



United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Agriculture  
Information  
Bulletin  
Number 773

August 2001



Electronic Report from the Economic Research Service

[www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)

# Household Food Spending by Selected Demographics in the 1990s

Noel Blisard and J. Michael Harris

## Abstract

Average per-person total food expenditures, adjusted for inflation, declined about 7 percent between 1990 and 1998, from \$2,189 to \$2,037. This decline resulted primarily from the average at-home food expenditures per person declining by about 6 percent and the away-from-home food expenditures declining by about 8 percent. Price-adjusted food spending reflects changes in the real price of food as well as any quantity adjustments made by consumers. However, the national average masks the fact that some population subgroups had significantly higher or lower food expenditures than average. For example, while total food spending declined for all demographic groups except female-headed and Black households, these two demographic groups still had the lowest per capita spending. In contrast to this, per-person total food expenditures were greatest for households in the highest income quintile, for one-person households, and for households with heads between 55 and 64 years of age.

**Keywords:** Food expenditures, food spending, demographics, Consumer Expenditure Survey.