Food and Nutrition Analysis
based on
Household Budget Survey 2023

Second Issue

Monitoring Progress Towards Healthier Diets

Are Mauritians eating healthy for a healthier tomorrow?

Released in

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1. Introduction

This report is the second issue whereby, using the microdata from the Household Budget Survey (HBS) 2023, various food and nutrition indicators have been computed, presented, and assessed in line with the recommendations of the Mauritius Healthy Eating Guidelines. The main objective is to produce evidence-based indicators that provide insights into the dietary habits, food consumption patterns, and nutritional quality of Mauritian households.

The findings provide valuable information for policymakers, researchers, and public health stakeholders in designing and evaluating nutrition-related policies, programmes, and interventions aimed at promoting healthier dietary practices and improving nutritional outcomes in Mauritius.

Below, the main results derived from the HBS 2017 and 2023 data have been summarised:

Table 1. Summary of food and nutrition statistics produced from HBS 2017 and 2023

Type of indicators under different Mauritius Healthy Eating Guidelines	2017			2023		
	Lower quintile	Highest quintile	Overall	Lower quintile	Highest quintile	Overall
Average calories per capita per day	1847	2598	2261	1961	2526	2326
-> Eat a healthy diet						
% of population having a Balanced diet	35.0	18.6	26.9	27.2	13.4	19.3
Average share of calories from ultra-processed foods (%)	11.8	16.4	13.8	13.9	19.4	15.5
-> Enjoy fruits and vegetables						
% of population with less than 400g of vegetables and fruits	93.5	67.3	81.2	91.9	72.7	81.2
-> Consume a mix of cereals, root and tubers and, pulses						
% calories from a mix of cereals, root and tubers and, pulses	49.8	39.8	45.4	49.8	41.8	46.2
-> Include a variety of protein-rich foods						
Average number of protein-rich foods consumed in a month	11.3	12.3	12.2	10.8	11.3	11.5
-> Watch your fat consumption						
% of population consuming more than 30% of fat	43.9	60.6	53.0	50.6	66.7	59.3
-> Be mindful of your nutrient needs						
% of population consuming less than 25g of fibre	85.7	51.9	67.5	78.4	45.1	58.8
-> Go easy on the salt						
% of population consuming more than 5g of salt	31.7	35.4	35.5	28.2	30.8	31.7
-> Shift your sweet tooth						
% of population consuming more than 45g of sugar	17.8	23.5	22.3	19.3	29.7	25.2

Note: *Quintile is a specific type of quantile which divides the sorted household by income level in five equal parts i.e., Quintile 1 (20% poorest households) to Quintile 5 (20% poorest households). Each quintile comprises 20% households.*

Between 2017 and 2023, average calorie consumption increased from 2,261 to 2,326 kilocalories per capita per day, particularly among lower-income households. However, adherence to the Mauritius Healthy Eating Guidelines declined, with the proportion of the population consuming a balanced diet falling from 26.9% to 19.3% and the share of calories from ultra-processed foods increasing from 13.8% to 15.5%.

While the proportion of the population consuming insufficient fibre decreased from 67.5% to 58.8% and excessive salt consumption declined from 35.5% to 31.7%, it has been found that around 81.2% of the population still consumed less than the recommended quantity of fruits and vegetables in a month.

Overall, the findings suggest that despite some improvements in specific dietary behaviours, there remains considerable scope to improve the quality of diets and promote healthier eating habits across all income groups.

1.1 About the Household Budget Survey (HBS)

The HBS is representative at regional level, covering 7000 households in the Republic of Mauritius. The survey is conducted every 5 years and over a period of 12 months. The 2023 survey was implemented from January to December 2023 in the Islands of Rodrigues and Mauritius.

The objective of the HBS is mainly to cover several dimensions of living standards such as household income, expenditure patterns, consumption of goods and services, housing conditions, and ownership of durable goods. In addition, the HBS serves as a key source of data for the compilation and rebasing of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the estimation of household final consumption expenditure in the National Accounts, the assessment of poverty and inequality, and the monitoring of food security and nutritional outcomes.

For additional information on the HBS, the publications can be accessed here:

1.1.1 How was HBS 2023 data used to compute food and nutrition analysis indicators?

The 2023 HBS necessitated the use of four questionnaires to collect all the necessary information from private households. The questionnaires are: -

(a) HBS 2 – Household schedule: To collect information on the characteristics of the selected households and their members

(b) HBS 3A and 3B – Daily record of the household expenditure: To record detailed daily household expenditure on every item purchased during the whole survey month

(c) HBS 4 – Income schedule: To collect data on the income of each income earner of the household.

(d) HBS 5 – Point of purchase questionnaire: To collect information on the type of outlets where households usually purchase consumption goods and services and was completed at the end of each survey month.

For this study, the comprehensive 30-day diary which was used to record food purchase, own production and gifts, served as the basis to calculate food and nutritional indicators on quantities (grams, energy and macronutrients) and monetary values.

Although the HBS is a rich source of information, it is important to be mindful of the following key caveats when using it for food and nutrition analysis.

a) Firstly, food purchased in a given period is not necessarily consumed. Because households can buy in bulk and consume from stock; foods may be given to animals; foods may be used for other purposes (e.g., salt for preserving fish).
b) Further, the survey does not provide information at individual level. There is no information on how foods are shared among members with the household, and there is no information on the number of guests in households or whether household members ate at other households.

1.2 Some interesting self-perceived health statistics from Living Conditions Survey 2024

The Living Conditions Survey (LCS) gather information pertaining to quality of life of Mauritians and how they spent their time on a 24-hour basis, with a view to obtain essential and up-to-date data used to inform government policy and also to be used by researchers, students amongst others. The **Living Conditions Survey (LCS) 2024** was a sub-sample of the 2023 Household Budget Survey

This section summarises the key findings from the LCS 2024 on self-perceived health and wellbeing. Self-perceived health is a subjective measure of overall health status encompassing several aspects such as overall physical, mental and social well-being. At the survey, respondents were asked to rate their health:

How is your health in general? 'Very good or Good or Fair or Bad or Very bad'

Some findings were:

a) In 2024, 7 out of 10 Mauritians rated their health status as 'good or very good', same as in 2018/19. Some 74% of Mauritians, aged 16 years and over, reported their health to be either 'good' or 'very good' in 2024. Only 5% rated their health as either 'bad' or 'very bad'. Same as in 2018/19, the majority reported either a 'good' or 'very good' health in 2024.
b) Men rated themselves healthier than women. In 2024, some 71% of women reported their health status to be either 'good' or 'very good' compared to 77% for men. It is worth noting that the 2024 figure of 71% for women improved by 4 percentage points from 2018/19 figure of 67%.
c) The higher the income and level of education, the higher the ratings on health status. The 2018/19 and 2024 LCS results show that around 86% of Mauritians, with at least a Cambridge School Certificate (SC), perceived their health as either 'good' or 'very good'. In contrast, those without an SC qualification reported poor health, particularly individuals who never attended school or reached only primary level (48%).
d) Self-perceived health decreased again with age in 2024. The young reported a better health than the elderly - 87% of young persons aged 16-39 years reported their health status to be 'good or very good' compared to 43% among elderly, aged 60 years and over.
e) Among the 80% of persons who reported having either 'good' or 'very good' eating habits, 82% of them perceived their health as either 'good' or 'very good'.
f) From 2018/19 to 2024, the share of persons in the highest quintile (20% richest households), who perceived their health as either 'good' or 'very good', increased from 82% to 84%. Conversely, in the lowest quintile (20% poorest households), only 70% in 2024 rated their health as either 'good' or 'very good', an increase over the 2018/19 figure of 60%.

More information on LCS results are available here.

The findings on self-perceived health status from the LCS 2024 and those from this Nutrition Analysis based on HBS 2023, should not be directly compared, as they measure different dimensions of health.

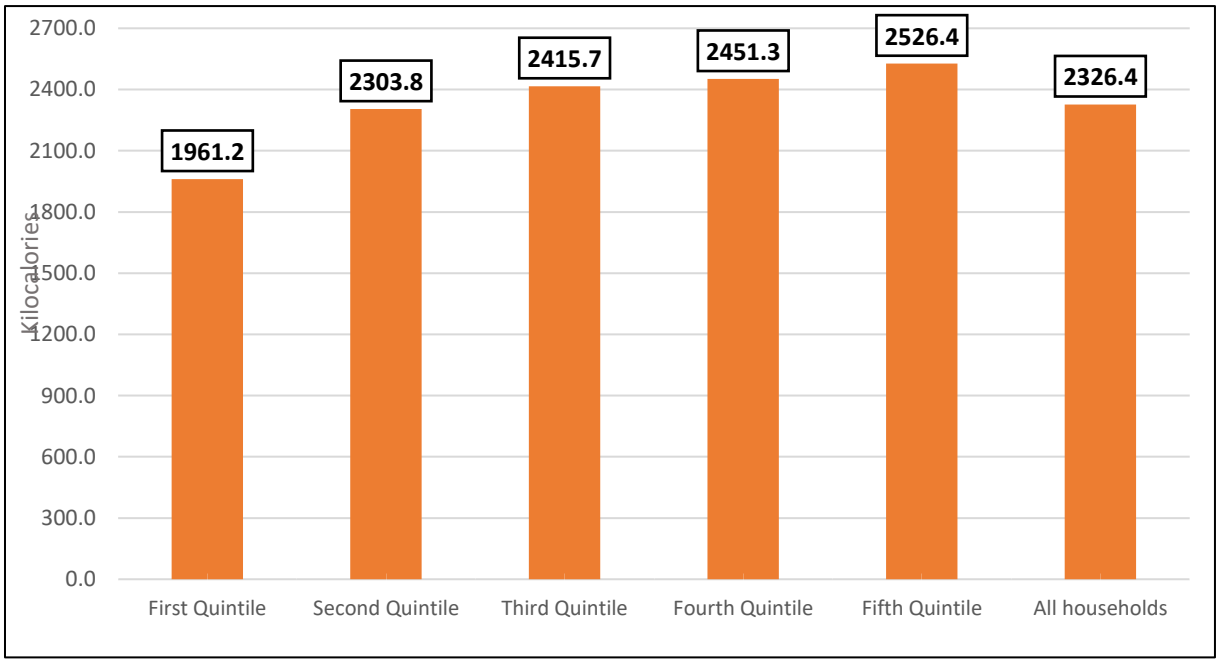
Self-perceived health status is a subjective indicator based on an individual's assessment of their health, whereas the Nutrition Analysis provides an objective assessment of dietary consumption against the Mauritius Healthy Eating Guidelines. Consequently, a favourable self-assessment of health does not necessarily imply adherence to healthy dietary practices, and the two sets of findings should be interpreted independently.

2. Food and Nutrition Analysis using HBS 2023 data

2.1 Daily energy consumption

Figure 2.1.1 shows that average daily calorie consumption increased consistently with household income, suggesting that higher-income households generally had greater access to food and consumed more energy-dense diets. While households in the lowest income quintile consumed an average of 1,961.2 kilocalories per capita per day, those in the highest income quintile consumed 2,526.4 kilocalories, representing an increase of nearly 29%. Overall, the average calorie consumption for all households was 2,326.4 kilocalories per capita per day.

Figure 2.1.1: Average daily energy consumption, by quintiles



From Figure 2.1.2, across districts, cereals, roots, tubers, pulses and nuts constituted the largest source of calories, accounting for around 44-48 percent of total consumption in most districts and reaching as high as 55.8 percent in Rodrigues, indicating a greater reliance on staple foods.

Oils and fats represented the second largest contributor, ranging from 14.6 percent in Port Louis to 16.7 percent in Savanne.

The contribution of fish, meat and eggs was relatively stable across districts, varying between 6.7 and 8.1 percent, while milk products accounted for around 5.7 to 7.4 percent of total calories.

