

THE CZECH FOOD BASKET

PRAGUE

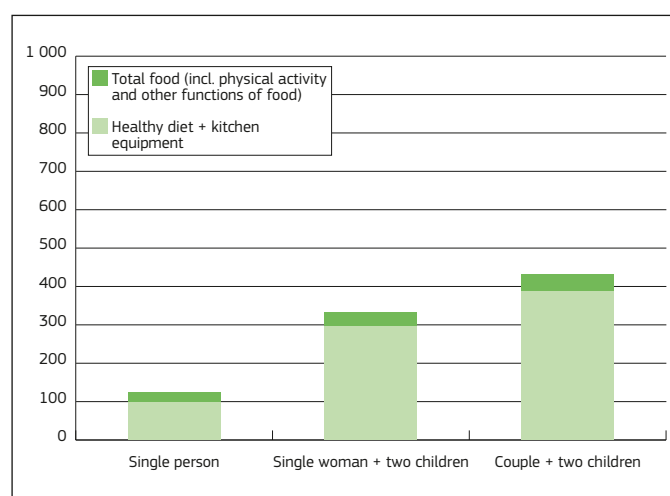
➔ The European Reference Budgets Network is a project financed by the European Commission that aims to develop cross-national, comparable reference budgets in all EU Member States. Reference budgets are baskets of goods and services considered necessary for an individual household to reach an acceptable 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 Czech food basket indicates the monthly budget required 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 Czech 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 Czech Food Budget: monthly amounts in euros, Prague, March 2015



The monthly budget required for a healthy diet in the Czech Republic is **EUR 98 for a single person** and **EUR 388 for a family of two adults and two children**. If the budget needed for physical activity and the other functions of food (eating out,

holidays, etc.) is taken into consideration, the **total monthly food budget** amounts to **EUR 126 for a single person** and **EUR 433 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 Czech food basket takes the following factors into account:

➔ Dietary habits

From 2000 to 2011, the total food consumption in Czech society increased by 6.7%, especially the consumption of plant products. One can note a decrease in the consumption of beef (mainly due to high prices), bread and spirits. In contrast, a high increase in plant products, bread wheat and cereal products, dairy, cheese, butter,

wine and soft drinks has been observed. It is difficult to assess the evolution as clearly negative or positive. On the one hand, there is a higher demand for cheaper commodities, which results in a positive trend by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption as well as dairy product intake. On the other hand, the increased consumption of butter, sugar and soft drinks reveals a worrisome development in the dietary habits of the Czech population.

➔ National food guidelines

The exact composition of the healthy food basket was developed in accordance with the national food guidelines. The first dietary recommendations for the Czech Republic were suggested by the Society for Nutrition in 1986. In 2004, an updated report from the Society for Nutrition served as a basis for the paper developed by the Ministry of Health entitled 'Nutrition recommendations for the population of the Czech Republic'. Eight years later, an innovative update was published. It was dedicated to professionals dealing with the prevention of non-infectious mass diseases. These dietary guidelines are based on recommendations from the World Health Organisation and the 2007 EU White Paper 'Strategy for Europe related to health problems connected to nutrition, overweight and obesity'. Moreover, the information provided by Societies for Nutrition in the DACH countries (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) was also taken into consideration as a reference framework. A Czech food pyramid was developed in 2013 by the Forum for Healthy Nutrition as a graphic explanation of recommended nutrition guidelines specifically established for the Czech population.

➔ The pricing of the basket

The pricing of the food basket was conducted in March 2015. The choice of the shops was based on suggestions made by focus group participants. One single food retailer was chosen, as it was mentioned as the most common store for food shopping in Prague. The selected retailer offers a wide variety of products of acceptable quality at average prices.

➔ Physical activity

Besides the budget needed 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. However, no additional costs have been included in the Czech food basket, because free activities like walking, jogging, cycling and working in the garden fulfil this function perfectly.

➔ Other functions of food

The food basket also takes the emotional, social and cultural functions of food into account, which have been identified by focus group participants as necessary for adequate participation in Czech society. Eating out once in a while, inviting friends and family over and cooking festive meals for important holidays and celebrations such as birthdays are seen as constitutive functions of food.