

Maize meal and rice prices remain high in Tete province

Key points:



Maize meal and rice remained very expensive in Tete province in January



Maize grain is available in all markets except in Gaza



Prices for rice and cooking oil are well above the provincial averages in Xai-Xai (Gaza) and Chibabava (Sofala)



WFP/Naomi Scott

Methodology

The January survey was conducted using live calls for a sample of 116 traders across 29 districts in the provinces of Gaza, Tete, Manica, Maputo, Sofala and Inhambane. The questions focused on the prices of basic foods such as maize grain, maize meal, imported rice, cowpeas and cooking oil, with an open-ended question to gauge traders' perception of the food security situation in their areas. However, some of the traders who generally sell these items had no stocks at the time of the calls. Consequently, many of the reported averages are based on fewer than three observations per district (Table 1). Phone surveys contain inherent response biases; therefore, the bulletin reports patterns and trends rather than precise estimates.

Food Security Outlook

Seasonal deficits and price increases have been observed for most cereals across the country. Prices continue to increase as the lean season progresses. The high demand for foods – especially for cereals – is likely to lead to price hikes (source: [FEWS NET](#)). The high prices could coincide with falling purchasing power and a lack of physical access to markets caused by heavy rains in most parts of the country. At the peak of the rainy season, flooding is expected in localized areas and along major flood plains. The rains could wash away crops, damage infrastructure and farmlands, and displace some of the population, exposing them to food insecurity.

Table 1: Districts with three or more observations

	Maize grain	Maize meal	Rice	Cowpeas	Cooking oil
Gaza	Chibuto	Bilene Macia	Bilene Macia		Bilene Macia
	Chokwe	Chibuto	Chibuto		Chibuto
		Chicualacuala	Chicualacuala		Chicualacuala
		Chigubo	Chigubo		Chigubo
		Chokwe	Chokwe		Chokwe
		Guija	Guija		Guija
		Massangena	Massangena		Massangena
		Xai-Xai	Xai-Xai		Xai-Xai
Tete	Doa	Doa	Doa	Mago	Doa
	Mago	Maravia	Mago		Mago
	Marara	Moatize	Marara		Marara
	Maravia	Mutarara	Maravia		Maravia
	Moatize		Moatize		Moatize
	Mutarara		Mutarara		Mutarara
Sofala	Marromeu	Marromeu	Marromeu	Marromeu	Marromeu
Inhambane		Funhalouro	Funhalouro		Funhalouro
					Govuro
Maputo	Magude	Magude	Magude	Magude	Magude
Manica		Manica			

Source: mVAM, January 2017

Table 2: Stock availability

	Total calls	Maize grain	Maize meal	Rice	Cow-peas	Cooking oil
Gaza	180	28	154	158	7	179
Tete	88	39	46	72	26	75
Sofala	17	4	13	13	3	13
Inhambane	16	5	13	12	0	15
Manica	15	5	11	15	0	15
Maputo	12	3	8	9	1	11

