

# Survey of Household Spending, 2012

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Canadian households spent an average of \$56,279 on goods and services in 2012, up 2.0% from 2011.

Spending on shelter accounted for the largest share of this total at 28.1%, followed by transportation (19.9%) and food (13.8%). These shares were little changed from 2011.

Provincially, the highest average spending on goods and services was by households in Alberta at \$69,870, followed by households in British Columbia (\$58,808). Households in Quebec reported the lowest average spending at \$48,870.

Couples with children had the highest average spending on goods and services (\$80,056) of all household types. One-person households headed by a senior aged 65 years or older had the lowest average spending (\$27,546).

## Shelter

Households spent an average of \$15,811 on shelter in 2012, up 4.0% from 2011. This category includes rent, mortgage payments, repairs and maintenance costs, property taxes and utilities. Homeowners spent an average of \$17,853 on shelter, which accounted for 27.1% of their goods and services spending, while renters spent \$11,947, representing 31.3% of their spending on goods and services.

Households in British Columbia (30.8%) allocated the largest share of goods and services spending to shelter, while households in New Brunswick (22.3%) averaged the lowest spending. Albertans had the highest average spending on shelter at \$19,309. Households in New Brunswick averaged the lowest spending at \$11,077.

Average spending on shelter was highest among households in population centres of one million or more at \$17,839. Households in rural areas had the lowest average at \$11,849.

## Transportation

Households spent an average of \$11,216 on transportation in 2012, little changed from 2011.

This spending consisted of \$10,087 on average for private transportation (which includes spending on the purchase of cars, trucks and vans and their operating costs), while the remaining \$1,128 was for public transportation, which covered spending on public transit, taxis, air fares, inter-city buses and trains.

Households in rural areas reported higher average transportation costs (\$12,725) compared with those in population centres (spending between \$9,530 and \$11,997, depending on population size).

## Food

On average, households spent \$7,739 on food in 2012, down 0.7% from 2011. Spending on food purchased from stores fell 0.3% to \$5,572 on average in 2012, while spending on food from restaurants fell 1.8% to \$2,167 on average.

The largest average spending declines between 2011 and 2012 were for fish and seafood (-12.4%), vegetables and vegetable preparations (-7.8%) and bakery products (-5.0%).

Provincially, households in Alberta reported the highest spending on food at \$8,414. Households in Nova Scotia had the lowest average spending at \$7,235.

The highest average spending on food purchased from stores was by couples with children (\$8,171). One-person households reported the lowest average spending at \$2,907.



Couples with children also reported the highest average spending on food purchased from restaurants at \$2,878, while one-person households headed by a senior aged 65 years or older spent the least at \$893.

## **Health care**

Households spent an average of \$2,285 on out-of-pocket health care expenses in 2012, up 3.3% from 2011. This included spending on health insurance premiums and health care costs not reimbursed by a public or private health care plan.

Health care spending share increased with age. Households headed by a senior aged 65 years or older allocated 6.4% of their goods and services spending to health care. In contrast, households headed by an individual under 30 years old reported spending 2.8% of their budget on health care.

## **Communications**

In 2012, 15.7% of households reported having only a cell phone and no landline, compared with 12.8% of households in 2011. Ownership of at least one cell phone was reported by 81.4% of households in 2012. Cell phone ownership was highest in Alberta (90.1%) and lowest in Quebec (72.8%).

In 2012, 81.5% of households reported having Internet access at home. Households in Alberta (87.3%) and British Columbia (84.3%) were the most likely to have home access while households in Prince Edward Island (75.0%) and New Brunswick (76.6%) were the least likely.

Cable was the most popular method of Internet connection in 2012. A cable connection was reported by 36.8% of households while 27.5% reported using a high speed telephone connection. The use of wireless Internet connection in households was 13.3% in 2012.

## **Average total expenditures**

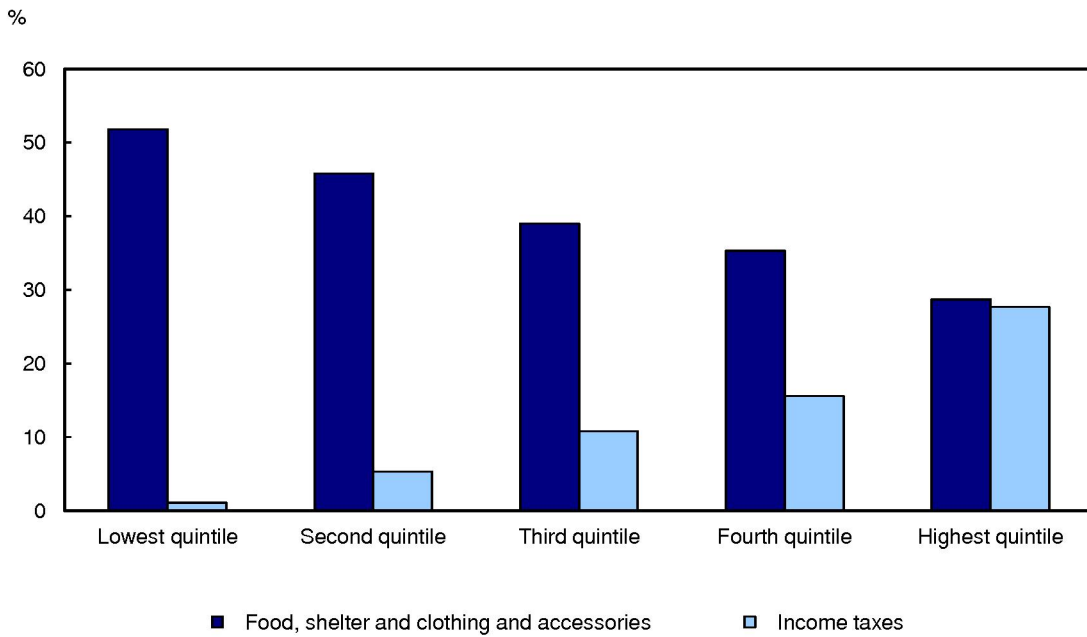
On average, households reported total expenditures of \$75,443 in 2012, up 2.7% from 2011. This total includes the \$56,279 spent on goods and services, plus expenditures on income taxes, pension contributions, employment and life insurance premiums and gifts of money.

