

# Compendium of food consumption statistics from household surveys in developing countries

Volume 2: Africa, Latin America  
and Oceania

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This publication aims at providing information on food consumption levels and patterns obtained from household surveys. As such, it replaces the Review of Food Consumption Surveys, which was last issued in 1988. While in essence pursuing the same aims as the latter, the present publication incorporates certain new features, as indicated below.

Firstly, a clear distinction is made between the following three types of food consumption information available: (i) food consumption expenditure; ii) quantities of food items consumed or acquired; and iii) nutritive values of food consumed or acquired.

Secondly, the information relating to nutritive values of food consumed or acquired is given due prominence thanks to the availability of a number of analytical tables obtained through a special data processing and tabulation programme undertaken in collaboration with the survey organization of selected countries. The immediate purpose of the programme was to obtain appropriate tabulations for the Sixth World Food Survey to be published in 1995. However, it has been conceived as part of a longer term effort to promote the processing and analysis of household survey data in countries for the purpose of assessing the food and nutrition situation.

Thirdly, certain useful indicators such as the percentage contribution of each food group to total food expenditure and to total calorie consumption and the percentage expenditure on food are also provided in the relevant tables.

This first issue of the publication presents data not only from the recent surveys but also, in a number of cases, from some undertaken as far back as the 1970's in order to provide some perspective of the changes over time. However, because of the many surveys involved, it is divided into two volumes: Volume 1,<sup>1</sup> covering the surveys conducted in the developing countries in Asia, and the present Volume 2, covering the surveys conducted in the developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Oceania. Another compendium covering the surveys conducted in developed countries will be issued, probably in 1995, following the computerization of all the available survey data in the FAO Statistics Division's database. Subsequently, a single compendium, updating the information, will be periodically issued.

The present volume, is organized as follows. Following the *Introduction* is a section entitled *General Notes*, which provides general descriptions of the data presented. This is followed by a section entitled *Glossary of terms used in the tables*, which provides a listing of the common terms used in the three official languages, i.e. English, French and Spanish. Subsequent to this section are the four substantive parts of the document: *Part One* dealing with the tables relating to food consumption expenditure (monetary values); *Part Two* referring to the quantities of food items consumed; *Part Three* referring to food consumption in terms of nutritive values; and *Part Four* giving the country notes referring to survey coverage, concepts, definitions and mode of data collection.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO, 'Compendium of Food Consumption Statistics from Household Surveys in Developing Countries', Volume 1: Asia, Economic and Social Development Paper 116/1, 1993, Rome.

## GENERAL NOTES

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### 1. Source of data

The data presented in this publication are mostly based on the survey reports published by the responsible national organizations. However, in the case of Brazil, three tables in Part Three have been obtained through special arrangements with the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE).

Evidently, the primary sources for the data are sample surveys investigating on household consumption. The relevant surveys can be broadly considered as being of two types: specialized food consumption or nutrition surveys and surveys collecting data on household expenditure (either solely or in combination with income and other socio-economic data). While both types of survey provide food consumption information, their objectives and measurement procedures are different; hence, the food consumption information obtained is also expected to differ.

The first type of survey primarily aims at obtaining information on the food consumed by households and the corresponding nutritive values (i.e. calorie, protein, fat, etc.). The data collected refers to the quantities of food items consumed by members of the household. The food consumed within the household is usually measured at the kitchen level by weighing the food items used for the preparation of each meal. In addition, information on food wasted on the plate and leftovers, etc., may also be collected to arrive at the actual amount of food consumed by the meal partakers. The information on food consumed away from home (for example, in restaurants or canteens, from street vendors, at work or school, with other families, etc.) is normally collected either by interviewing each member of the household or by record-keeping. The nutritive values of the food consumed are obtained by applying the appropriate food composition factors to the quantity data.

Data on household expenditure from the second type of survey (henceforth referred to as expenditure type of survey) are collected primarily for investigating the economic behaviour of consumers and for other purposes such as the construction of cost of living indices or national accounts. Hence, from the consumption perspective, the focus is on household acquisitions of both food and non-food items. The food expenditure data, which are collected either by the interview or record-keeping method, therefore normally refer to food items acquired by the household. Supplementary information on meals/food consumed outside the household may also be collected. Thus, the food consumption data obtained from the expenditure type of survey generally reflects the food acquired by or available to the household during the reference period. Wastage or loss in the household are not normally accounted for.

The most commonly available surveys are those of the expenditure type. Furthermore, this type of survey has been carried out regularly in many developing countries in recent years. The specialized food consumption or nutrition surveys, being rather complicated and costly to implement on a large scale, have been carried out only in a few countries. In view of this, the majority of data presented in this publication are from surveys of the expenditure type.

