

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

JAMES J. DAVIS, Secretary

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

ETHELBERT STEWART, Commissioner

BULLETIN OF THE UNITED STATES }  
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS } . . . . . No. 491

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES

HANDBOOK OF  
LABOR STATISTICS  
1929 EDITION



AUGUST, 1929

UNITED STATES  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON : 1929

**TABLE 2.—PER CENT OF INCREASE IN RETAIL PRICES OF 22 ARTICLES OF FOOD IN 1928 COMPARED WITH 1913**

Article	Per cent of increase in 1928 compared with 1913	Article	Per cent of increase in 1928 compared with 1913	Article	Per cent of increase in 1928 compared with 1913
Ham.....	96.7	Pork chops.....	65.7	Butter.....	47.5
Round steak.....	88.3	Coffee.....	65.1	Tea.....	42.3
Sirloin steak.....	88.2	Flour.....	63.6	Eggs.....	34.5
Rib roast.....	76.8	Bacon.....	63.0	Sugar.....	29.1
Corn meal.....	76.7	Bread.....	62.5	Lard.....	17.7
Beans.....	75.6	Milk.....	59.6	Rice.....	14.9
Chuck roast.....	74.4	Potatoes.....	58.2		
Cheese.....	74.2	Plate beef.....	57.0		

### Trend of Retail Prices of Food, 1890 to 1928

TABLE 3 shows by index numbers the trend in the retail cost of food in the United States from 1890 to 1928. The percentage increase in the cost from 1890 to 1928 was 121.7. From 1920 to 1928 there was a decrease of 24.1 per cent. Prices in 1928 averaged 0.7 of 1 per cent lower than in 1927.

**TABLE 3.—INDEX NUMBERS SHOWING TREND IN THE RETAIL COST OF FOOD IN THE UNITED STATES, BY YEARS, 1890 TO 1928<sup>1</sup>**

[Average for year 1913—100.0]

Year	Index number	Year	Index number	Year	Index number	Year	Index number
1890.....	69.6	1900.....	68.7	1910.....	93.0	1920.....	203.4
1891.....	70.6	1901.....	71.5	1911.....	92.0	1921.....	153.3
1892.....	69.3	1902.....	75.4	1912.....	97.6	1922.....	141.6
1893.....	71.0	1903.....	75.0	1913.....	100.0	1923.....	146.2
1894.....	67.8	1904.....	76.0	1914.....	102.4	1924.....	145.9
1895.....	66.5	1905.....	76.4	1915.....	101.3	1925.....	157.4
1896.....	64.9	1906.....	78.7	1916.....	113.7	1926.....	160.6
1897.....	65.4	1907.....	82.0	1917.....	146.4	1927.....	155.4
1898.....	67.1	1908.....	84.3	1918.....	108.3	1928.....	154.3
1899.....	67.7	1909.....	88.7	1919.....	185.9		

<sup>1</sup> The number of articles included in the above index numbers has not been the same throughout the period of years, but a sufficient number has been used to represent fairly food as a whole. From 1890 to 1907, 30 articles were used; from 1907 to 1913, 15 articles; from 1913 to 1920, 22 articles; and from 1921 to 1928, 43 articles. The index numbers have been so computed as to be comparable with one another.

### Monthly Price Changes of Food, 1919 to 1928

RETAIL price movements during the period 1919 to 1928 for the United States as a whole are shown in Table 4.<sup>1</sup> The year 1913 forms the base period, and average prices in all years and months are measured in terms of average prices in that year. To aid in the comparison there is also shown the per cent of increase or decrease in prices for each year or month as compared with the preceding year or month. As will be seen, the retail cost of food reached the peak in July, 1920, when prices were 119.2 per cent above the 1913 level. In March, 1922, prices had fallen to 38.7 per cent above the 1913 level, but they increased to 64.3 per cent above that level in January, 1926, subsiding to 51.4 per cent above the 1913 level in

<sup>1</sup> Comparable information for the months of 1913 to 1918 inclusive, will be found in Bulletin No. 396, p. 12.