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# Food Consumption Highlights

Anne Rogers  
447-8801

Per capita food consumption dropped 7 pounds in 1982 to an average of 1,387 pounds, reflecting a decline in animal product use of 9 pounds from 1981. Reductions in pork, eggs, and dairy products offset increased poultry consumption. We consumed almost 2 pounds more of crop products per person, with increases in vegetables and potatoes offsetting decreases in cereal and bakery items, sugar and sweeteners, and fruits and melons.

## Meat, Poultry, and Eggs

Red meat consumption, excluding game meat and edible offals, was 139.4 pounds per person in 1982, down 5.8 pounds from 1981. Pork consumption dropped 6 pounds to 59 pounds, partly because supplies decreased and prices rose nearly 13 percent. Beef use rose slightly to 77.3 pounds, as larger supplies held price increases to 1.4 percent. Veal consumption remained at 1.6 pounds per person.

Americans consumed more poultry—about 64 pounds each in 1982, up 1.3 pounds from 1981 and nearly double the 1960 level. Chicken and turkey reached record levels of 52.9 pounds and 10.8 pounds per capita, as prices for chicken fell 1.8 percent and those for other poultry fell 1.6 percent from 1981. Despite lower egg prices in 1982, per person consumption fell 0.4 pound to 33.4 pounds (263 eggs), which may be partially attributed to concern over cholesterol.

## Dairy Products

Increased demand for cheese, cream, specialties milk, other beverage milk, and ice cream boosted per capita consumption of dairy products on a milk-equivalent basis from 543.4 pounds in 1981 to 561.6 pounds in 1982. This increase occurred despite a 1.4-percent rise in dairy product prices.

Fluid milk and cream products consumption dropped from 245.7 pounds in 1981 to 242.2 pounds in 1982, while milk and cream prices rose 0.7 percent. Consumption of cream and specialties milk products, such as milk-cream mixtures,

sour cream and dips, and yogurt, however, rose 0.4 pound to 8.7 pounds per capita in 1982. Use of other beverage milk, including lowfat, skim, buttermilk, and flavored milk, increased from 99.5 pounds to 100.2 pounds per person, largely because of higher sales of lowfat milk. Per capita lowfat milk sales increased from 2.27 pounds in 1960 to 75.68 pounds in 1982, as consumers substituted lowfat milk for plain whole milk. Despite higher prices, butter consumption increased 0.2 pound to 4.5 pounds per capita.

Cheese consumption has risen steadily since 1960 because of its popularity as a snack food and increased use in processed foods, such as pizza and frozen dinners. In 1982, cheese consumption in-

creased from 18.4 pounds to a record 20.1 pounds per person, although prices increased 2.6 percent. More production of cheese, relatively stable prices, and USDA donations of 178 million pounds to needy persons resulted in an increase of 1-pound per person in consumption of American cheese in 1982.

Americans consumed 26.3 pounds of frozen dairy products (on a product weight basis) per person in 1982, unchanged from a year earlier. Increased consumer demand for more varieties of ice cream, such as specialty imports, boosted production and consumption. Ice cream remained the most popular frozen dairy dessert, with Americans consuming 17.5 pounds per person, up 0.3 pound from 1981. However, we ate less sherbet

**Table 1. Per Capita Consumption of Selected Foods, 1960-84<sup>1</sup>**  
(Retail-weight pounds)

Food Item	1960	1970	1980	1981	1982P	1983P	1984F
All items	1,401	1,397	1,405	1,394	1,387	1,396	1,395
Animal products	614	615	587	582	573	582	576
Red meats <sup>2</sup>	147	165	160	157	151	156	153
Beef and veal	69	86	78	79	79	80	79
Pork	60	62	68	65	59	62	61
Other	18	17	14	13	13	14	13
Poultry	34	49	61	63	64	63	63
Eggs	43	39	35	34	33	34	33
Dairy products <sup>3</sup>	365	336	307	304	302	305	303
Other	25	26	24	24	23	24	24
Crop products	787	782	818	812	814	814	819
Cereal and bakery	147	142	150	151	150	151	150
Vegetable oils	29	41	47	48	49	50	47
Fruits and melons <sup>4</sup>	168	160	162	164	156	164	163
Vegetables & potatoes <sup>4</sup>	299	284	292	281	287	280	288
Sugar and sweeteners <sup>5</sup>	109	121	133	135	134	134	135
Other	35	34	34	33	38	35	36

<sup>1</sup>For detailed information, see *Food Consumption, Prices, and Expenditures, 1962-82*, ERS Statistical Bulletin No. 702, December 1983.

<sup>2</sup>Includes game meat and edible offals.