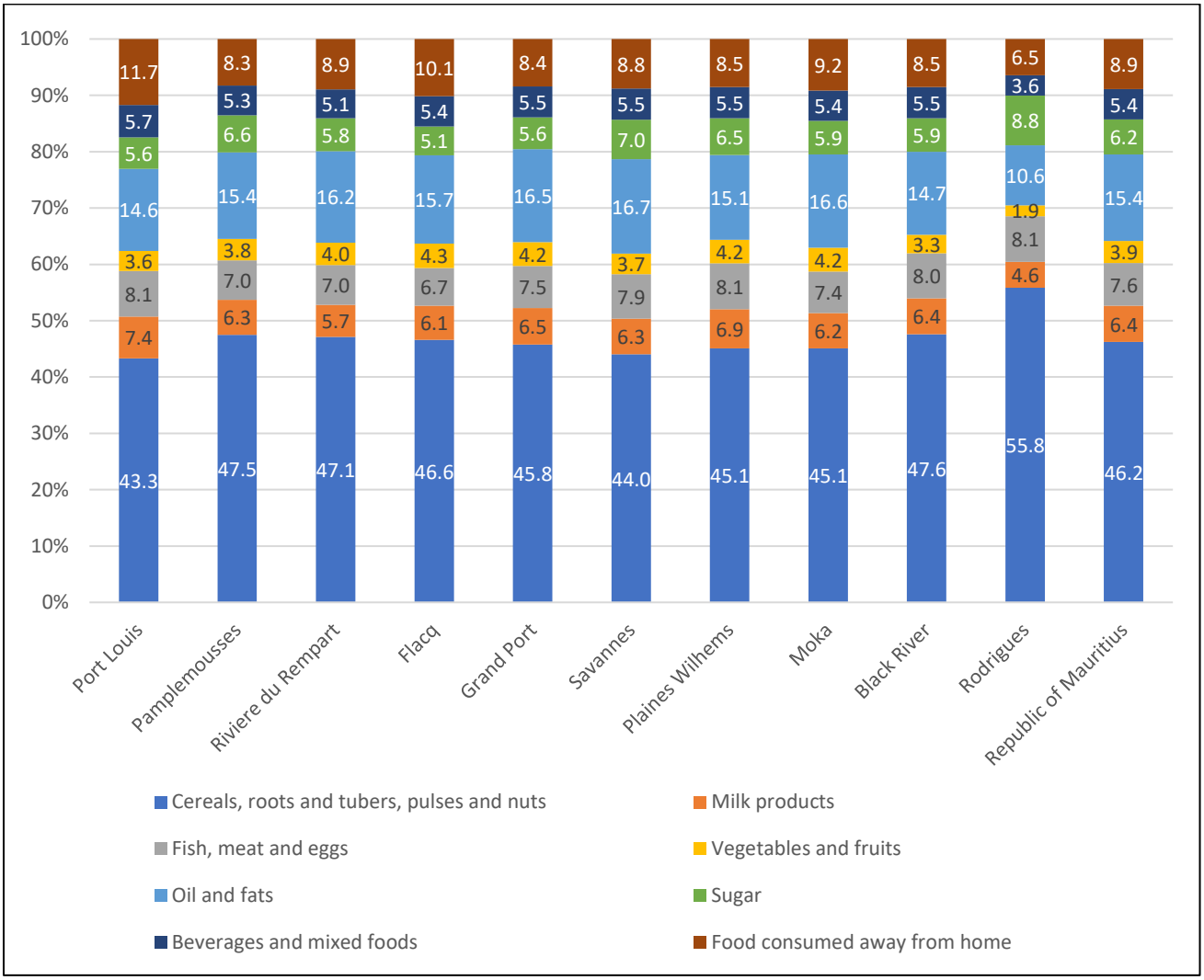
Vegetables and fruits contributed only a small proportion of calorie consumption, generally between 3 and 4 percent, with Rodrigues recording the lowest share (1.9 percent).

Sugar accounted for between 5.1 and 8.8 percent, with the highest contribution observed in Rodrigues.

Food consumed away from home was highest in Port Louis (11.7 percent), followed by Flacq (10.1 percent) and Moka (9.2 percent), reflecting a greater reliance on meals purchased outside the household, whereas Rodrigues recorded the lowest share (6.5 percent).

Overall, while dietary patterns were broadly similar across districts, Rodrigues stood out with a higher dependence on staple foods and sugar and a lower contribution from fruits and vegetables, whereas more urban districts such as Port Louis and Moka exhibited a greater share of calories derived from food consumed away from home.

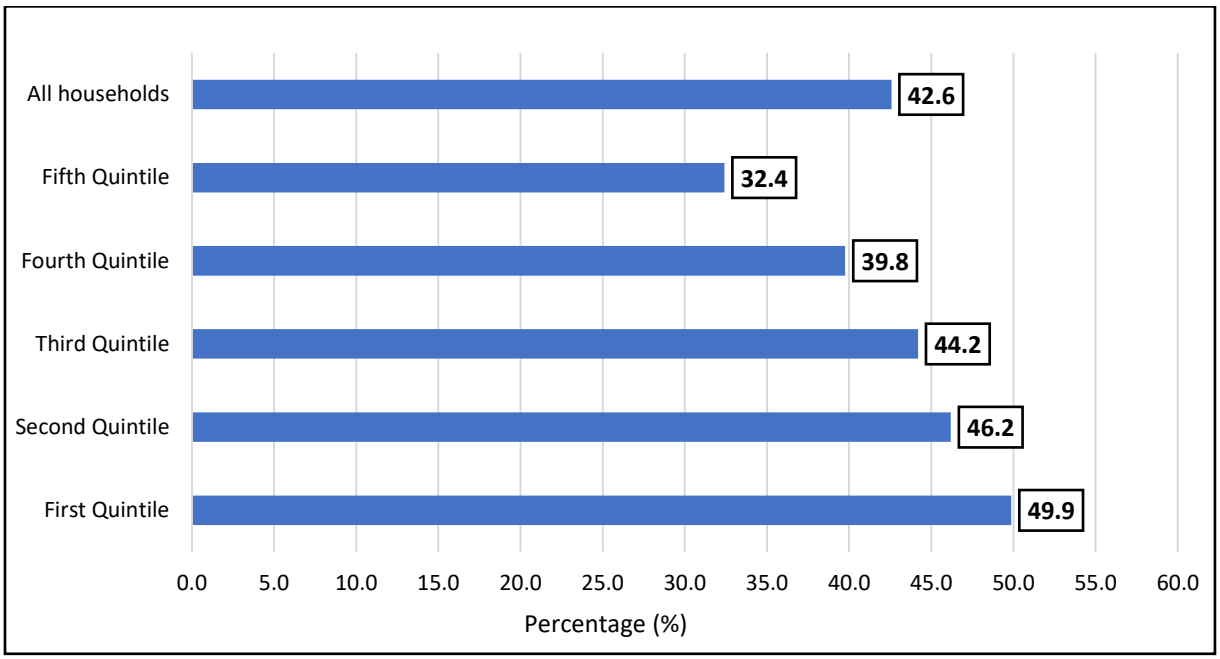
Figure 2.1.2: Share of daily energy consumption per capita, by food groups and regions



2.2 Cost of food

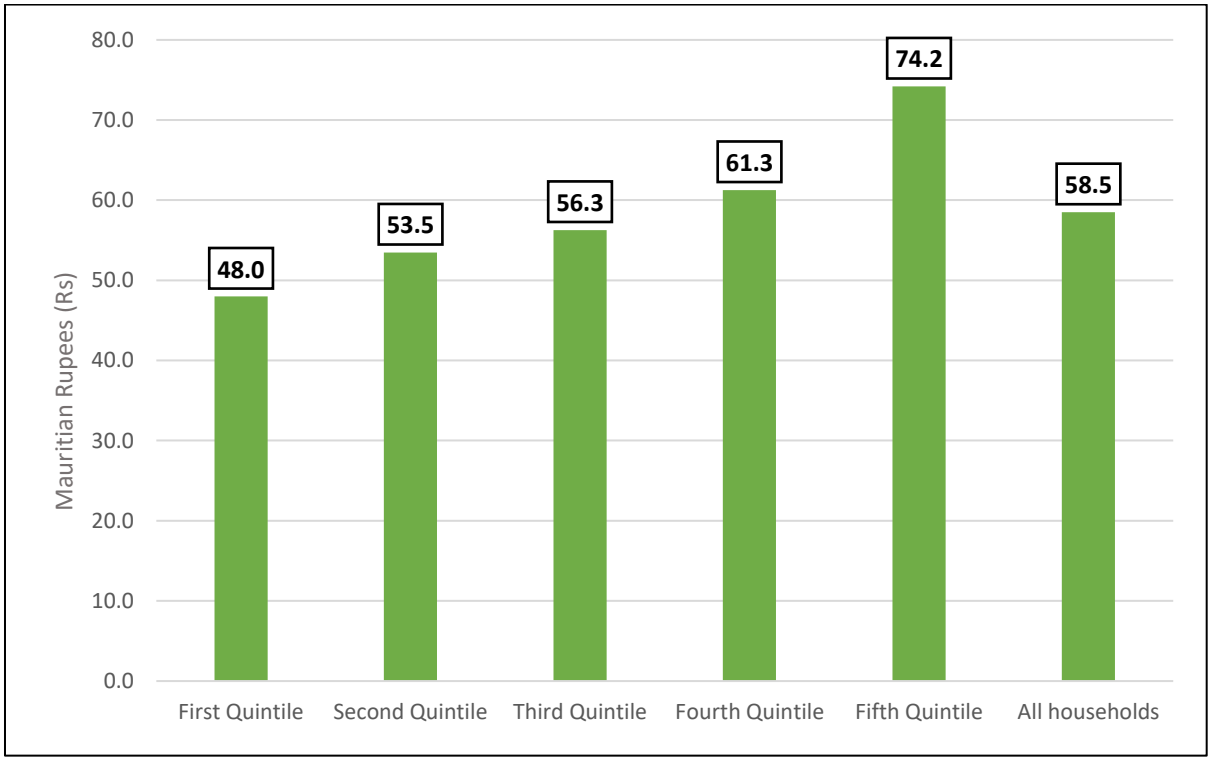
The share of food expenditure declined with increasing income, from 49.9% among households in the lowest income quintile to 32.4% among those in the highest quintile.

Figure 2.2.1. Share of food in total expenditure, by quintiles



In terms of average cost per 1000 calories, households in the lowest income quintile spent on average about Rs 48.0 whilst those in the highest quintile spent around Rs 58.5. Thus, the lower income households are more economic vulnerable, with higher share spent on food (49.9%) while at the same time buying cheaper food compared to the higher income counterparts.

Figure 2.2.2. Average Cost per 1000 calories, by quintiles



3.1 Food and nutritional analysis indicators based on HBS 2023 responding to Healthy Eating Guidelines for Mauritius

Mauritius Healthy Eating Guidelines provides 10 recommendations for healthy eating.

The Household Budget Survey (HBS) data for the Republic of Mauritius can inform us on nine of the following aspects:

- **Eat a healthy diet**
- **Enjoy fruits and vegetables**
- **The carbohydrate advantages**
- **Build up with protein**
- **Watch your fat consumption**
- **Be mindful of your nutrient needs**
- **Go easy on the salt**
- **Shift your sweet tooth**
- **Strive for a Healthy Weight**

The rest of the analysis responds to the recommendation in the Guidelines from various perspectives.

