

# Survey of Household Spending, 2011

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Canadian households spent an average of \$55,151 on goods and services in 2011, up 2.7% from 2010. This was slightly below the rate of inflation of 2.9% as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Spending on shelter accounted for 27.6% of this total; transportation, 20.4% and food, 14.1%.

Provincially, households in Alberta (\$64,453) had the highest average spending on goods and services, followed by households in Ontario (\$57,514). Households in Prince Edward Island (\$45,190) reported the lowest average.

Couples with children reported average spending on goods and services of \$75,543 in 2011. One-person senior (aged 65 and over) households reported average spending of \$26,047.

## Shelter

Households spent an average of \$15,198 on shelter, up 1.3% from 2010. This category includes rent, mortgage payments, repairs and maintenance costs, property taxes and utilities.

On average, homeowners spent \$17,123 on shelter, accounting for 26.7% of their spending on goods and services. Renters spent an average of \$11,320, or 30.4% of their goods and services budget. These shares were similar to those in 2010.

Although Ontario (29.5%) households reported spending the highest share of their goods and services budget on shelter, households in Alberta had the highest average spending at \$18,300, followed by Ontario at \$16,960. Households in Newfoundland and Labrador reported the lowest average spending at \$10,589.

Average spending on shelter was highest among households in population centres of one million or more at \$17,285. Households in rural areas had the lowest average, \$12,213.

## Transportation

Households spent an average of \$11,229 on transportation in 2011, up 1.5% from 2010.

This spending consisted of \$10,152 on average for private transportation (including cars, trucks and vans as well as their operating costs). The remaining \$1,077 was for public transportation, which covered spending on public transit, taxis, air fares, inter-city buses and trains.

Average spending on gas and other fuels rose 23.7% to \$2,606. This was faster than the increase in gas prices of 20.0% as measured by the CPI.

For private transportation, homeowners spent \$12,415 on average, more than double the spending of \$5,609 by renters.

## Food

On average, Canadian households reported spending \$7,795 on food in 2011, down 0.4% from 2010. Spending on food purchased from stores fell 1.8% to \$5,588 on average, while spending on food purchased from restaurants rose 3.6% to \$2,207.

The largest declines between 2010 and 2011 occurred among fruit, fruit preparations and nuts (-6.2%), cereal grains and cereal products (-5.3%) as well as dairy products and eggs (-4.0%).

Senior-headed households reported the highest share of spending on food purchased from stores, at 12.5%. Households with a principal respondent under 30 years of age had the highest share of spending on food purchased from restaurants, at 4.6%.



## Health care

On average, households spent \$2,211 on out-of-pocket health care expenses in 2011, down 0.1% from 2010. These include health insurance premiums and health care expenses not reimbursed by a public or private health care plan.

Spending shares on health care increased with age. Senior-headed households reported spending 6.8% of their goods and services budget on health care, compared with 2.6% for households with a principal respondent under 30.

## Communications

Average spending on communications increased 5.1% from 2010 to \$1,825. In 2011, the average household spent \$809 on cell phone expenses, \$481 on expenses related to landline telephones and \$416 on Internet access.

In 2011, 79.4% of households reported owning at least one cell phone, while 12.8% reported they had only a cell phone and no landline. As was the case in 2010, cell phone ownership was highest in Alberta (88.5%) and lowest in Quebec (70.4%).

About four out of five households reported having Internet access at home. Access was most common in Alberta (87.3%) and British Columbia (86.2%) and lowest in Newfoundland and Labrador (72.6%) and New Brunswick (72.6%).

Cable connections were the preferred method to access the Internet in 2011. Overall, 35.4% of households used cable compared with 30.4% that reported a high speed telephone connection. Wireless connections were used by 8.1% of households.

## Average total expenditures

On average, households reported total expenditures of \$73,457 in 2011, up 3.1% from 2010. This total includes the \$55,151 in spending on goods and services, plus expenditures on income taxes, pension contributions, employment and life insurance premiums and gifts of money.

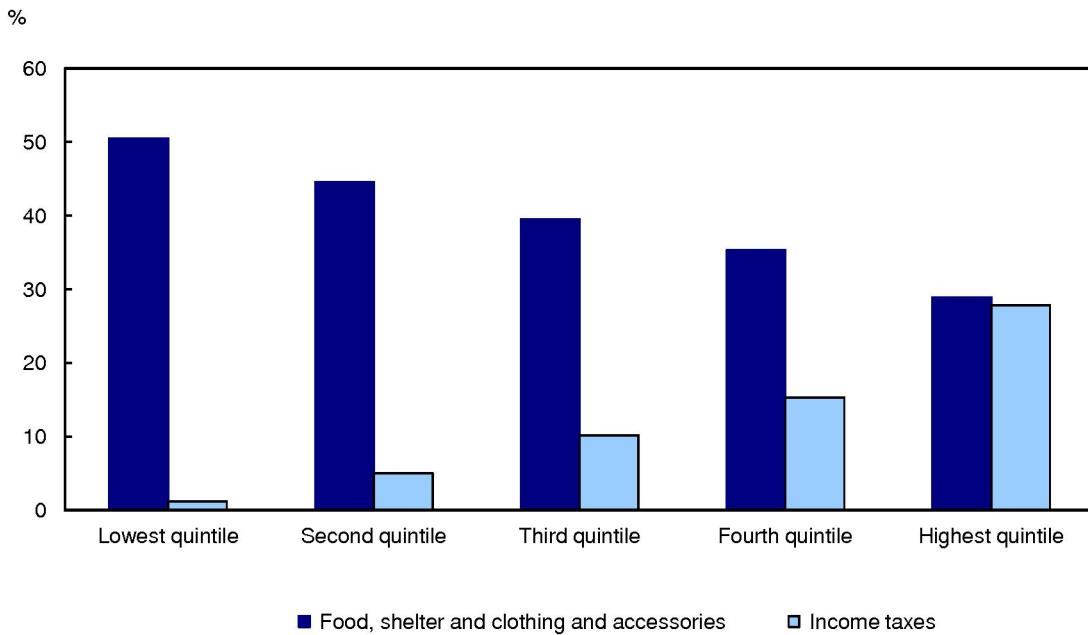
The average spending on goods and services represented 75.1% of total spending. Income taxes, pension contributions, employment and life insurance premiums and gifts of money accounted for the remaining 24.9%.