The average spending on goods and services of \$56,279 represented 74.6% of total spending. Income taxes, pension contributions, insurance premiums and gifts of money accounted for the remaining 25.4%.

Distributing the population into five equal income groups, or quintiles, provides additional spending analysis. The 20% of households with the lowest income spent an average of \$29,921 in 2012. Of this total, 51.8% went to shelter, food and clothing and accessories. Income taxes represented 1.1% of their total spending.

In contrast, the 20% of households with the highest income reported spending an average of \$151,506. They allocated 28.7% of their budgets to shelter, food and clothing and accessories, while 27.7% went towards income taxes.

**Chart 1**  
**Shares of total expenditure by income quintile, 2012**



## Territories

Household spending information was also collected in the territories in 2012.

Households in the territories spent an average of \$68,022 on goods and services in 2012. Of this total, shelter accounted for 26.2% of spending, transportation 18.3% and food 16.2%.

Households in the Northwest Territories (\$76,620) had the highest average spending on goods and services, followed by households in Yukon (\$62,903) and Nunavut (\$61,730). Shelter accounted for the largest share of spending in the Northwest Territories (28.3%) and Yukon (26.1%), while households in Nunavut (23.9%) allocated the largest share of spending on food.

**Table 1**  
**Average spending on goods and services and shares of spending of major categories by province, 2012**

	Average spending on goods and services	Shelter	Transportation	Food	Clothing and accessories
	dollars	shares of spending on goods and services (%)			
<b>Canada</b>	<b>56,279</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>6.2</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	52,271	23.2	23.3	14.5	7.0
Prince Edward Island	50,745	24.7	22.8	14.3	6.3
Nova Scotia	51,347	26.6	21.1	14.1	5.7
New Brunswick	49,696	22.3	24.5	14.6	6.0
Quebec	48,870	25.8	19.5	15.9	6.4
Ontario	58,062	29.5	19.8	12.9	6.2
Manitoba	51,730	26.3	21.7	14.6	6.3
Saskatchewan	53,865	25.6	22.4	13.5	5.9
Alberta	69,870	27.6	21.0	12.0	6.6
British Columbia	58,808	30.8	17.5	14.1	5.3

**Table 2**  
**Budget shares of major spending categories by income quintile, 2012**

	Lowest quintile	Second quintile	Third quintile	Fourth quintile	Highest quintile
	dollars				
<b>Average household expenditures</b>	<b>29,921</b>	<b>43,507</b>	<b>64,008</b>	<b>88,061</b>	<b>151,506</b>
	shares of spending (%)				
Food	14.1	13.6	11.4	10.2	8.1
Shelter	32.5	26.9	22.6	20.8	16.4
Clothing and accessories	5.2	5.3	4.9	4.4	4.2
Transportation	13.8	16.0	17.2	16.0	13.1
Income taxes	1.1	5.3	10.8	15.6	27.7

**Note to readers**

Data for the provinces were collected using the 2012 Survey of Household Spending (SHS), which gathered detailed information from a sample of close to 18,000 households.

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 selected households complete over the two weeks following an interview. The diary provides more detailed information, particularly for spending on food and other frequent purchases.

In 2012, the sample size for the expenditure diary was reduced to 50% of the total sample, given that the baseline for diary expenditures was established during the first years of its collection. Corresponding changes have been made in the weighting method for data collected from the diary.

The data for the territories in 2012 were collected according to the previous model of the SHS (questionnaire with 12-month recall period only, no diary of expenditures). As such, estimates from the territories are not combined with the provincial estimates but presented separately.

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

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**Available in CANSIM: tables 203-0021 to 203-0028, 203-0030 and 203-0031.**

**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, 2012," which is now available as part of the *Household Expenditures Research Paper Series* (62F0026M), 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, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca)).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Danielle Zietsma (613-951-4243; [danielle.zietsma@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:danielle.zietsma@statcan.gc.ca)), Income Statistics Division.