MAURITIUS FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY

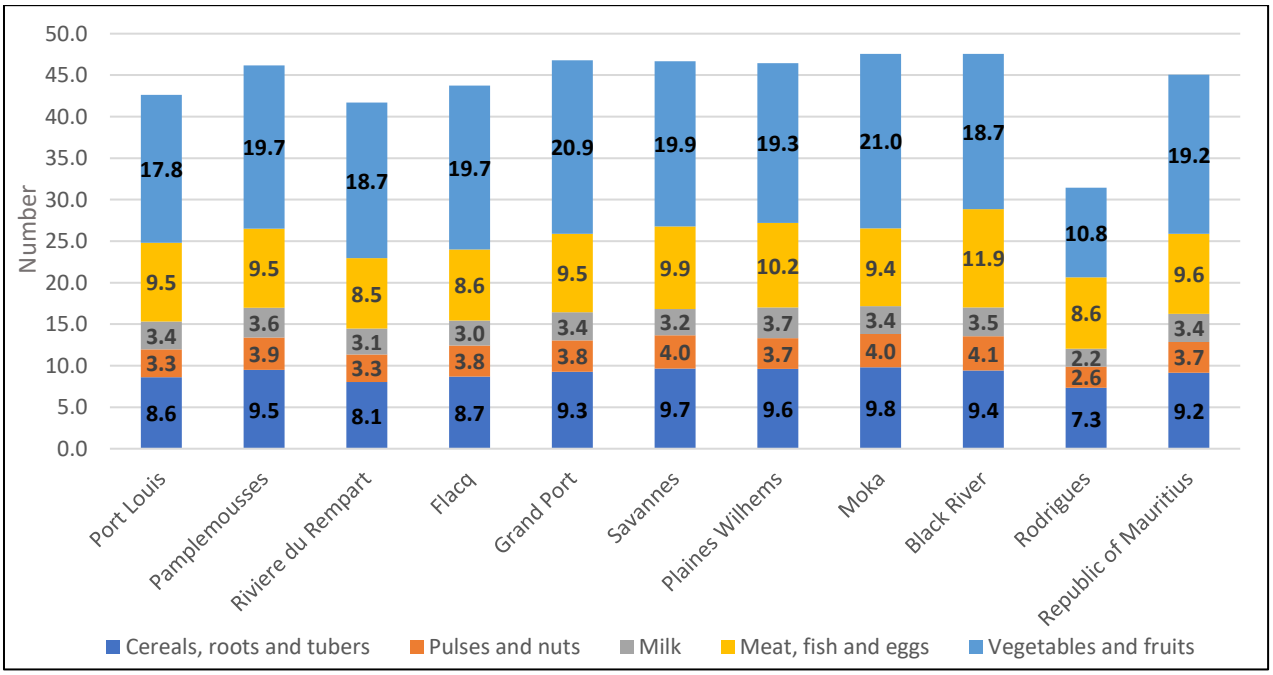
A HEALTHY NATION THROUGH SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Eat a healthy diet: Eat a variety of food, including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, cereals, protein-rich foods, and low-fat or fat-free dairy or fortified dairy alternatives.

Variety can be analysed by the number of food items consumed. From Figure 3.1.1, at the national level, households consumed an average of around 45 items in a month, with vegetables and fruits accounting for the largest number of items (19.2), followed by meat, fish and eggs (9.6) and cereals, roots and tubers (9.2).

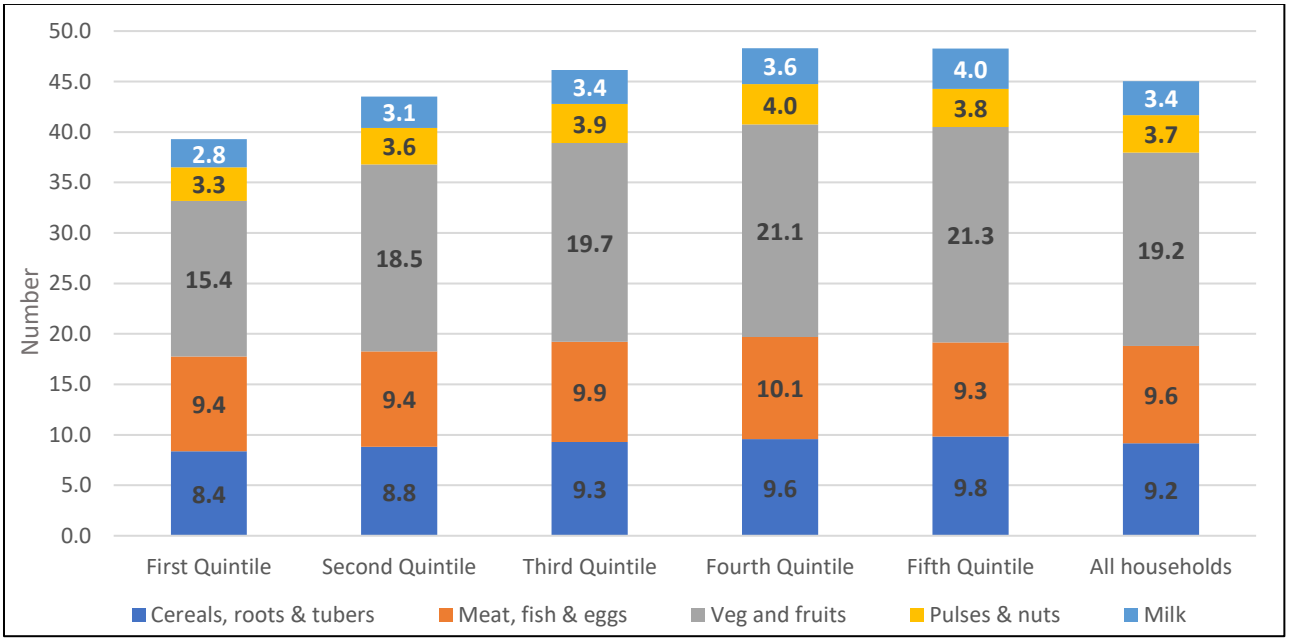
Rodrigues had a markedly lower average of about 31 items, mainly due to a smaller variety of vegetables and fruits consumed. Moka recorded the highest average number of vegetable and fruit items (21.0), whereas Black River had the greatest variety of meat, fish and egg items (11.9).

Figure 3.1.1 Average number of food items by selected food groups, by region



Higher-income households consumed a wider range of fruits and vegetables and milk products, while the diversity of meat, fish and egg items remained fairly similar across income groups. Overall, richer households tended to have more diverse diets.

Figure 3.1.2 Average number of food items by selected food groups, by quintiles

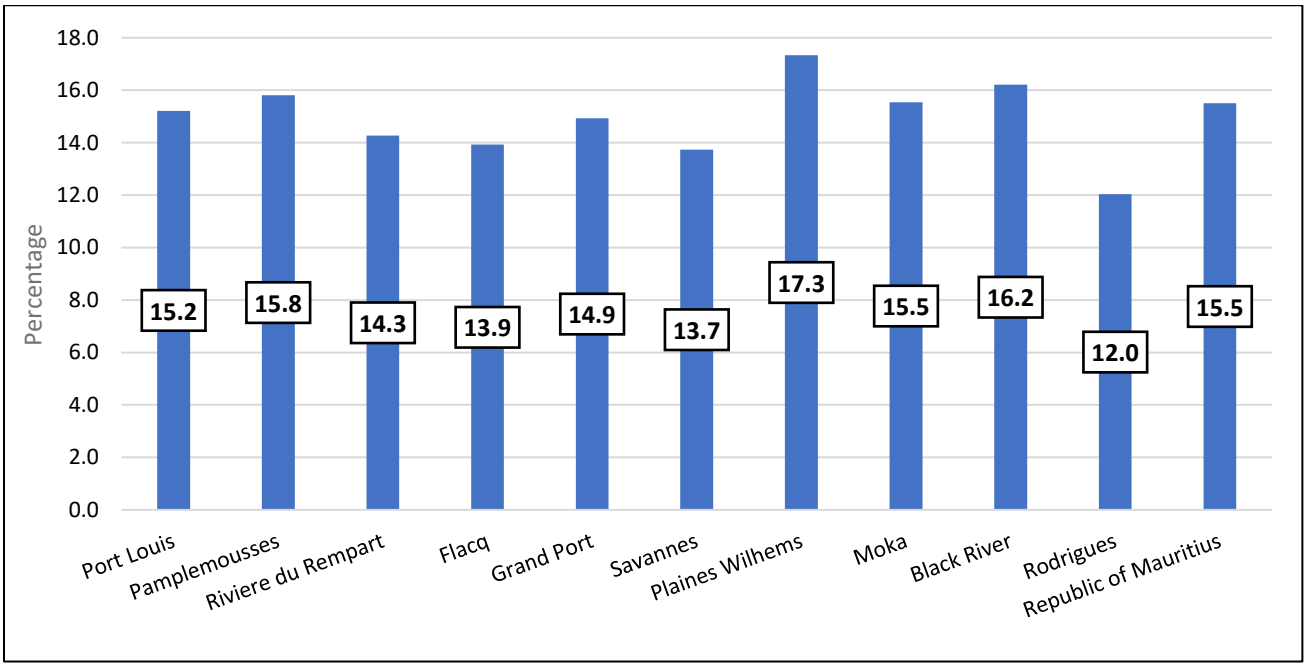


The average number of food items consumed from all food groups generally increased with household income. Across all income groups, vegetables and fruits contributed the largest share, increasing from 15.4 to 21.3 items, while cereals, roots and tubers, milk, and pulses and nuts also showed a gradual increase. Consumption of meat, fish and eggs remained relatively stable, ranging from 9.3 to 10.1 items.

Eat a healthy diet: Choose minimally processed foods when possible

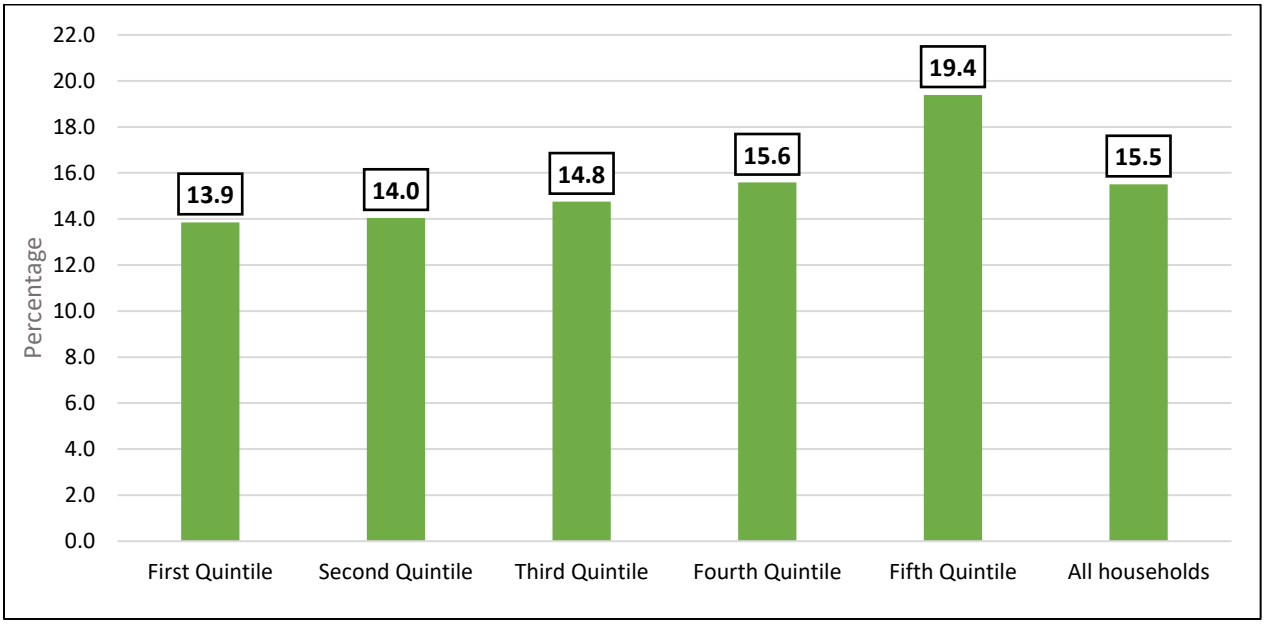
Plaines Wilhems recorded the highest share of calories from ultra-processed foods (17.3%), while Rodrigues had the lowest (12.0%). The national average was 15.5%, with Black River (16.2%) and Pamplemousses (15.8%) also above average, whereas most other districts fell below the national level.

