

COMPARISON OF TUCSON FOOD PRICES

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Comprehensive Study of Pre-War, War and Post-War Prices in Tucson in 1914, 1920, and 1926

THE prices included in this article were taken from advertisements in a Tucson daily paper. The bound volumes of the paper were used as a source of information, and a fairly representative list of foods and prices was secured in this way. Every food listed in this article was found listed in the Tucson paper at least three times at different seasons of the year. If the prices listed were different an average was determined. Take eggs for example. In the spring and summer, eggs were cheap due to an over supply. In the winter eggs were much higher. The average was found and listed in this article.

The three years 1914, 1920 and 1926 were selected for study because of the

Table No. 2.—Cost of the Same Amount of Food Groups in the Different Years, 1914, 1920 and 1926.

Year	Fruit	Vegetables	Meat	Meat replacers	Fats	Cereals	Beverages	Sugar	Total
1914	6.08	.65	1.49	.92	3.25	1.11	1.35	.60	15.35
1920	7.35	1.28	2.75	1.27	5.04	1.89	2.36	1.30	23.24
1926	5.95	.94	2.54	1.01	4.50	1.72	1.83	.72	19.21
Potatoes, lb.				.01½	.08	.05	433	60	

following reasons: 1914 which represents a pre-war period, 1920 which represents war prices and 1926 which represents the latest prices at the time the study was made.

It was hard to obtain information in 1920, because very little advertising was done due to lack of competition and cost of advertising.

The following table shows the percentages of increase or decrease in prices of every food studied in 1914, compared with 1920 and 1926.

This table shows that fruits, as a group (fresh and canned), were cheaper in 1926 than either of the other years. This is due to a more even balance between supply and demand, because a great deal of fruit is raised in Arizona now and the transportation charges are not so high.

Every other class of food represented was higher in 1920 and 1926 than in 1914, but lower in 1926 than in 1920. There is a 50 percent increase in food costs between 1914 and 1920, and a 25 percent increase of 1926 prices over 1914.

At a glance, one sees that sugar was the one thing that was very expensive in 1920. This was due to the scarcity of sugar caused by the war. Vegetables and meats were the other things that were highest in 1920. Vegetables have decreased in price considerably since 1920 for two reasons. It was a post-war period but war prices still prevailed; also, since that time many of the vegetables are shipped from Mexico on a direct rail route, and transportation charges are not so high as formerly.

Meats have not decreased to any great extent since 1920 due to the fact that the cattle industry has been on a decline, and feed used to fatten cattle, hogs and sheep have been very expensive. The cattle ranges have not been good because of drought.

From the preceding figures and charts the factors which have influenced cost are: Transportation, post-war conditions, supply and demand, and competition in prices of the three years' study.

Table No. 1.—Average Retail Prices of Specified Food Articles and Percent Increase or Decrease in 1914, Compared with 1920 and 1926, in Tucson, Arizona.

Articles of Food	1914 Cost	1920 Cost	1926 Cost	1914-20 % Increase	1920-26 % Decrease
Oranges, doz.	.25	.35	.50	40	
Apples, box	2.25	3.25	2.25	44	44
Grapefruit, box	3.00	2.95	2.50	16	
Bananas, doz.	.40	.40	.40		
Canned peaches	.18	.40	.30	122	33½
Celery, bunch	.10	.35	.20	250	75
Cabbage, lb.	.06	.12	.08	100	50
Cauliflower, lb.	.10	.15	.20	50	33½
Potatoes, lb.	.01½	.08	.05	433	60
French peas	.25	.40	.32	60	25
Pork and beans	.12½	.18	.09	44	100
Snowdrift, 10 lbs.	1.50	2.25	2.10	50	7
Wesson Oil No. 8	1.25	1.75	1.60	40	9
Swift's lard, lb.	.15	.29	.23	93	26
Butter, lb.	.35	.75	.57	114	31
Swift's bacon, lb.	.27	.52	.52	96	
Smoked ham, lb.	.22	.60	.60	217	
Pork chops, lb.	.28	.45	.35	60	28
Round steak, lb.	.20	.35	.30	75	16
Hens, lb.	.21	.45	.39	114	15
Cheese, lb.	.22	.45	.35	104	28
Eggs, doz.	.60	.67	.50	11	34
Red salmon, can	.31	.38	.38	22	
Milk, quart	.10	.15	.16	50	2
Sugar, 10 lbs.	.60	1.30	.72	116	80
Schilling's Coffe, lb.	.50	.90	.56	80	60
Hills Bros. Coffee, lb.	.50	.86	.57	72	50
Tea, lb.	.35	.60	.70	71	16
Flour, 24 lbs.	.90	1.50	1.40	66	8
Bread	.10	.15	.15	50	
Rice	.08	.18	.12	125	50
Corn Meal	.03	.06	.05	100	20
Total	15.35	23.24	19.21		

This table shows that the price of every food except grapefruit was higher in 1920 than 1914. In 1920 eggs cost 11 per cent more than in

1914, and white potatoes 433 percent more. Oranges increased 42 percent in price from 1914 to 1926. Grapefruit decreased 20 percent from 1914

to 1926. Every other food article increased in price during this period ranging from 12 percent to 233 percent. This goes to show that there has been a decline in prices from 1920 to 1926.