

Survey of Household Spending, 2016

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Canadian households spent an annual average of \$62,183 on goods and services ranging from clothing to communications in 2016, up 2.8% from 2015.

The increase was driven by higher year-over-year spending by households in Ontario and Quebec. Households in Ontario spent \$66,220 (+5.6%), while those in Quebec spent \$52,447 (+4.5%).

Despite the overall increase in 2016, households still spent the same proportion of their total consumption on the three largest expenditure categories as they did in 2015: shelter (29.0%), transportation (19.2%) and food (14.1%).

Canadian households spent an average of \$18,032 on shelter in 2016, little changed from 2015. They paid an average of \$16,293 for their principal residence (including rent, mortgage payments, repairs and maintenance costs, property taxes and utilities) and an average of \$1,739 for other accommodations, such as owned secondary residences and hotels.

On transportation, Canadian households spent an average of \$11,909 in 2016, almost the same as 2015. The largest portion (\$10,660) went toward private transportation, which includes spending on the purchase of cars, trucks and vans, as well as their operating costs. The remainder went to public transportation, which covers spending on public transit, taxis, intercity buses, trains and air fares.

On average, Canadian households spent \$8,784 on food, also little changed from 2015. They spent an average of \$6,176 on food purchased from stores, and an average of \$2,608 on food purchased from restaurants.

Income and household consumption

Higher income is generally linked to higher spending. Distributing the population into five equal income groups, or quintiles, allows for a comparison of spending between different household income levels. In 2016, the 20% of Canadian households with the lowest incomes spent an average of \$30,985 on goods and services, compared with \$105,288 for those in the top 20% of household incomes.

On average, households in the lowest income quintile spent \$10,876 on shelter (35.1% of their consumption of goods and services). In contrast, households in the highest income quintile spent an average of \$28,796 on shelter (27.3% of their consumption).

While households in the lowest income quintile spent \$4,735 on food, and those in the highest spent \$13,755, both groups spent similar shares of their total consumption on food: 15.3% for the lowest income quintile versus 13.1% for the highest quintile.

Household spending on transportation also varied by income. On average, households in the lowest income quintile spent \$4,204 on transportation (13.6% of their total consumption of goods and services). The highest income quintile households spent \$20,962 (19.9% of their consumption).

Consumption patterns vary according to household composition

Data from the [2016 Census](#) showed that one-person households became the most common type of Canadian household for the first time in 2016, surpassing couples with children. Compared with 2001, proportionally fewer households are composed of couples with children, and more households are made up of one person, or couples without children.

On average, couples with children spent \$88,273 on goods and services in 2016, compared with \$34,674 for one-person households.

For shelter, one-person households paid an average of \$12,247 (35.3% of their total consumption). Couples with children spent \$24,613 on shelter (27.9% of their consumption).



For transportation, one-person households spent an average of \$5,425 in 2016, while couples with children spent \$17,679. As a share of total consumption, transportation spending was lower for one-person households (15.6%) than for couples with children (20.0%).

Spending on food also varied by household type. Couples with children spent an average of \$12,249 on food in 2016, while one-person households spent \$4,520. However, both groups spent similar shares of between 13.0% and 14.0% of their consumption of goods and services on food.

The share of consumption allocated to out-of-pocket health care expenses increased with age. In 2016, households headed by a person aged 65 years or older spent 6.3% of their total consumption of goods and services on health care, compared with 2.6% for households headed by someone under the age of 30. Out-of-pocket health care expenses include spending on private health insurance premiums and health care costs (for example, prescription and non-prescription medications, eye wear and dental care) not reimbursed by a public or private health care plan.

Households across Canada spend their money differently

Provincially, households in Alberta (\$74,044) reported the highest average spending on goods and services in 2016. In contrast, households in New Brunswick (\$50,175) spent the least.

Of all the provinces, the largest share of consumption spent on shelter was seen in households in Ontario (30.9%) and British Columbia (30.0%), reflecting the higher cost of shelter in these two provinces. Meanwhile, households in Newfoundland and Labrador spent the smallest share on shelter (23.7%).

Households in Alberta (\$15,318) and Saskatchewan (\$14,522) spent the most on transportation among all the provinces, while households in Quebec (\$9,652) spent the least. This was largely due to households in Alberta (\$13,771) and Saskatchewan (\$13,620) spending a higher amount on private transportation (for purchasing and operating a personal vehicle) than those in Quebec (\$8,824). To a lesser extent, it was also due to households in Alberta (\$1,547) spending more on public transportation than Quebec (\$828). Households in Saskatchewan spent a similar amount (\$902) to Quebec.

Steady increase in the cell phone and home Internet usage of Canadian households

Over the years, cellular telephones have replaced landline telephones as the most popular telephone type among Canadian households. In 2010, 89.3% of households reported having a landline telephone, compared with 78.1% reporting owning a cell phone. In 2016, 66.8% of households had a landline, while 87.9% had a cell phone. Moreover, 32.6% of households reported having only a cell phone and no landline in 2016, compared with 10.0% of households in 2010.

Although cellular telephones have replaced landline telephones as the most popular telephone among households nationally, this was not the case in one province, namely, New Brunswick. In 2016, 85.7% of households in New Brunswick had a landline telephone, while 82.8% had a cell phone. In Newfoundland and Labrador, more households owned a cell phone (87.6%) than a landline phone (86.6%). This is in contrast to Alberta, where 60.5% of households had a landline telephone compared to 92.9% that had a cell phone. Meanwhile, only 12.7% of households in Newfoundland and Labrador and 13.8% of households in New Brunswick reported having only a cell phone and no landline, compared to 38.6% of households in Alberta.