Figure 3.1.3 Average share of ultra-processed foods in total calories, by region



From Figure 3.1.4, higher-income households derived a greater share of 15.5% of their calorie consumption from ultra-processed foods, from 13.9% in the lowest income quintile to 19.4% in the highest. This highlights a greater reliance on ultra-processed foods among wealthier households.

Figure 3.1.4 Average share of ultra-processed foods in total calories, by quintiles

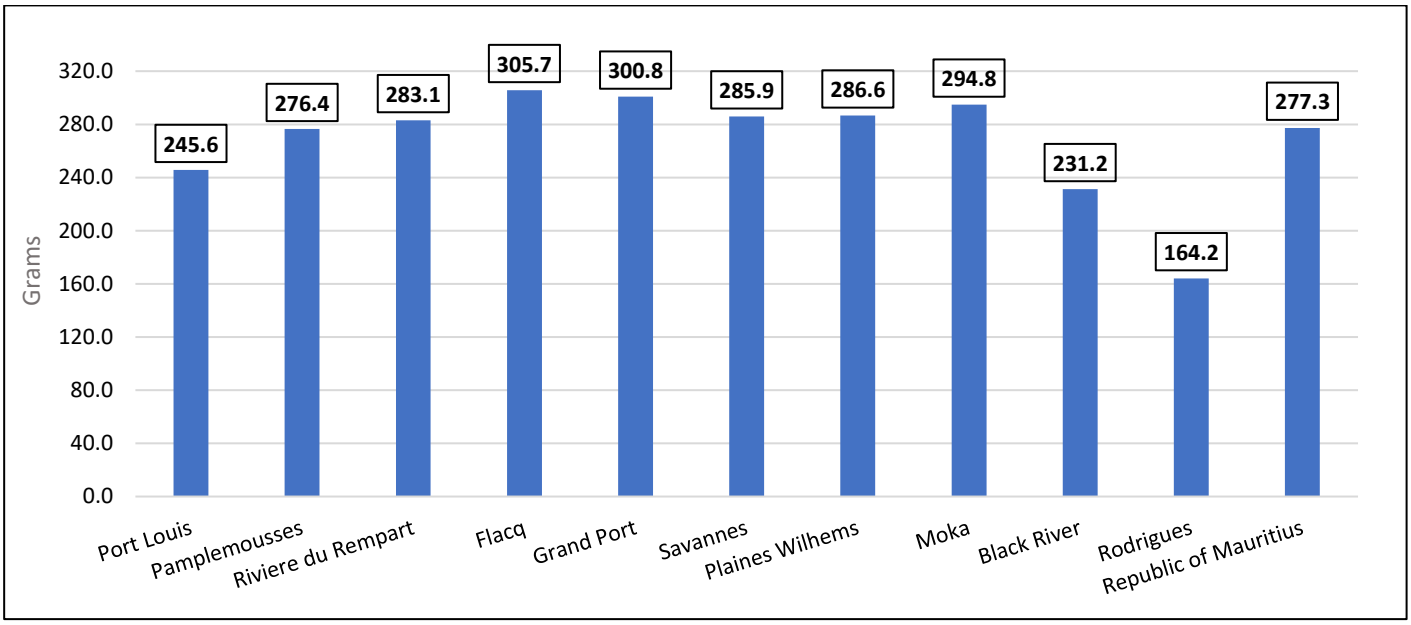


Note that foods have been classified by degree of processing using the NOVA classification and local expert assessment. A conservation classification approach was used i.e. – in case of doubt on where to classify a food, the strategy was to classify it with the lower degree of processing.

Enjoy fruit and vegetables: WHO recommends 400 grams per capita per day

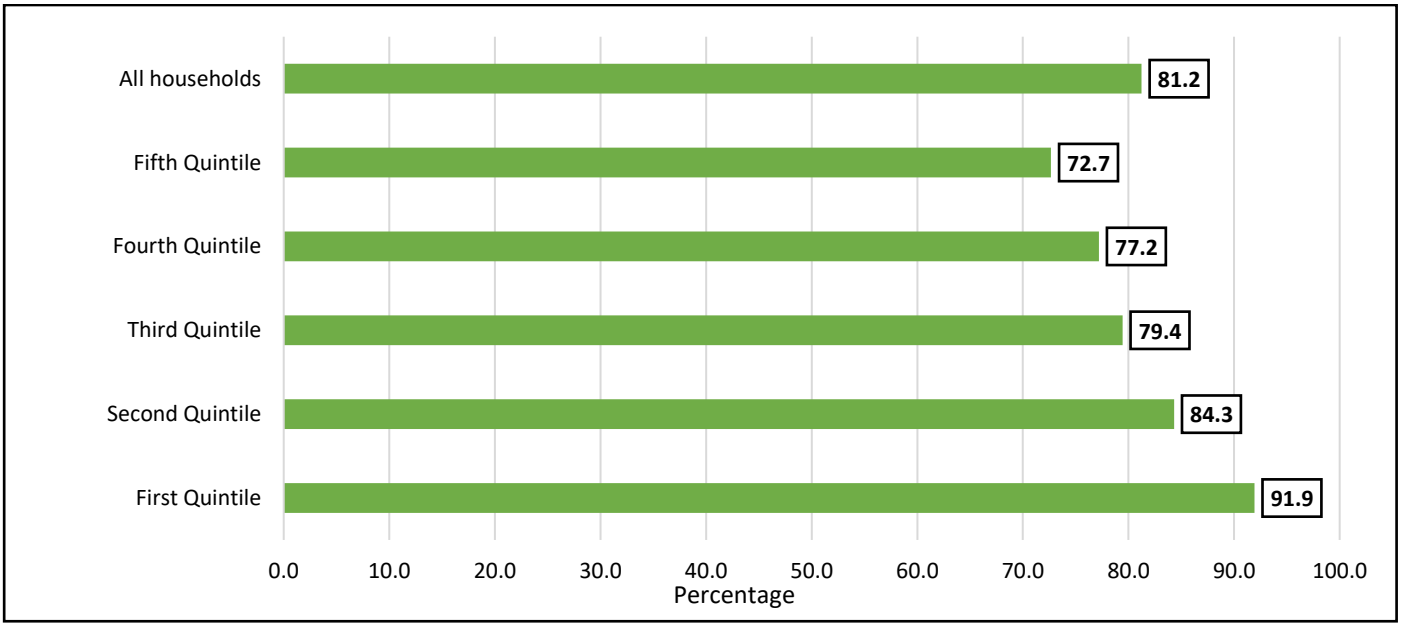
The average daily consumption of fruits and vegetables per capita varied considerably across regions, ranging from 164.2 grams in Rodrigues to 305.7 grams in Flacq, with the Republic of Mauritius averaging 277.3 grams. Rodrigues, Black River and Port Louis had comparatively lower consumption levels.

Figure 3.1.5 Average grams of fruit and vegetables per capita per day, by region



The proportion of population consuming less than the recommended 400 grams of fruits and vegetables per capita per day declined with income, from 91.9% in the lowest income quintile to 72.7% in the highest quintile. Nevertheless, inadequate consumption remained widespread, with 81.2% of the population failing to meet the recommendation.

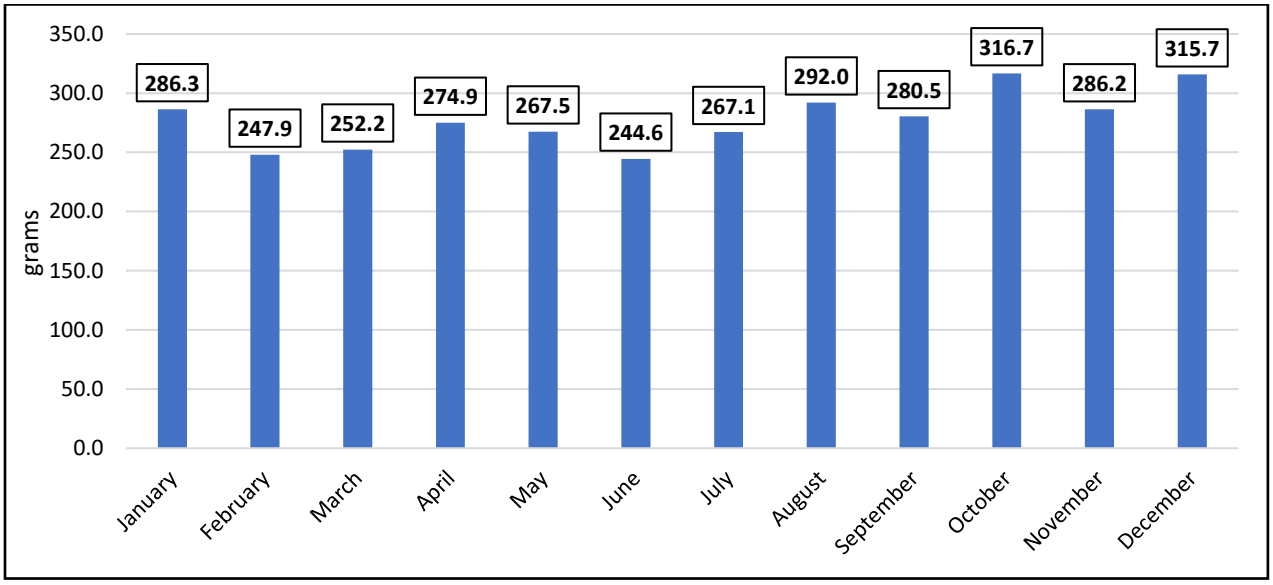
Figure 3.1.6 Percentage of population with less than 400 grams per capita per day of fruit and vegetables, by quintiles



Enjoy fruit and vegetables: Seasonality

From the figure below, we can see the monthly seasonality in the average grams of fruit and vegetables per capita per day – The average daily consumption of fruits and vegetables varied considerably throughout the year, ranging from 244.6 grams in June to 316.7 grams in October. Consumption was generally higher during the second half of the year, with August to December all recording consumptions above 280 grams, indicating a marked seasonal pattern in fruit and vegetable availability and consumption.

Figure 3.1.7 Average grams of fruit and vegetables per capita per day, by month



Include a variety of protein-rich foods

Figure 3.1.8 shows that the average number of protein-rich food items consumed increased from 11.6 in the lowest income quintile to 13.1 in the fourth income quintile, before declining slightly to 12.4 in the highest income quintile. Overall, households consumed an average of 12.4 protein-rich food items in a month, with households in the third- and fourth-income quintiles recording the greatest dietary variety in protein-rich foods.

Protein-rich foods include seafood, lean meats, poultry, beans, lentils, peas, nuts and eggs.