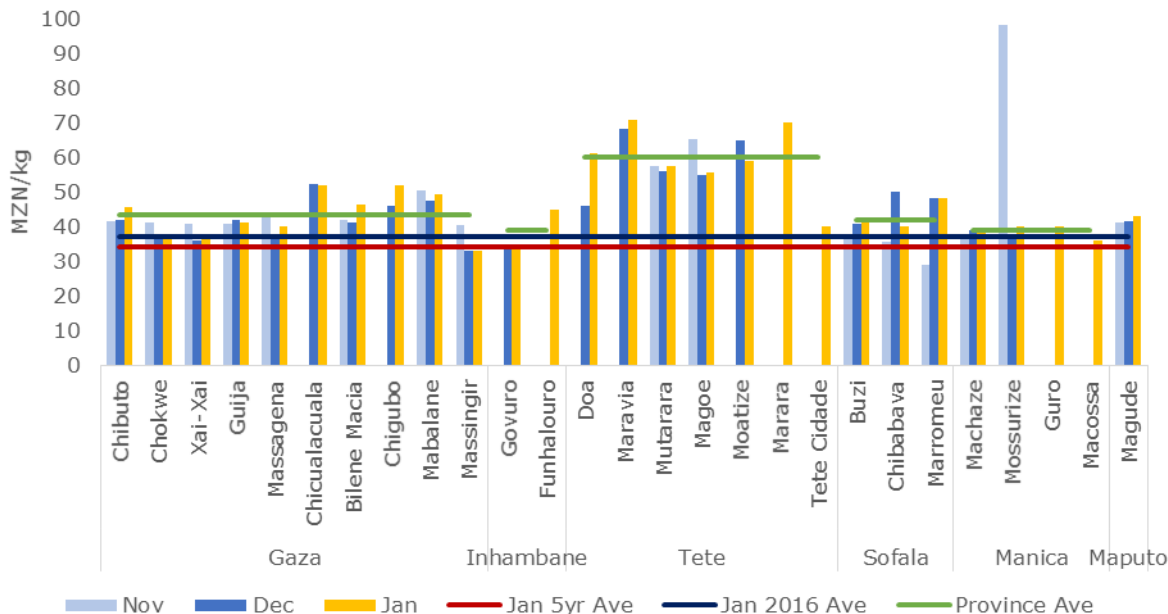
Source: mVAM, January 2017

Maize meal is most expensive in Tete

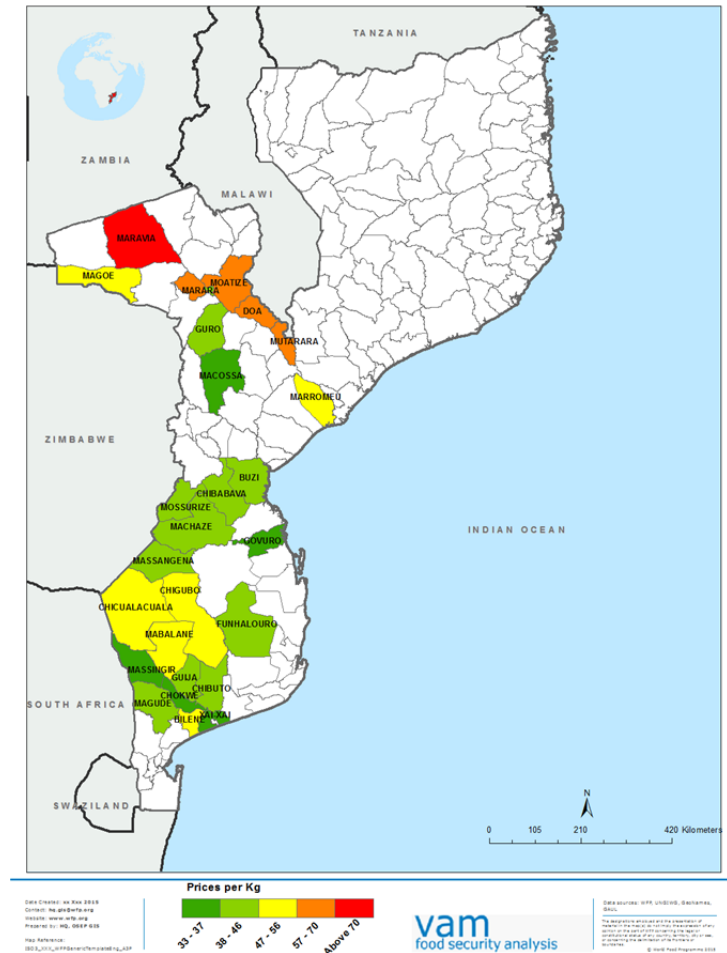
Basic foods remained expensive in January in most of the surveyed districts, surpassing the January 2016 average. The highest price increases for maize meal were in Tete province. Rice prices rose by 64 percent in Xai-Xai (Gaza), by 23.75 percent in Moatize (Tete) and by 13.50 percent in Doa (Tete). By contrast, maize grain prices fell in Tete. In Gaza, the maize grain price trend was mixed.