<sup>3</sup>Includes butter.

<sup>4</sup>Includes home-garden produce.

<sup>5</sup>Excludes sugar in processed fruits and vegetables and sweetened condensed milk. Does not include noncaloric sweeteners.

P = preliminary.

F = forecast.

and ice milk in 1982. Consumption of mellorine, an ice cream substitute with no butter fat, remained at 0.2 pound per person.

Consumption of dry milk products rose slightly, with increases in the use of non-fat dry milk and whey, and decreases in dry whole milk.

### Food Fats and Oils

The average American consumed 0.2 pound more food fats and oils (fat content basis) in 1982, with vegetable oil increasing 1.0 pound to 47.1 pounds, but animal fats dropping 0.9 pound to 9.7 pounds.

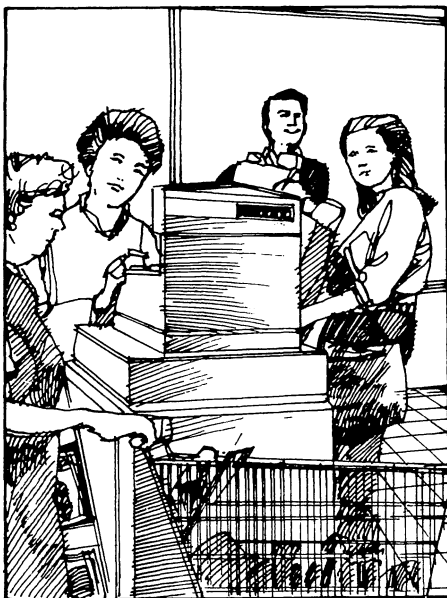
Table spread use rose 0.2 pound to 15.6 pounds per person, as butter consumption rose 0.2 pound to 4.5 pounds per capita and margarine remained at 11.1 pounds. Cooking fats consumption rose 0.2 pound to 21.2 pounds, as shortening use inched up from 18.5 to 18.8 pounds per person and lard consumption dropped 0.1 pound to 2.4 pounds per capita.

Consumption of fat and oil products has increased 26 percent since 1960; however, the use of animal fats fell from a 41-percent share of the total in 1960 to 17 percent in 1982, as consumers substituted margarine for butter, vegetable oils (primarily soybean) for lard, and used more salad and cooking oils.

### Fruits and Melons

Per capita consumption of fruits dropped 8 pounds in 1982. Fresh and canned fruit use declined, while use of melons and frozen and dried fruits increased. Canned and chilled fruit juice consumption dropped from 23.28 in 1981 to 17.34 pounds per person in 1982, while frozen citrus juice consumption rose from 33.39 to 37.17 pounds per person (single-strength equivalent) during the same period.

Higher fresh fruit prices pushed down consumption in 1982, with the exception of grapefruit, bananas, grapes, pineapples, and strawberries. Short supplies following the 1982 Florida freeze raised orange prices 28.2 percent, and as a result, Americans ate 12.3 pounds of oranges, 0.8 pound less than 1981. The



freeze did not severely damage the grapefruit crop and consumption increased 0.7 pound to 7.4 pounds per person. Bananas remained the most popular fresh fruit, accounting for almost 28 percent of all fresh fruit consumption and nearly 40 percent of noncitrus fruit use in 1982. As banana prices fell in 1982, consumption increased over 1 pound, to 22.6 pounds per person.

Canned fruit (except pineapples) consumption fell 0.4 pound to 13 pounds per capita in 1982. Canned noncitrus fruit consumption, which accounts for most canned fruits, dropped from 12.7 pounds to 12.4 pounds per capita (excluding pineapples). Canned apple and applesauce consumption fell by 0.1 pound in 1982, in response to higher prices. Canned cherry use also dropped. Canned peaches and canned pears, however, increased to 3.7 pounds and 1.8 pounds per capita, respectively.

Canned citrus juice consumption was down 2.8 pounds from 1981, to 4.7 pounds per person, as consumers substituted lower priced fruit juices. For this reason, canned apple juice consumption continued to increase, reaching a record level of 7.2 pounds per capita in 1982.

Frozen fruit consumption increased during 1982. Use of frozen apples, peaches, and cherries went up, while frozen berries dropped, due mainly to a decline in the use of strawberries.

Dried fruit consumption increased from 2.71 pounds to 2.76 pounds per capita in 1982. Increased use of dried apples, apricots, dates, figs, and prunes offset lower consumption of raisins, the major dried fruit. Smaller shipments and higher bulk prices pushed down consumption of raisins 0.04 pound to 1.70 pounds per person in 1982.