Figure 3.1.8 Average number of protein-rich foods, by quintiles

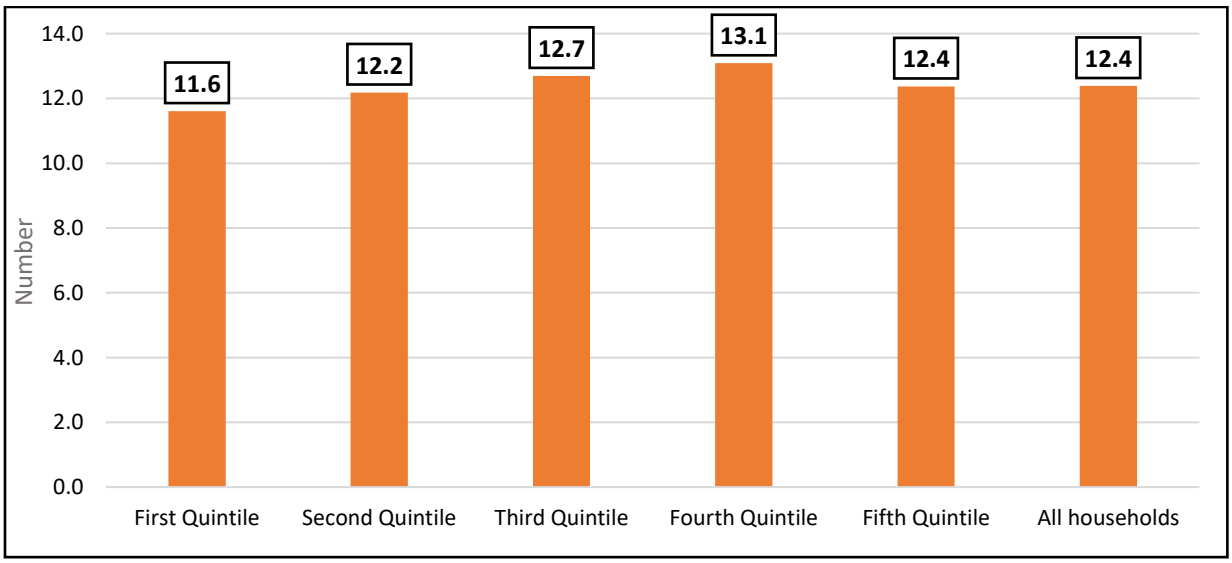
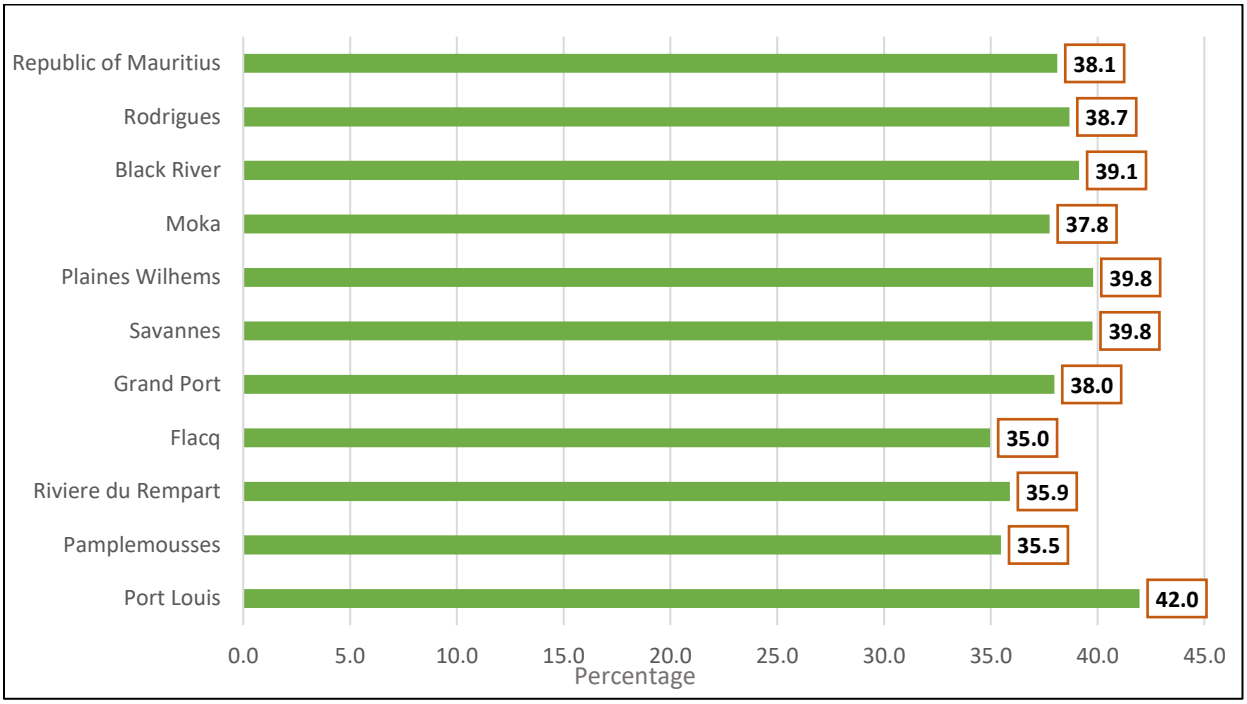


Figure 3.1.9 shows that the share of protein from animal origin varied from 35.0% in Flacq to 42.0% in Port Louis. Relatively high shares were also observed in Plaines Wilhems and Savannes (both 39.8%), while Pamplemousses (35.5%) and Rivière du Rempart (35.9%) recorded lower proportions. Overall, the Republic of Mauritius average stood at 38.1%.

Figure 3.1.9 Average share of protein from animal origin, by region



Watch your fat consumption: less than 30% fat in diet (WHO recommendation)

While around two-thirds of the population in Moka (66.8%) and Grand Port (66.2%) consumed diets with more than 30% fat, the corresponding share was only 19.0% in Rodrigues. Overall, 59.3% of the population in the Republic of Mauritius exceeded the recommended threshold, pointing to the widespread consumption of high-fat diets.

Figure 3.1.10 Percentage of population with more than 30% fat in diet, by region

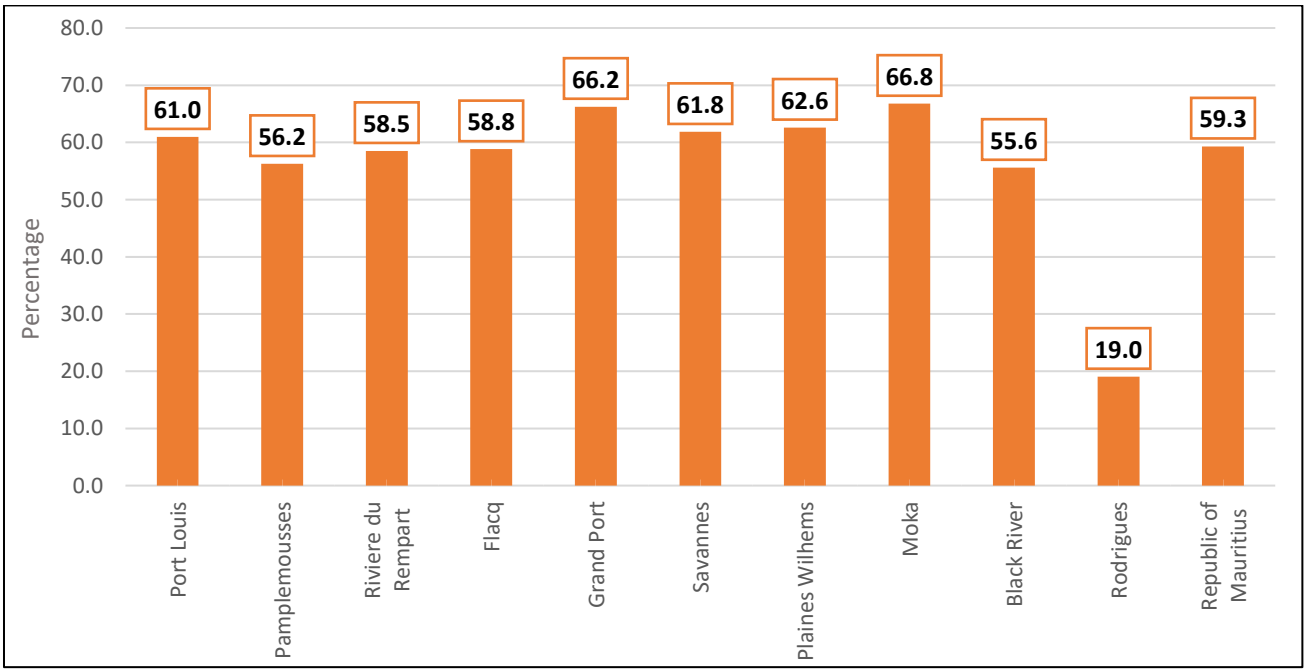
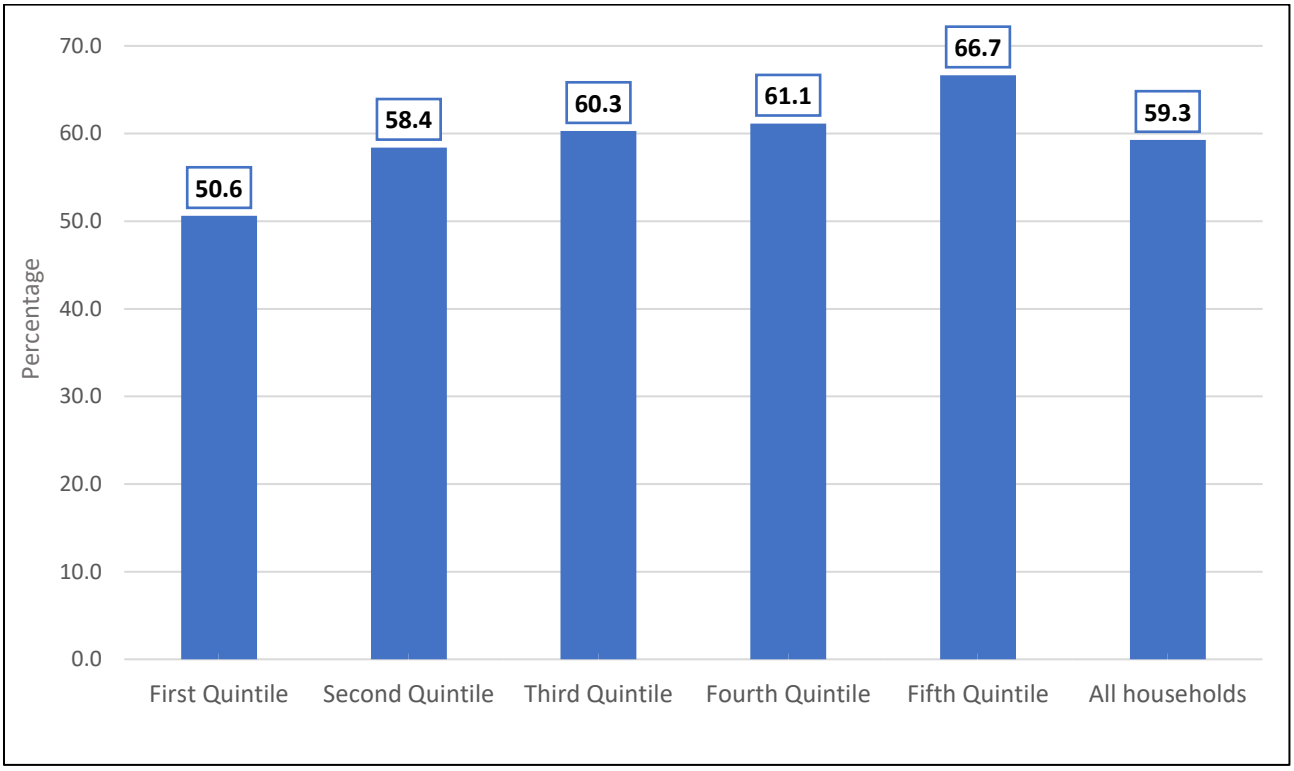


Figure 3.1.11 shows that the prevalence of diets containing more than 30% fat increased with income, rising from 50.6% in the lowest quintile to 66.7% in the highest quintile.