Maize meal was most expensive in Maravia (MZN70.91/kg) and Marara (MZN70.00/kg), both in Tete (Figure 1). However, prices fell in Chokwe compared to December, perhaps thanks to its proximity to Xai-Xai Cidade and the irrigation scheme that surrounds the district, which provides them with a green harvest. The cheapest maize meal was in Massingir (MZN33.00/kg), which is one of the main districts receiving assistance from WFP. Prices in all surveyed districts – except those in Tete province – are quite close to the five-year average and the January 2016 average.

Figure 1: Retail price for maize meal (MZN/kg) by district



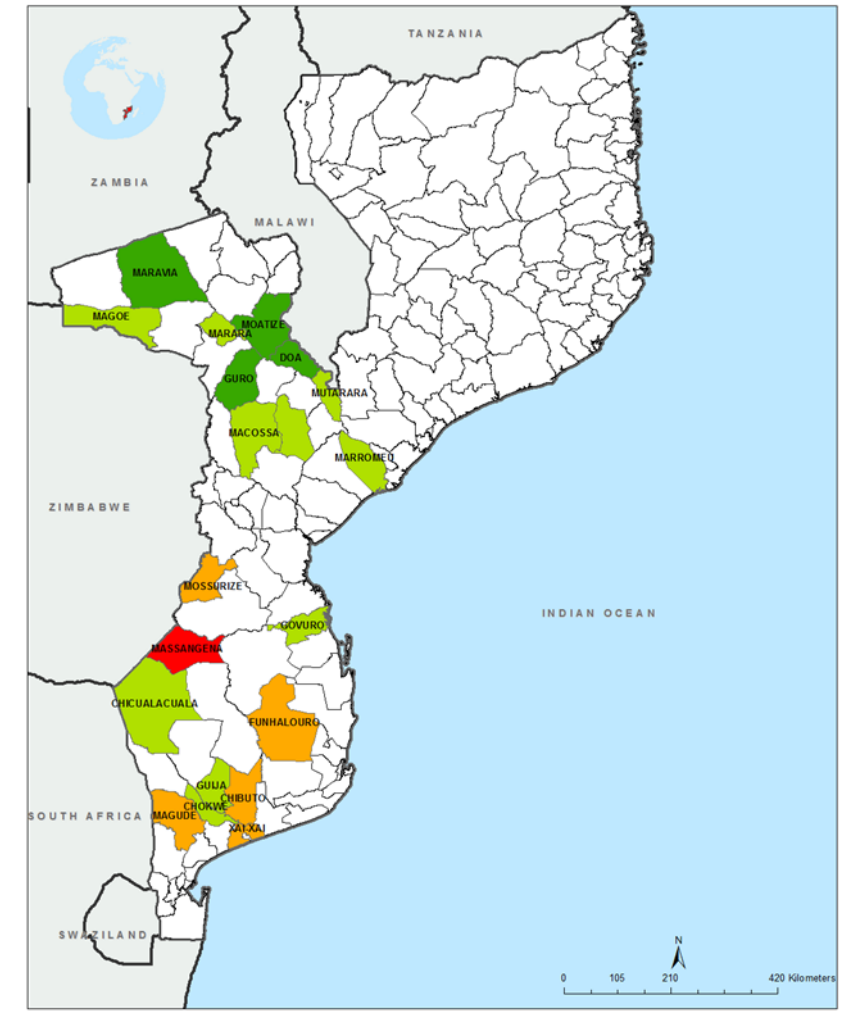
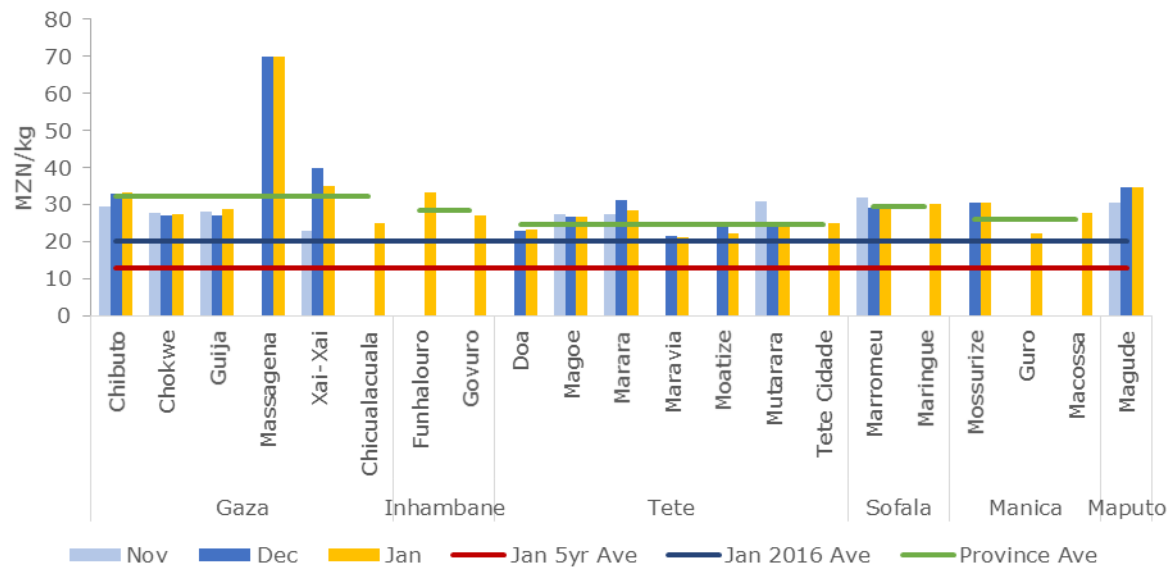
Map 1: Retail price for maize meal (MZN/kg) by district