Analyzing spending by dividing the population into five equal income groups provides additional perspective.

The 20% of households with the lowest incomes spent an average of \$29,129 in 2011. Of this total, 50.5% went to food, shelter and clothing and accessories. Income taxes represented 1.2% of their total expenditures.

The 20% of households with the highest incomes reported average total expenditures of \$143,519. They allocated 28.9% of their budget to food, shelter and clothing and accessories, while 27.8% went to income taxes. These proportions were similar to shares in 2010.

**Chart 1**  
**Shares of total expenditure by income quintile, 2011**



**Note to readers**

*This release is based on data from the 2011 Survey of Household Spending (SHS), which gathered detailed information from a sample of close to 18,000 households on spending patterns, dwelling characteristics and household equipment. Data covers all provinces.*

*Average spending for a specific good or service is calculated for all households, including those with and those without expenditures for the category. Average spending includes sales taxes.*

*The survey methodology combines a questionnaire with recall periods appropriate to an expenditure item and a diary of daily expenses that the household completes over the two weeks following an interview. The diary provides more detailed information, particularly for spending on food and other frequent purchases.*

*The method of adjusting for incomplete diaries has been refined with the 2011 SHS. As well, the age of household members is now defined to be at the time of the interview rather than as of December 31 of the survey year.*

*To ensure comparability of the data, the 2010 data have also been revised by incorporating these changes. The revised 2010 estimate of average household spending on all types of goods and services has increased by 1.3% when compared with the previously published 2010 estimate.*

*Comparisons of spending between years have not been adjusted for inflation.*

**Table 1**  
**Average spending on goods and services and shares of spending of major categories by province, 2011**

|                           | Average spending on goods and services | Shelter                                      | Transportation | Food        | Clothing and accessories |
|---------------------------|--|--|----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
|                           | dollars                                | shares of spending on goods and services (%) |                |             |                          |
| <b>Canada</b>             | <b>55,151</b>                          | <b>27.6</b>                                  | <b>20.4</b>    | <b>14.1</b> | <b>6.1</b>               |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 49,985                                 | 21.2   | 23.7           | 15.3        | 7.2                      |
| Prince Edward Island      | 45,190                                 | 25.4   | 19.0           | 15.9        | 6.5                      |
| Nova Scotia               | 50,009                                 | 25.0   | 21.3           | 15.1        | 5.6                      |
| New Brunswick             | 47,960                                 | 23.0   | 23.2           | 15.2        | 6.0                      |
| Quebec                    | 49,239                                 | 24.8   | 21.1           | 15.2        | 6.1                      |
| Ontario                   | 57,514                                 | 29.5   | 19.6           | 13.6        | 6.3                      |
| Manitoba                  | 49,975                                 | 25.3   | 22.1           | 14.5        | 6.2                      |
| Saskatchewan              | 52,540                                 | 24.7   | 21.8           | 14.3        | 5.8                      |
| Alberta                   | 64,453                                 | 28.4   | 20.9           | 13.2        | 6.1                      |
| British Columbia          | 57,332                                 | 28.8   | 19.2           | 14.1        | 5.5                      |

**Table 2**  
**Budget shares of major spending categories by income quintile, 2011**

|                                       | Lowest quintile        | Second quintile | Third quintile | Fourth quintile | Highest quintile |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
|                                       | dollars                |                 |                |                 |                  |
| <b>Average household expenditures</b> | <b>29,129</b>          | <b>45,057</b>   | <b>62,941</b>  | <b>86,682</b>   | <b>143,519</b>   |
|                                       | shares of spending (%) |                 |                |                 |                  |
| Food                                  | 14.1                   | 14.1            | 11.9           | 10.5            | 8.3              |
| Shelter                               | 31.8                   | 25.7            | 22.6           | 20.2            | 16.4             |
| Clothing and accessories              | 4.6                    | 4.9             | 5.0            | 4.6             | 4.3              |
| Transportation                        | 15.8                   | 16.4            | 17.6           | 16.4            | 13.2             |
| Income taxes                          | 1.2                    | 5.0             | 10.2           | 15.3            | 27.8             |

**Available without charge in CANSIM: tables 203-0021 to 203-0028.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3508.**

[Data tables](#) are also now available from the *Summary tables* module of our website.

The report "User Guide for the Survey of Household Spending, 2011," which is part of the *Household Expenditures Research Paper Series* (62F0026M, free), presents information about the survey methodology, concepts and data quality. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, choose *Publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).