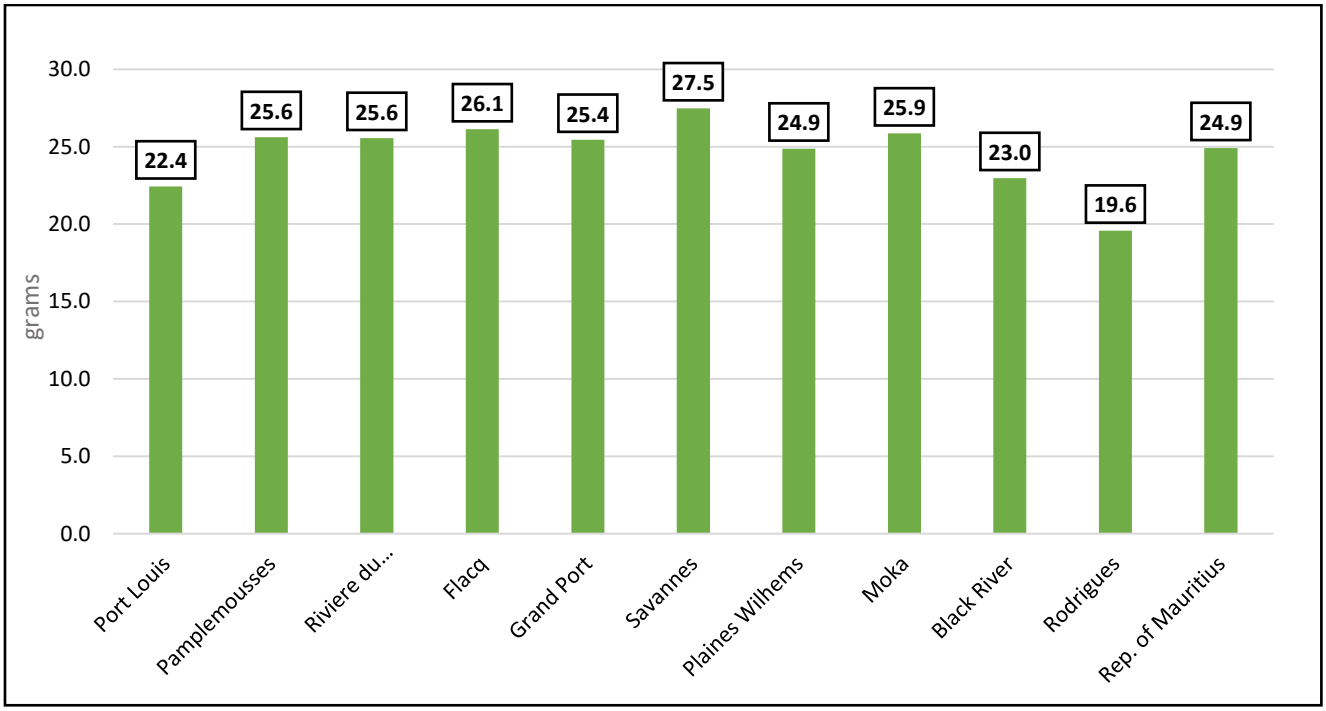
Figure 3.1.11 Percentage of population with more than 30% fat in diet, by quintiles



Be mindful of your nutrient needs: increase dietary fibre. WHO recommends at least 25 grams of fibre per capita per day

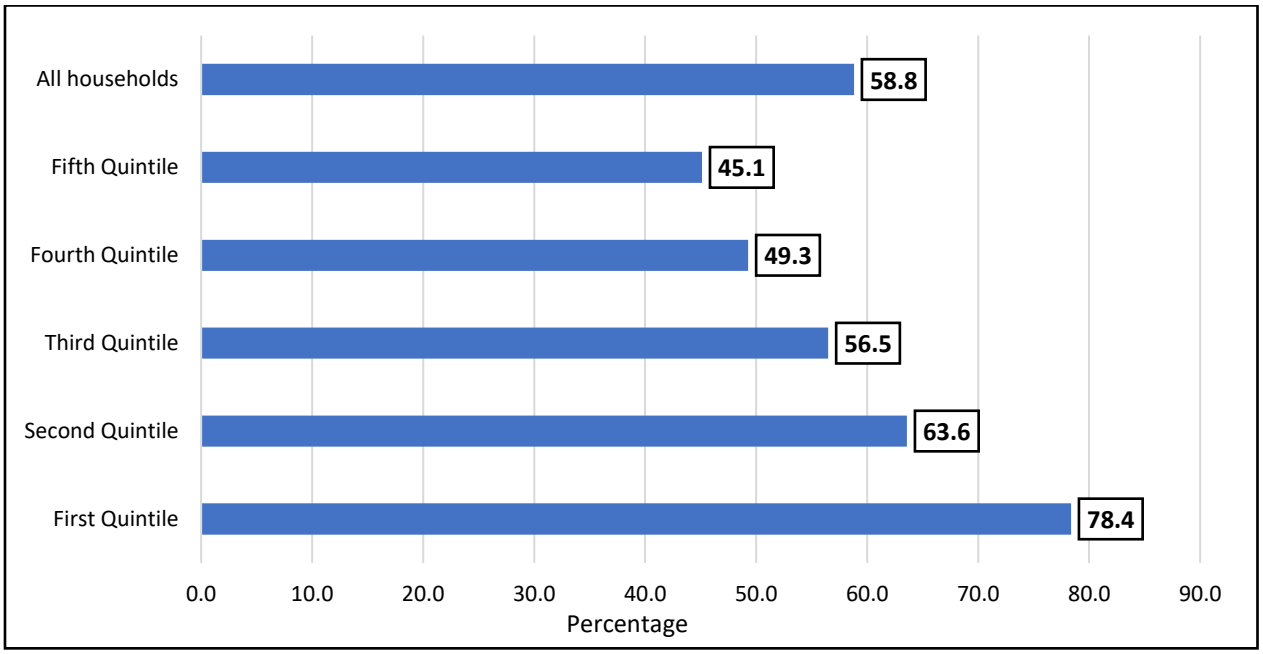
The average grams of fibre per capita per day for the Republic of Mauritius is 24.9 grams per capita per day. Savannes (27.5 grams) recorded the highest average consumption, while Rodrigues (19.6 grams) had the lowest.

Figure 3.1.12 Average grams of fibre per capita per day, by region



Households in the lowest income quintile were considerably more likely to have inadequate fibre consumption, with 78.4% consuming less than the recommended 25 grams per capita per day, compared with 45.1% in the highest quintile.

Figure 3.1.13 Percentage of population with less than 25 grams of fibre per capita per day, by quintiles



Go easy on the salt: WHO recommends less than 5g of salt per person per day

Savanne has a share of the population with more than 5 grams of salt at 47.0%, followed by Rodrigues which has a share of 42.7%. Note that in Rodrigues, salting and drying fish are one of the most prominent activities, which may explain that a high share of its population consuming more than the recommended quantity of salt. In contrast, Black River (24.3%) and Port Louis (24.4%) recorded the lowest shares.

Overall, 31.7% of the population in the Republic of Mauritius exceeded the recommended salt consumption of more than 5 grams of salt per capita per day.

Figure 3.1.14 Share of population with more than 5 grams of salt per capita per day, by region

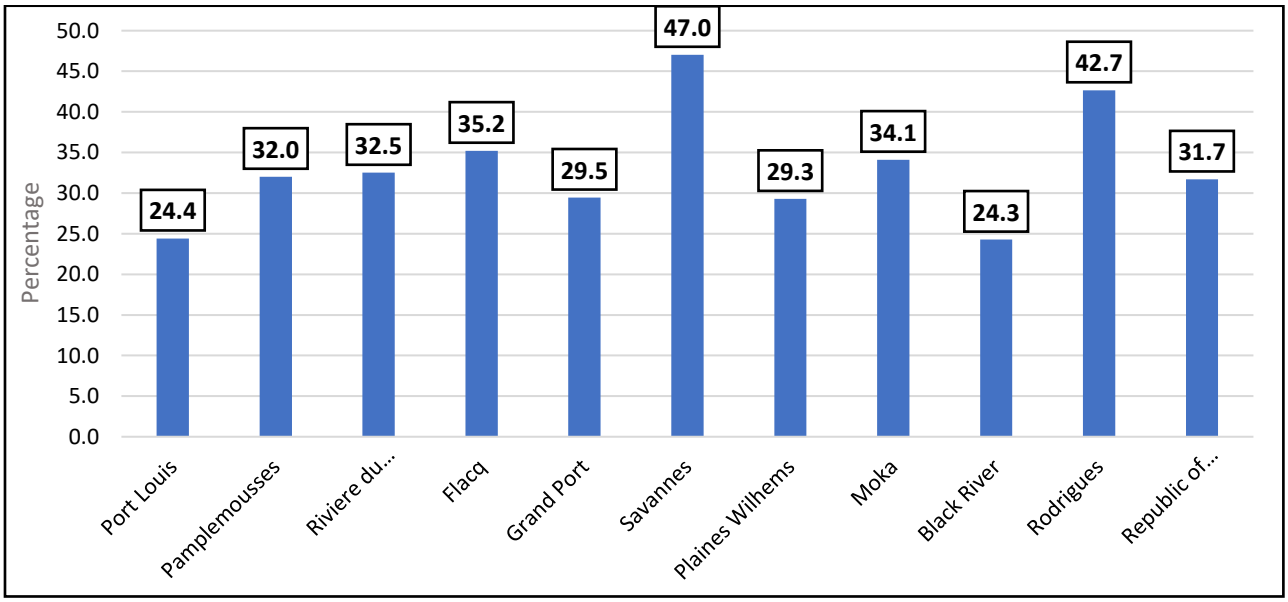
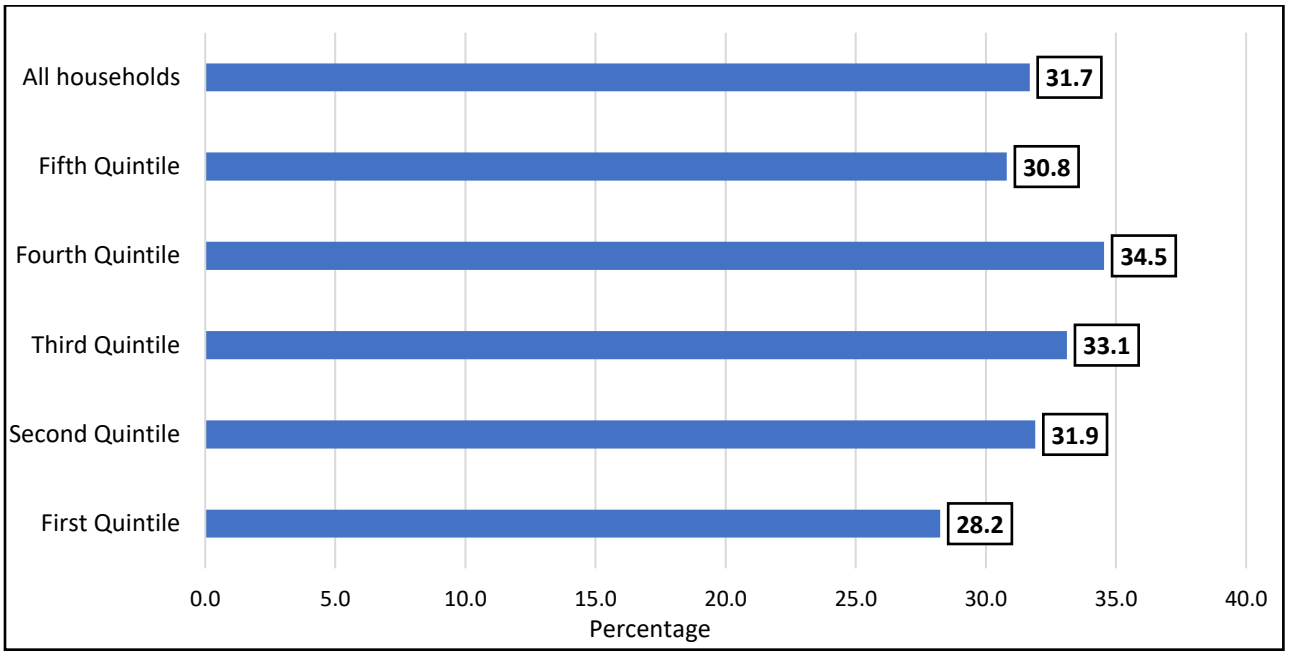


Figure 3.1.15 shows little variation across income quintiles in the proportion of the population consuming more than the recommended 5 grams of salt per capita per day. The share ranged from 28.2% in the lowest quintile to 34.5% in the fourth quintile, with no clear income-related pattern evident.