Home Internet access was reported by 87.4% of Canadian households in 2016, up from 78.3% in 2010. Provincially, home Internet access was lowest in Quebec (82.9%), and highest in Alberta (91.8%) in 2016.

The mode households used to connect to the Internet varied by province. In 2016, cable Internet connection was least common in Saskatchewan (19.3%) and most prevalent in British Columbia (51.7%). Wireless Internet connection was lowest in Quebec (12.2%) and British Columbia (12.8%), and highest in Saskatchewan (27.1%). The proportion of households reporting high-speed telephone connections was lowest in Quebec (19.1%), and highest in Prince Edward Island (38.3%) and Saskatchewan (38.2%).

Overall, Canadian households spent an average of \$2,246 on communication devices and services in 2016, up 2.7% from 2015.

Data for this release come from the Survey of Household Spending (SHS), which collects information on household expenditures. SHS data are an important input into Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index (CPI), and are used in the calculation of gross domestic product (GDP). The SHS data are also used by many federal and provincial government departments to develop social and economic policies and programs, and by the private sector, research organizations and academics to study various topics related to household consumption and well-being.

Table 1
Average spending on goods and services and shares of spending of major categories by province, 2016

	Average spending on goods and services	Shelter	Transportation	Food
	dollars	share of spending on goods and services (%)		
Canada	62,183	29.0	19.2	14.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	58,248	23.7	22.0	15.3
Prince Edward Island	50,638	25.3	21.3	15.2
Nova Scotia	54,349	25.8	20.4	14.9
New Brunswick	50,175	25.3	20.8	14.9
Quebec	52,447	26.6	18.4	16.2
Ontario	66,220	30.9	18.6	13.2
Manitoba	56,984	26.0	19.7	14.6
Saskatchewan	65,411	26.6	22.2	13.6
Alberta	74,044	29.2	20.7	13.2
British Columbia	64,588	30.0	18.7	14.1

Note(s): Canada-level statistics include the provinces only.

Source(s): Data were derived from CANSIM table [203-0021](#).

Table 2
Average spending on goods and services and shares of spending of major categories by income quintile, Canada, 2016

	Average spending on goods and services	Shelter	Transportation	Food
	dollars	share of spending on goods and services (%)		
All quintiles	62,183	29.0	19.2	14.1
Lowest quintile	30,985	35.1	13.6	15.3
Second quintile	43,218	30.7	17.5	15.1
Third quintile	58,460	28.3	20.5	14.4
Fourth quintile	72,916	28.4	20.3	14.4
Highest quintile	105,288	27.3	19.9	13.1

Note(s): Canada-level statistics include the provinces only.

Source(s): Data were derived from CANSIM table [203-0022](#).

Table 3
Average spending on goods and services and shares of spending of major categories by household type, Canada, 2016

	Average spending on goods and services	Shelter	Transportation	Food
	dollars	share of spending on goods and services (%)		
All classes	62,183	29.0	19.2	14.1
One person households	34,674	35.3	15.6	13.0
Couples without children	62,639	27.4	19.8	14.7
Couples with children	88,273	27.9	20.0	13.9
Couples with other related or unrelated persons	92,012	27.9	20.7	13.9
Lone-parent households with no additional persons	54,195	29.2	17.3	14.9
Other households with related or unrelated persons	59,013	28.3	19.5	14.6

Note(s): Canada-level statistics include the provinces only.

Source(s): Data were derived from CANSIM table [203-0023](#).

Table 4
Selected communications equipment by province, 2016

	Households having landline telephone service	Households having cellular telephones	Households having Internet use from home	Households having high-speed telephone Internet connection	Households having cable Internet connection to a computer	Households having wireless Internet connection
	Percent of households reporting					
Canada	66.8	87.9	87.4	25.2	42.0	18.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	86.6	87.6	86.8	30.8	37.4	21.7
Prince Edward Island	72.7	85.0	84.5	38.3	25.3	16.8
Nova Scotia	71.6	86.8	86.7	32.5	37.3	16.9
New Brunswick	85.7	82.8	86.0	33.1	32.6	14.8
Quebec	72.5	82.0	82.9	19.1	48.2	12.2
Ontario	63.4	90.2	88.7	25.4	37.4	22.7
Manitoba	67.9	86.0	85.3	29.7	30.3	26.0
Saskatchewan	64.0	90.5	86.4	38.2	19.3	27.1
Alberta	60.5	92.9	91.8	23.7	46.4	23.3
British Columbia	64.1	89.7	90.4	29.6	51.7	12.8

Note(s): Canada-level statistics include the provinces only.

Source(s): Data were derived from CANSIM table [203-0027](#).

Note to readers

The sample of the 2016 Survey of Household Spending (SHS) consists of 17,590 households in the 10 provinces.

National-level estimates include the 10 provinces only.

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.

Total current consumption refers to the sum of the expenditures for food, shelter, household operations, household furnishings and equipment, clothing and accessories, transportation, health care, personal care, recreation, education, reading materials and other printed matter, tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, games of chance and miscellaneous expenditures.

Total expenditure refers to the sum of total current consumption, income taxes, personal insurance payments and pension contributions, as well as gifts of money, support payments and charitable contributions.

The survey methodology combines a questionnaire with recall periods based on the type of 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. Data were collected on a continuous basis from January to December 2016 using 12 monthly subsamples of similar sizes.

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

Available in CANSIM: tables [203-0021](#) to [203-0028](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3508](#).

[Summary tables](#) are also now available.

The report "[User Guide for the Survey of Household Spending, 2016](#)," 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*.

The infographic "[How Canadians spent their money in 2016](#)" which is part of *Statistics Canada — Infographics (11-627-M)*, is also available.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services, Income Statistics Division (toll-free 1-888-297-7355; 613-951-7355; STATCAN.income-revenu.STATCAN@canada.ca).