Maize grain prices have remained fairly stable since December 2016 in Chibuto, Chokwe, Guija, Marromeu, Mossorize and Magude (Figure 2). However, they are well above the five-year average and last year's average. Across the surveyed districts in January, the highest maize grain prices were reported in Massangena (Gaza) retailing at MZN70/kg. Prices were second highest in Xai-Xai (Gaza), but still half the price in Massangena (MZN35/kg). Prices have been stable in Sofala compared to December 2016, but since the province lost half of its production area due to heavy rains, most of its districts are relying on food assistance, especially Machanga (most affected), Chemba, Caia, Marringue, Marromeu, Chibabava, Nhamatanda, Cheringoma and Gorongossa.

Map 2: Retail price for maize grain (MZN/kg) by district

Figure 2: Retail price for maize grain (MZN/kg) by district



Prices per Kg

- 21 - 24
- 25 - 30
- 31 - 40
- 41 - 70

Data source: IFPRI, UNISD, Statista, etc.

vam food security analysis

Source: mVAM, January 2017 and CIMA

Source: mVAM, January 2017



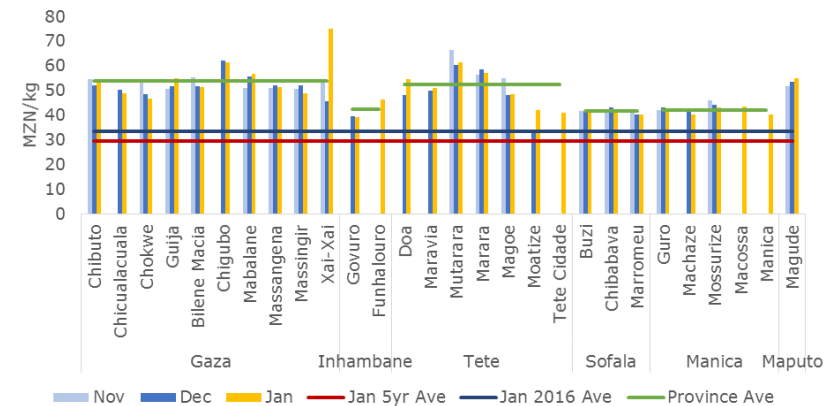
Inaccessible roads push up rice prices

In most assessed districts, rice became cheaper in January compared with December, perhaps a result of the local currency gaining value against the US dollar, which has allowed more traders to stock this mostly imported commodity. Nevertheless, rice prices remain way above the national five-year average and the January 2016 national average. The highest rice price at the province level was reported in Gaza, followed by Tete. Within the provinces, prices were highest in the districts of Xai-Xai, Chigubo and Mutarara. The high prices in Xai-Xai could be a result of flooding in the district, which has made it difficult for traders to transport their goods. In Mutarara and Chigubo, the high prices could be attributed to their distance from the city and the inaccessibility of the roads due to the rains.