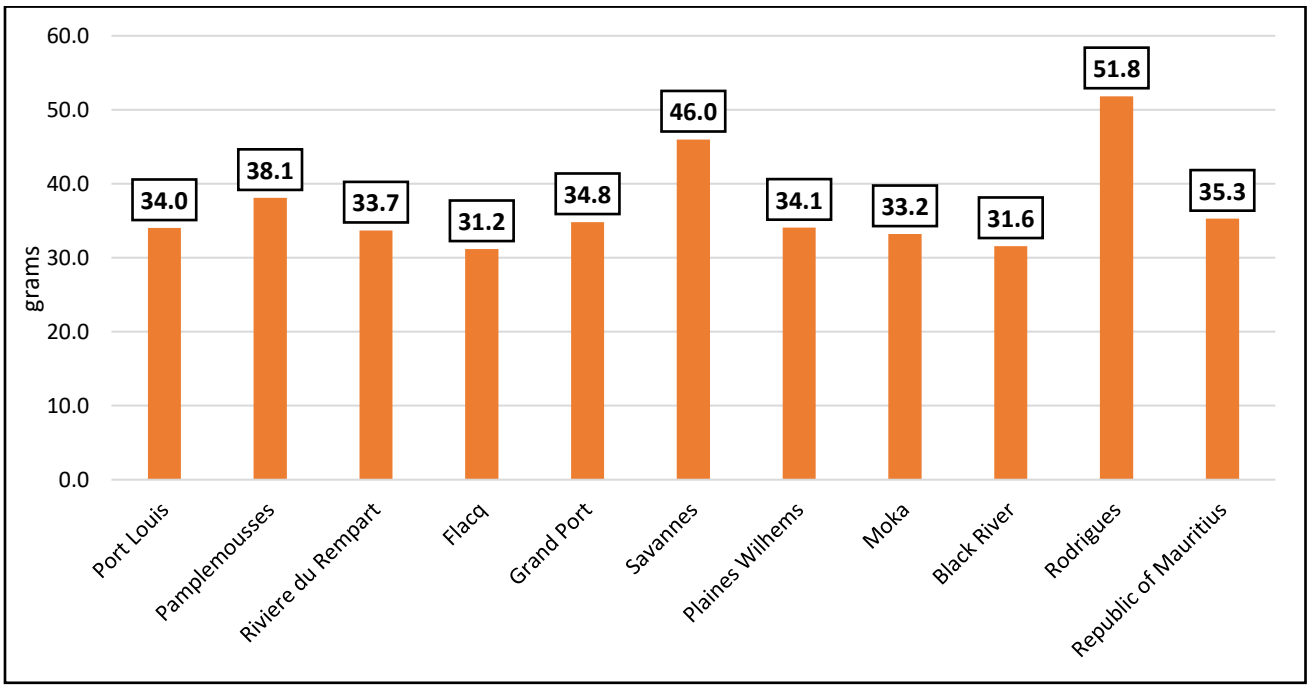
Figure 3.1.15 Share of population with more than 5 grams of salt per capita per day, by quintiles



Shift your sweet tooth: The WHO recommends less than 45 g of sugar

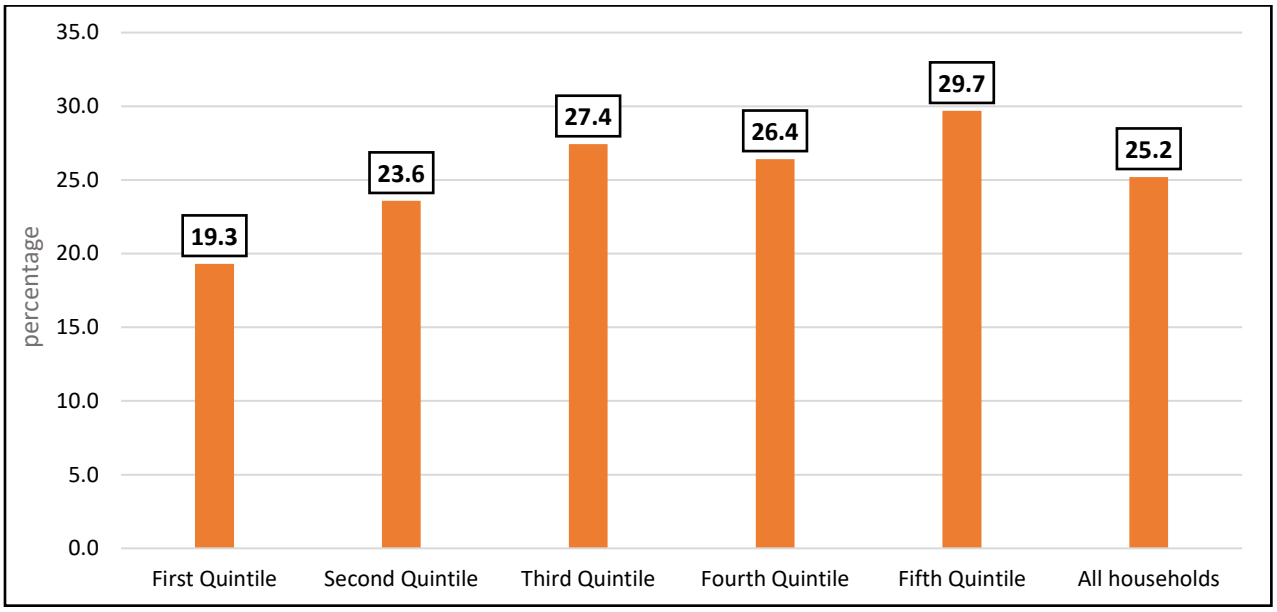
Households in Rodrigues have a relatively higher estimated quantity (in grams) of sugar in sugar dense foods, per capita per day – around 52 grams. Conversely, Flacq (31.2 grams) and Black River (31.6 grams) had the lowest estimated grams of sugar in sugar dense foods. Overall, the estimated grams of sugar in sugar dense products per capita per day for the Republic of Mauritius was 35.3 grams (Refer to Appendix on how the quantity of sugar was estimated).

Figure 3.1.16 Grams of sugar from sugar dense foods per capita per day, by region



The households in the lowest quintile have a share of 19.3% of the population with more than the WHO recommended level of sugar whilst the highest quintile stood at 29.7%. Overall, 25.2% of all households have more than 45 grams of sugar per capita per day.

Figure 3.1.17 Share of population with more than 45 grams of sugar per capita per day, by quintiles



Strive for a Healthy Weight: Eat a balanced diet

3.1.18 Box explaining balanced diet

A balanced diet (FAO/WHO 2003):

Fat:	5-30 %
Carbohydrates:	55-75 %
Protein:	10-15 %

In the lowest quintile, 27.2% of the population have a balance diet, compared to the highest quintile, where the share is as low as 13.4%. One reason may be that there is higher consumption of fat among wealthier households (as shown previously). Overall, only around one-fifth (19.3%) of the population in the Republic of Mauritius had a balanced diet.

Figure 3.1.18 Share of population with a balanced diet, by quintiles

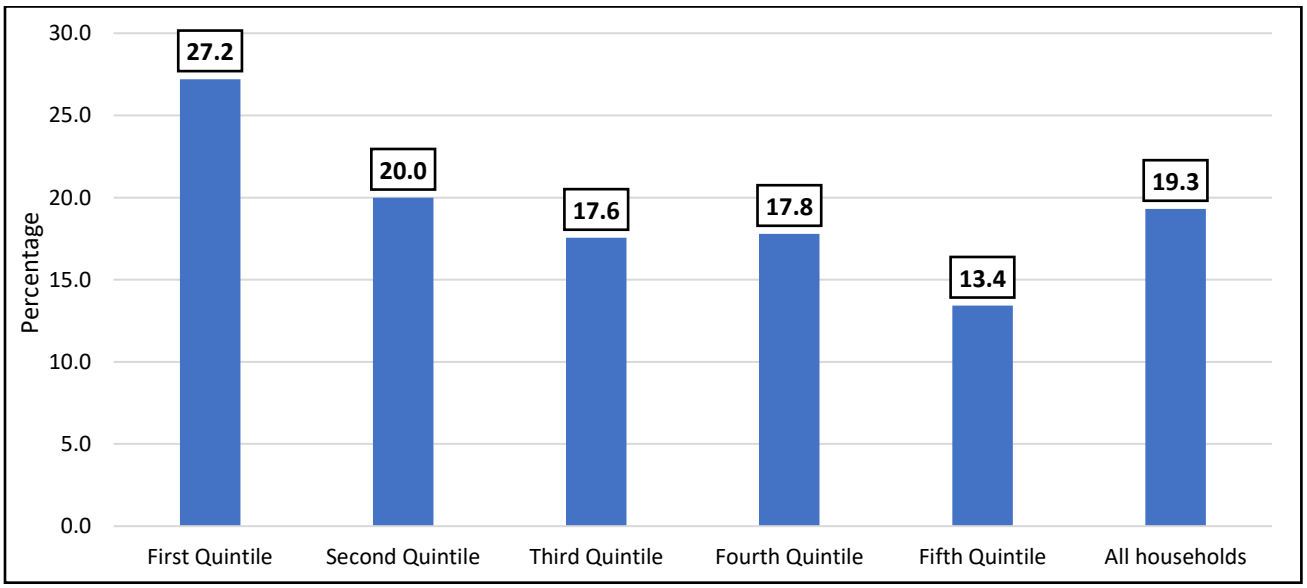
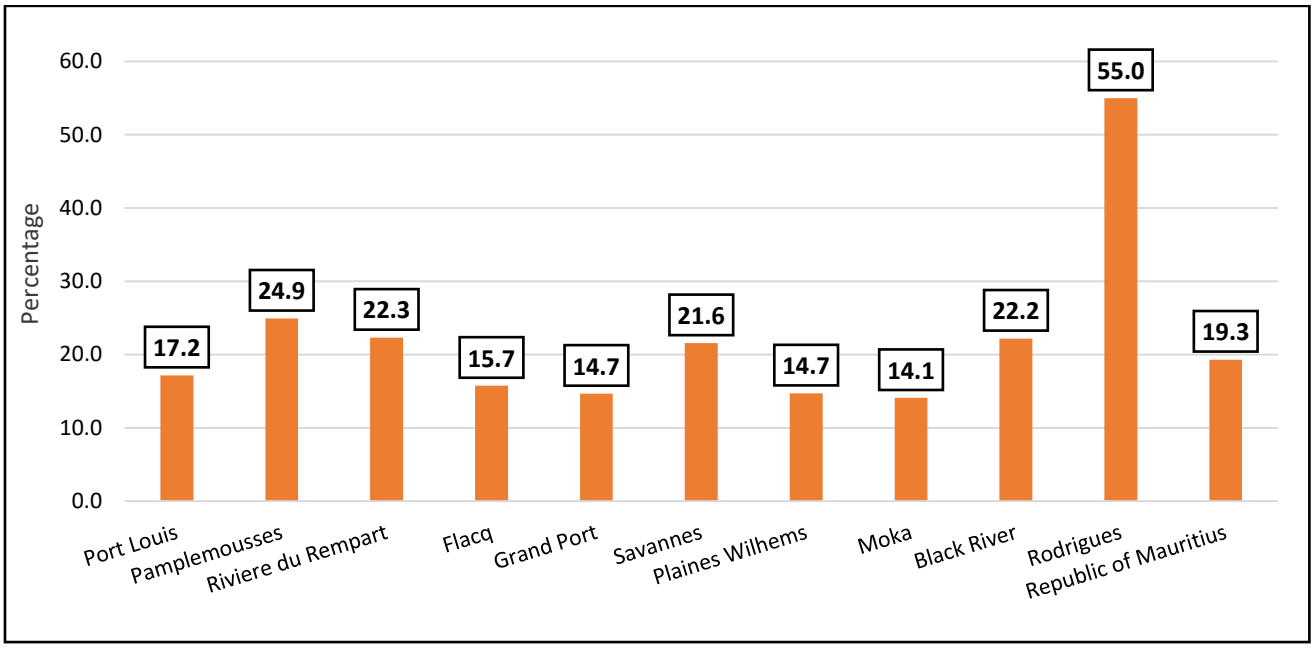


Figure 3.1. highlights substantial regional disparities in the prevalence of a balanced diet. While Rodrigues recorded the highest share, with 55.0% of the population having a balanced diet, partly due to the lower share of households with high fat consumption (as shown previously), the corresponding proportions were below 15% in Grand Port (14.7%), Plaines Wilhems (14.7%), and Moka (14.1%). Overall, only 19.3% of the population in the Republic of Mauritius had a balanced diet.