### Vegetables

Per capita consumption of vegetables (excluding potatoes and sweetpotatoes) was 157.2 pounds, up 3.8 pounds from 1981. Frozen vegetable consumption declined, while fresh vegetable consumption increased. Canned vegetable consumption was unchanged.

Despite a 0.5-percent increase in prices, consumers continued to substitute more fresh for canned vegetables. Fresh vegetable (excluding potatoes and sweetpotatoes) consumption increased to 100.9 pounds per person in 1982, up 4.9 percent. This increase was attributed to the growing popularity of salad bars, and salad vegetables, including tomatoes, broccoli, and carrots. Lettuce consumption dropped 0.3 pound to 23.5 pounds per capita, reflecting the 19.3-percent increase in prices caused by a white fly infestation in California that reduced 1982 supplies. Fresh potato use increased 1.4 pounds to 46.7 pounds per capita, as prices dropped 15.3 percent.

Canned vegetable consumption remained stable in 1982 at 45.6 pounds per capita. Lower prices increased consumption of canned tomatoes and tomato products by 0.6 pound to 20.2 pounds per person. Use of other vegetables, including pickles and sauerkraut, dropped 0.6 pound to 23.7 pounds per capita as higher processing costs pushed up retail prices. The use of dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables, such as carrots and pumpkins, remained at 1.7 pounds per capita in 1982.

A price increase of 10.3 percent dropped frozen vegetable consumption from 11.6 pounds in 1981 to 10.7 pounds per capita in 1982. Consumption of frozen corn, broccoli, and peas, the three main frozen vegetables, fell to 2.0, 1.5, and 1.4 pounds, respectively, in 1982.

#### Other Foods

Cane and beet sugar consumption was down in 1982 to 75.2 pounds per capita, as soft drink producers continued to replace sugar with high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) (*see NFR-24*). Sugar and artificial sweetener prices fell 9.2 percent in 1982 from year-earlier levels. Saccharine consumption increased 0.1 pound per capita in 1982, continuing the trend toward substitution of artificial sweeteners for sugar that has boosted per-capita consumption of saccharine by almost 400 percent since 1960—from 1.9 pounds to 7.3 pounds in 1982.

Soft drink consumption also increased from 1981, to 39.6 gallons per person despite a 2.9-percent increase in cola drink prices. Soft drink consumption has nearly tripled since 1960 because of the increased variety and growing popularity of diet beverages. The use of coffee dropped 3 percent to 7.5 pounds in 1982, reflecting a 29-percent increase in roasted coffee prices. The use of coffee has declined steadily from a high of 15.8 pounds

per person in 1960. Tea consumption, in contrast, has increased 33 percent since 1960, although it amounted to only 0.8 pound per person in 1982. Per capita consumption of cocoa rose slightly from 1960 to 3.0 pounds.

Because of its high nutritional value, relatively low price, and variety of food uses, rice consumption has almost doubled from 6.1 pounds per person in 1960 to 11.8 pounds in 1982.

Americans consumed 149.5 pounds of flour and cereal products in 1982, compared with 150.6 pounds in 1981. Wheat flour use dropped 1.9 pounds to 114 pounds per capita in 1982 because prices for flour and prepared mixes increased 1.5 percent.

#### Outlook for 1983 and 1984

Preliminary estimates indicate per capita food consumption rose 11 pounds in 1983 on the strength of abundant supplies and higher personal disposable income.

Consumption of animal products increased an estimated 9 pounds per person in 1983. Lower prices pushed up consumption of red meat, with pork gaining the most. Beef and veal and egg consumption each rose about 1 pound and poultry consumption declined in 1983, while use of dairy products is estimated to

have risen 3 pounds, because of larger supplies and the free cheese distribution.

Per capita consumption of crop products changed little in 1983. Use of fruits and melons showed the largest expansion—8 pounds per person in 1983. Consumption was boosted by large apple and orange crops which increased fruit supplies. In contrast, weather-related reductions in vegetable production led to a 7-pound-per-person decline in vegetables and potatoes. Overall, fruit and vegetable prices increased 0.5 percent in 1983, compared to a 5.5 percent jump in 1982.

In 1984, total food consumption is forecast to decline 0.1 percent as expected reductions in red meat production and price increases of 3 to 6 percent will lower animal product consumption by 1 percent. Lower supplies and forecasted price increases of 5 to 8 percent, will hold consumption of poultry at an estimated 63 pounds per person.

Consumption of crop products is forecast to increase slightly in 1984, despite a possible price gain of 8 to 11 percent for fresh fruits and vegetables. The December 1983 freeze reduced orange supplies in Florida, and fruit consumption is expected to drop slightly as a result. □