



European  
Commission

# THE CROATIAN FOOD BASKET

## ZAGREB

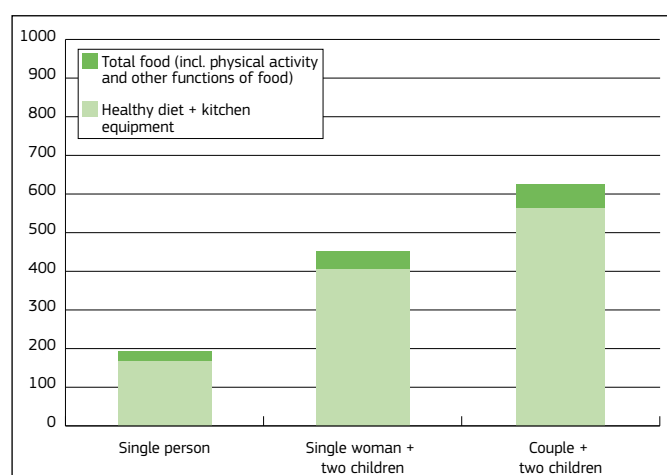
➔ The European Reference Budgets Network is a project financed by the European Commission that aims to develop cross-national, comparable reference budgets in all EU Member States. Reference budgets are baskets of goods and services considered necessary for an individual household to achieve an acceptable standard of living within a given country, region or city. Preparing reference budgets with a common methodology can help EU Member States to design effective and adequate income support measures and to encourage mutual learning and the exchange of best practices. More information about the project as well as the full country reports can be found on the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/!CC79TD>

The Croatian food basket indicates the monthly budget needed for an adequate food intake by three reference households (consisting of children and people of working age, in good health, without disabilities and living in the capital city). The basket includes a budget for food and for the kitchen equipment required to prepare, serve, consume and preserve this food. Furthermore, it takes into account the necessary budget for physical activity

and for other functions of food, such as its social function for example. The food basket has been developed in accordance with nutritionist recommendations and national dietary guidelines, and takes into account the cultural specificities of Croatian eating habits. The feasibility and acceptability of the basket have been verified through focus group discussions involving citizens with different socio-economic backgrounds.

## 1. Key findings

The Croatian Food Budget: monthly amounts in euros<sup>(1)</sup>, Zagreb, March 2015



The monthly budget required for a healthy diet in Croatia is **EUR 166 for a single person** and **EUR 564 for a family of two adults and two children**. If the budget needed for physical activity and for the other functions of food (eating out, holidays, etc.) is also taken into consideration, the **total monthly**

**food budget** amounts to **EUR 193 for a single person** and **EUR 625 for a family of two adults and two children**.

## 2. National specificities

Developing cross-national, comparable European reference budgets requires the differences between the respective budgets of the Member States to be explained according to the institutional, cultural, climatological and economic context of the country concerned. The Croatian food basket takes the following factors into account:

### ➔ Dietary habits

According to the 2003 health survey, 68.3 % of men and 58.2 % of women are overweight in Croatia. Of these, 21.6 % of men and 22.7 % of women are obese. The rates appear to increase dramatically for those over 50 years of age. Croatian people tend to consume too much fat and to have a below-average carbohydrate intake. The 2006 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey

<sup>(1)</sup> EUR 1 = HRK 7.6481

revealed that, in Croatia, 14.7 % of children did not have breakfast during the week and that only 49.4 % of 11 year olds and 24.1 % of 15 year olds had fruit on a daily basis. Another survey from 2011 showed that Croatian people spent 31.7 % of their annual average household expenditure on food and beverages.

### ➔ National food guidelines

Croatia is yet to agree on national food-based dietary guidelines for adults. The main body responsible for public health issues is the Croatian Public Health Institute, which works through a network of regional institutes. Some of these regional institutes have published dietary guidelines. For instance, the Bjelovar-Bilogora County Public Health Institute has developed a food pyramid that consists of six food groups on four levels: grain products, vegetables and fruits, milk and meat products, and sweet and fatty foods. Furthermore, as part of the Action Plan for the Prevention and the Reduction of Obesity adopted by the Croatian Government in July 2010, the Ministry of Health developed national dietary guidelines for primary school pupils and for the elderly. The exact composition of the food basket has been developed in consultation with nutritionists from the Croatian Institute for Public Health and on the basis of the dietary guidelines for children, together with the broad understanding that adults require approximately 2 000 calories a day.

### ➔ The pricing of the basket

The pricing of the food basket was conducted in March 2015. A single retail chain was selected, which has the largest market share in Croatia. It can be found throughout the country and

offers products of varying quality and price, from low-priced own brands to the most popular local and international brands as well as premium branded goods. The retail chain boasts different kinds of stores, from small corner shops to large supermarkets. For this reason, the pricing was conducted in a medium-sized shop in order to avoid the price deviating as a result of the shop size.

### ➔ Physical activity

Besides the budget required for a healthy diet, the food basket also includes a minimum budget for physical activity, as this is presented in the national guidelines as a general requirement for a healthy lifestyle. Since the Croatian National Action Plan for Overweight and Obesity Prevention and Control also focuses on physical activity, with the overall objective of preventing obesity, it has been decided to incorporate the cost of paid physical activity equivalent to a bi-weekly visit to a local swimming pool.

### ➔ Other functions of food

The food basket also incorporates social, cultural, religious and emotional functions of food that have been identified by focus group participants as necessary for adequate participation in Croatian society. Food can strengthen social relations and help develop friendships or improve relations with neighbours. It can also be important in terms of leisure. Cooking festive dishes for holidays and celebrations, eating out once in a while and inviting friends and family over are seen as constitutive functions of food.