Figure 3.1.19 Share of population with a balanced diet, by region



Finally, the next two respective graphs show the share of the population with carbohydrates higher than the recommended threshold in the balanced diet (75%) and protein lower than the recommended threshold (10%).

Rodrigues stands out with a relatively high share of the population with too much carbohydrates (4.5%) and a relatively high share of the population with too little protein (13.6%).

Figure 3.1.20 Share of population with more than 75% of carbohydrates, by region

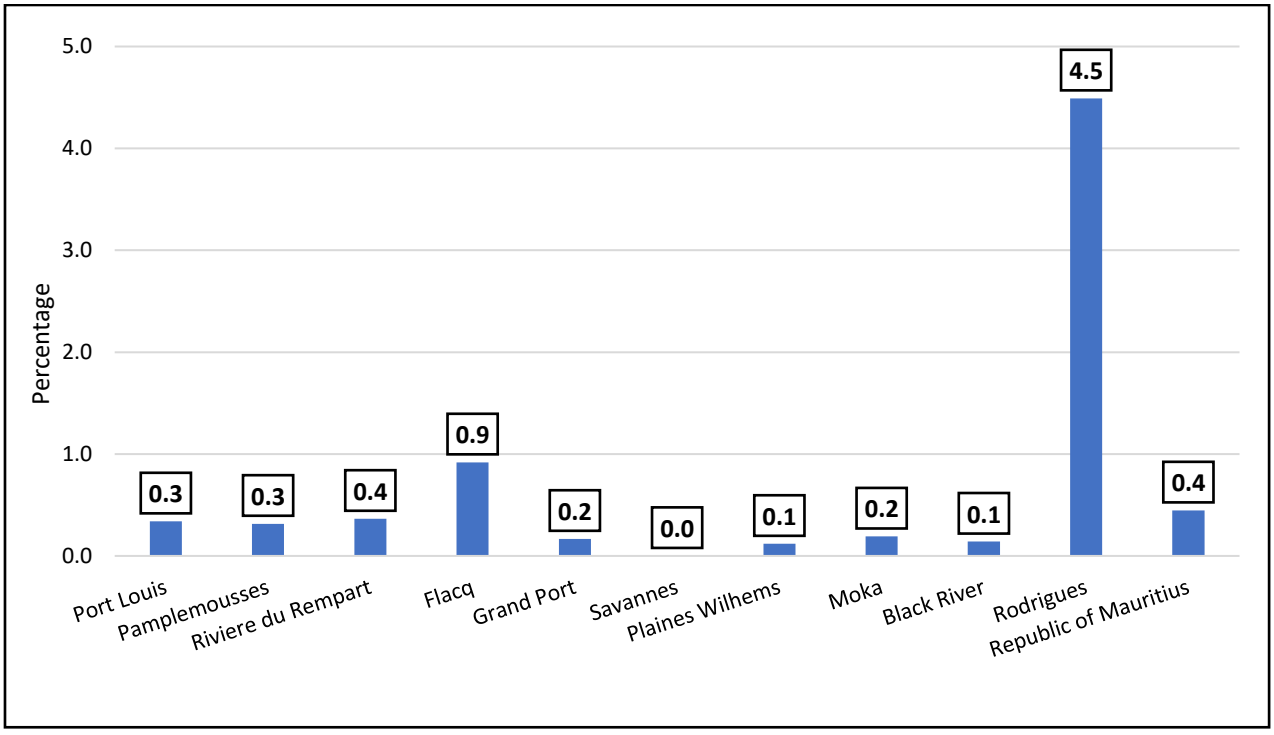
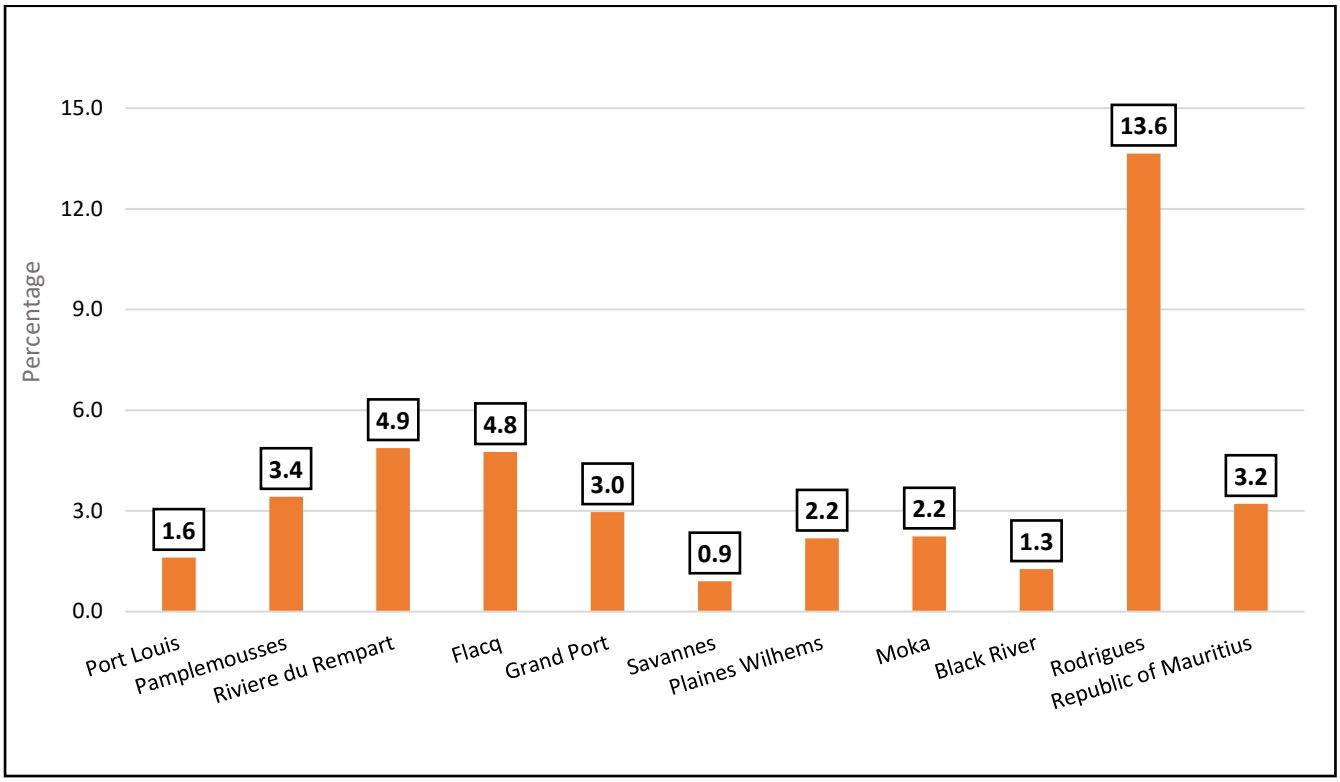


Figure 3.1.21 Share of population with less than 10% of protein, by region



3.2 Conclusion

This is the second report on 'Food and Nutrition Analysis' based on HBS 2023 expenditure microdata at household level. These analyses were based on some assumptions as specified in the Appendix.

Additionally, these results highlight the need to promote healthier eating habits and greater dietary diversity across all population groups. They also provide valuable evidence to support nutrition-related policies and programmes aimed at improving the quality of diets and addressing emerging nutritional challenges in the Republic of Mauritius.

3.3 Acknowledgement

This report has been prepared following the technical and analytical capacity developed under the Food Security Statistics Project implemented by Statistics Norway in collaboration with the COMESA Secretariat.

Statistics Mauritius wishes to express its sincere appreciation to Statistics Norway, the COMESA Secretariat and the Food and Agriculture Organisation, for their continued support and expertise in strengthening food security and nutrition statistics.

Statistics Mauritius also acknowledges the valuable contribution and commitment of all stakeholders involved in this initiative, particularly the Ministry of Health and Wellness, whose collaboration was instrumental in the interpretation of the findings presented in this report.

Appendix

About the NCT

For the first issue of the Food and Nutrition Analysis report, an initial Nutrient Conversion Table (NCT) was developed by Statistics Norway. This was subsequently reviewed and refined by a team comprising representatives from Statistics Mauritius and the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW), taking into account comments provided by Ms Ana Moltedo of the FAO Statistics Division.

Statistics Norway further updated the second issue of the NCT to reflect the adoption of the latest expenditure classification standards. In particular, Statistics Mauritius migrated from COICOP 1999 to COICOP 2018, which introduced a more detailed breakdown of expenditure items through the inclusion of the sub-class level. This transition necessitated a comprehensive review and revision of the original NCT.

The revised NCT used in the analyses presented in this report was revied by the FAO Statistics Division, with valuable technical guidance provided by Mr Talent Manyani.

Both NCTs have been built following the approach outlined in a newly published document on NCTs for Household Consumption documentation which can be found here.

All documentation can be found in the NCT table itself. Here we will just mention that as Mauritius do not have a national Food Composition Table, the following are the main sources of information for the nutrient composition of the foods:

- For some mixed plates of foods (e.g Dhollpuri and Briani) information on nutrient values by 100 grams, collected and provided by the MoWH, was used.
- Indian Food Composition Tables (2017). T. Longvah; R. Ananthan; K. Bhaskarachary; K. Venkaiah
- Food Standards Agency. 2021. McCance and Widdowson's The Composition of Foods Integrated Dataset (CoFID) 2021. London, Institute of Food Research, Public Health England. (also available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/composition-of-foods-integrated-dataset-cofid).
- Grande, V et al. 2020. FAO/INFOODS Food Composition Table for Western Africa (2019). Rome, FAO. URL: http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca7779b
- FAO & Government of Kenya. 2018. Kenya Food Composition Tables. Nairobi. http://www.kilimo.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/KENYA-FOOD-COMPOSITION-TABLES-2018.pdf
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service, Nutrient Data Laboratory. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference 2021-23. https://www.ars.usda.gov/northeast-area/beltsville-md-bhnrc/beltsville-human-nutrition-research-center/food-surveys-research-group/docs/fndds/ .

About the classification of ultra-processed foods

The healthy eating guidelines for Mauritius recommend to "choose minimally processed foods when possible". This recommendation is responded to by classifying foods reported in the HBS into four groups according to degree of processing following the NOVA classification. In addition to the NOVA documentation the classification was based on discussions during the workshop with the team from Statistics Mauritius, MoHW, COMESA, and Statistics Norway. When in doubt we decided to not include the food item in the NOVA group with the lower level of processing to arrive at a conservative estimate.

For example:

- No bread is classified as ultra processed foods (as we are not able to distinguish between "packaged" breads and other breads)
- We included ham in ultra processed foods (but bacon is according to the examples in NOVA not ultra processed)
- Foods in restaurants are not classified as ultra-processed, except for chips and burger (e.g. Mc Donald's)

Full documentation can be found in the syntax codes.

About the estimation of sugar

We use two different approaches to look at sugar. One is the calories from foods belonging to the food group sugar. The second approach is to estimate the actual quantities of sugar in grams. The latter was done in the following way: First we selected pure sugar and sugar dense foods (e.g. cakes, biscuits, soft drinks etc). For pure sugar the quantities in grams are straight forward. For sugar dense foods we searched for approximate levels of sugar in such foods (on the internet) and calculate estimates on average daily quantities in grams. This is likely to be conservative as only sugar dense foods are included. For example, for soft drinks we used estimated 10 grams of sugar per 100 grams of soft drink.

Full documentation can be found in the syntax codes.