At the province level, cooking oil was most expensive in Sofala followed by Gaza and Inhambane. It was cheapest in Manica. At the district level, the cheapest cooking oil was in Moatize (Tete) and Guro (Manica), possibly because of their proximity to Tete Cidade. By contrast, Chibabava (Sofala), Chigubo (Gaza) and Guija (Gaza) had the highest cooking oil prices, perhaps because these remote areas rely heavily on supplies from other districts (**Figure 4**).

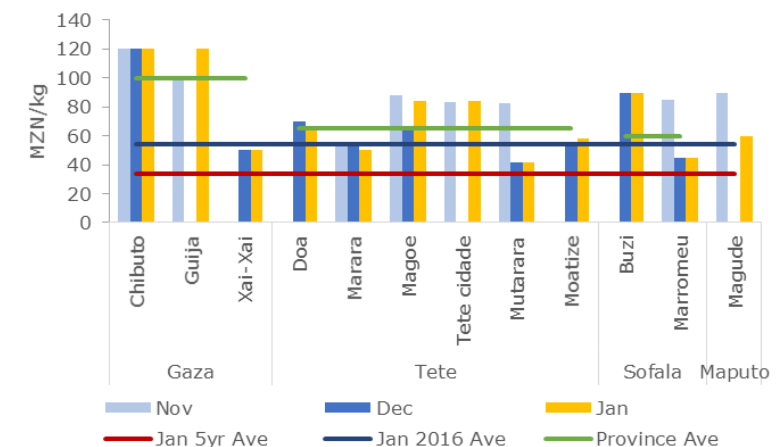
The price of cowpeas has remained high but stable since December for most surveyed districts (**Figure 5**). The highest prices were recorded in Gaza province in Chibuto and Guija, both retailing cowpeas at MZN120.00/kg. Prices in all surveyed districts were above the five-year national average, but were below the January 2016 average in Xai-Xai, Mutarara and Marromeu. The cheapest cowpeas were recorded in Mutarara (Tete) and Marromeu (Sofala).

Figure 3: Retail price for rice (MZN/kg) by district



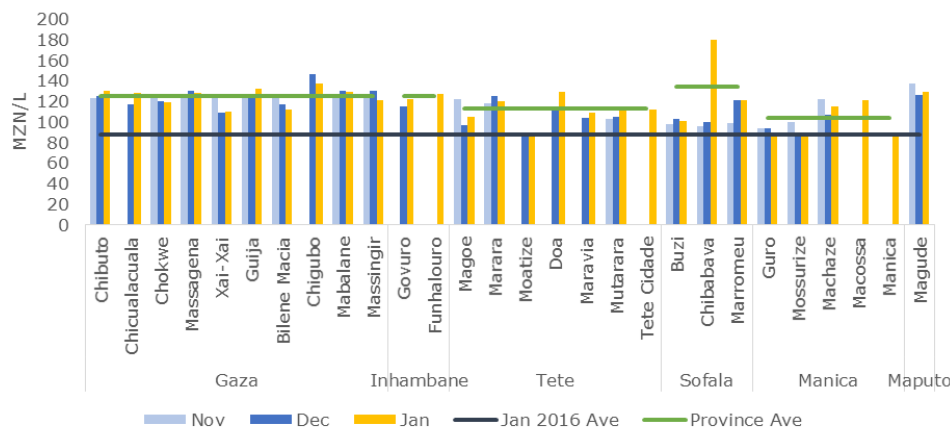
Source: mVAM, January 2017 and CIMA

Figure 5: Retail price for cow peas (MZN/kg) by district



Source: mVAM, January 2017 and CIMA

Figure 4: Retail price for cooking oil (MZN/litre) by district



Source: mVAM, January 2017 and CIMA

