

■ Food Expenditures and Prices

Total food expenditures, which include imports, fishery products, and food originating on farms, were \$691.2 billion in 1996, an increase of 3.3 percent over these expenditures in 1995. The average was \$2,605 per capita, 2.3 percent above the 1995 average.

Away-from-home meals and snacks captured 46 percent of the U.S. food dollar in 1996, up from 38 percent in 1976 and 43 percent in 1986.

The percentage of disposable personal income (income after taxes) that U.S. consumers spend on food continues to decline. From 1995 to 1996, disposable personal income increased 5.0 percent, a faster pace than the rise in food expenditures.

U.S. consumers in 1996 spent 10.9 percent of their disposable personal income on food, compared to 11.6 percent in 1990, 13.4 percent in 1980, and 13.8 percent in 1970.

In the United States, total retail food prices (including meals served in restaurants) rose 40.8 percent over the last 10 years (1986-96). Prices of food eaten away from home increased 35.6 percent, while retail foodstore prices increased 43.8 percent.

Prices of goods and services, excluding food, in the Consumer Price Index climbed 43.4 percent over the same 10 years. Transportation was up 39.8 percent; housing 37.8 percent; medical care 87.0 percent; and apparel and upkeep 24.4 percent.