Here’s what R100 could buy you in 2000 vs today

Inflation has increased by 285% since 2000, but food prices have far exceeded this, meaning R100 tends to buy you much less than it should in 2026 compared to 26 years ago.

Inflation in South Africa is influenced by a combination of global and local factors. In recent years, two major international events have exacerbated inflationary pressures.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted supply chains worldwide, leading to shortages and surging prices for goods and services.

Subsequently, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine sent global food and fuel prices skyrocketing. This global shock was felt once again when the US went to war with Iran, shutting down the Strait of Hormuz.

These crises had a cascading effect, pushing up costs in essential sectors and increasing financial strain on South African consumers.

As a consequence, South Africa’s consumer food price inflation has climbed for the third consecutive month, increasing to 5% in July 2026, while many experts had forecast it would rise to approximately 4.7%.

Stats SA said the main contributor to the increases was transport, up 12.7% year-on-year, accounting for 1.7 percentage points.

Petrol and fuel prices rose rapidly following the United States attacks on Iran and the subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz, where around 30% of the world’s oil flows.

What R100 is worth

Statistics South Africa has recorded consumer price inflation over the decades. CPI headline indexes can be used to calculate the equivalent buying power of R100 between 2000 and 2026.

Stats SA said the consumer price index (CPI) is a metric that reflects changes in the rate of inflation and measures changes in price for a range of consumer products.

To calculate today's value of R100 after inflation, one must multiply R100 by the CPI of 2026 divided by the CPI of 2000.

This calculation shows that R100 in 2000 would be roughly equivalent to R385 in 2026. This represents an inflation figure of 285% over the past 26 years or 5.54% annually.

Unfortunately, many things, including staples like food, have exceeded this growth, making R100 today much less powerful in terms of purchasing power.

Prices of goods 2000 vs 2026

Concerningly, food inflation has beaten inflation in many categories. For example, cooking oil has seen a 703.9% price increase since 2000, far exceeding the inflation rate.

Similarly, staples like bread and milk have risen by 589% and 611%, respectively, underscoring the disproportionate burden on South African households.

Food prices are rising faster than overall inflation due to several reasons.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted agricultural supply chains, making it more expensive to produce and transport food.

The costs of farming essentials like fertiliser, fuel, and electricity have also gone up, which adds to the prices consumers pay.

The table below shows how the price of certain goods in 2000, as provided by StatsSA, compares to the same or similar products today.

For comparison purposes, prices from several of the country's major retailers were considered to reach an average cost figure.

What's notable about the items below is that, if they were treated as a basket, the total in 2000 (R81.73) could be covered by R100.

In 2026, the total (R484.90) is much higher than the R100 equivalent (R385), which shows the erosion of purchasing power over the two and a half decades.

Food Price Inflation: 2000 vs. 2026

Food Item	Quantity / Unit	Price: 2000	Price: 2026	% Change
White Bread	700g Loaf	R2.95	R19.99	**+577.6%**
Brown Bread	700g Loaf	R2.68	R18.49	**+589.9%**
Maize Meal	5kg Bag	R12.50	R52.99	**+323.9%**
Full Cream Fresh Milk	1 Litre	R3.30	R23.49	**+611.8%**
White Sugar	2.5kg Bag	R9.00	R59.99	**+566.6%**
Sunflower Cooking Oil	750ml Bottle	R4.85	R38.99	**+703.9%**
Eggs	1 Dozen (12 Large)	R6.65	R42.99	**+546.5%**
Canned Pilchards	400g / 425g Can	R5.05	R29.99	**+493.9%**
Stewing Beef	1 kg	R20.25	R134.99	**+566.6%**
Fresh Whole Chicken	1 kg	R14.50	R62.99	**+334.4%**