The expenditure type surveys usually collect data referring to both the quantity and monetary value of each food item acquired by the household. However, the quantity data have been tabulated and published in a few countries only. The processing and tabulation of the data in terms of nutritive values have been undertaken in yet fewer number of countries (namely Morocco and Trinidad and Tobago). This process, which involves the conversion of the quantity data relating to the different food items consumed by the household into nutritive values, is normally undertaken in connection with specialized food consumption or nutrition surveys. However, as indicated above, few countries have carried out this type of survey. In view of this, the FAO Statistics Division has carried out a special programme to assist selected countries in undertaking the required processing and tabulation work on the basis of the food consumption data

available from surveys of the expenditure type<sup>2</sup>. In Latin America, such assistance has been provided to four countries; namely, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

## **2. Availability and coverage of the surveys**

The availability of the surveys varied from one country to another. In Africa, the surveys conducted in the early periods were often confined only to urban areas or to certain cities/regions of the country concerned. Later on, coverage has been extended to rural areas or to the rest of the country. However, recent surveys with nationwide coverage are available for a few countries only and few countries have conducted the survey more than once during a ten year period. In Latin America also, most of the surveys do not have nationwide coverage: they have been confined to urban areas or urban agglomerations where the large majority of the population live. However compared to the situation in Africa, there are a larger number of recent surveys available and some have been conducted with intervals of five years. In Oceania, few surveys are available.

For the purpose of this publication, the primary objective has been to include the recent surveys with nationwide coverage. However, in order to provide some perspective of changes over time, wherever possible, a few surveys of similar type conducted in the earlier periods, but not prior to the year 1970, have also been included. In the absence of nationwide surveys, those with less than nationwide scope have been included if their coverage represented a large majority of the population.

## **3. The information content**

### *(a) Food consumption data*

The food consumption data presented in this publication refers to (i) food expenditure (consumption in terms of monetary value); (ii) quantities (in weight) of food items consumed or acquired; and (iii) nutritive values (i.e. calorie, protein and fat) of food consumed or acquired. The quantity data refers to food items only. In the case of food expenditure and nutritive values of food consumed, the data refers to total food and, as far as possible, their breakdown by food items/groups. This information is generally in the form of averages for groups of households classified according to income or total expenditure levels/classes. In many cases, separate tabulations for certain sub-national areas such as the urban and rural areas, cities and regions are also given.

Although the household is the unit of data collection, an analysis based on the household per caput average as the unit is preferable. However, particularly with respect to food expenditure, the data given in a number of the survey reports refers to averages per household. In a few exceptional cases, the averages are given on a per adult equivalent or per meal partaker basis. In all these cases the original units have been retained for the purpose of this publication.

### *(b) Supplementary information*

As far as possible, the number of sample households, the estimated percentage of total households, the average size of households, and the average income/total expenditure corresponding to the income/ expenditure classes are also given.

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FAO, Analysis of Food Consumption Data from Household Income and Expenditure Survey, paper presented at the Fourteenth Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics, Beijing, People's Republic of China, 8-13 June 1992.

(c) *Food consumption indicators*

In addition to the above data, certain indicators, namely the percentage contribution of each food group to total food expenditure, the percentage contribution of each food group to total calorie consumption and the percentage of expenditure on food corresponding to the income/expenditure classes have been derived and included in the relevant tables. The percentage contributions of various food groups to total food expenditure reflect the food expenditure pattern, whereas the percentage contributions of various food groups to total calorie consumption reflect the dietary pattern. The proportion of food expenditure, which is obtained as the ratio of food expenditure to the total consumption expenditure, reflects the level of welfare of the household.

(d) *Standardized classification of food items/groups*

The individual food items or groups given in the survey reports differ from one survey to another. In this connection, an attempt has been made to rearrange them according to a uniform classification. This classification was prepared on the basis of the classification of the food items and groups used in connection with the FAO Food Balance Sheets. However, the list of items adopted is less detailed compared to those underlying the latter classification. In general, only those food items commonly consumed or purchased by the households are included and shown separately. This implies that minor food items and food items that are not commonly consumed are not shown separately. They are, however, included in the residual food items such as cereals not elsewhere specified (nes), milk products nes etc. On the other hand, meals away from home are included in the list since there were a number of surveys which provided such information.

In many survey reports fairly detailed food items are shown and this permitted the regrouping of food items according to the adopted classification. However, where this regrouping has not been possible, the relevant tables include appropriate explanatory footnotes.

(e) *Standardized measuring unit for quantity data relating to food items consumed*

In some cases, the measuring unit for the quantity data given in the survey reports refers to the local ones. In this connection, the metric system for weights and volume is adopted as far as possible. The original units have been converted into the metric system by using national or international conversion factors. There are, however, some cases where the appropriate conversion factors were not available. In these cases the original units have been retained.

(f) *Types of classification*

As already indicated, the food consumption information is generally classified by size of

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