

# Cost of Living Survey

## Guidelines

---

September 2022

---



---

Dear respondent,

## **ECA Cost of Living Survey September 2022**

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey for ECA International.

Information provided by expatriates forms an extremely valuable part of our research. The accompanying questionnaire has been designed to allow you to present information related to the cost of living in your location. To ensure that the data collection process is as straightforward as it can be, and so that we can make the best use of the information you supply, please keep in mind these important pointers:

### **Please DO:**

- Make sure that the person/people collecting the data are international assignees or their family members. We are interested in reflecting the lifestyles of expatriates in your location so it is important that the questionnaire be completed by someone who meets these criteria.
- Work with other expatriates to complete a joint questionnaire, returning one questionnaire only from all contributors.
- Provide data from outlets that you/your household would normally use, which can include online outlets.
- Complete and return the questionnaire within the timeframe specified or as close to those dates as possible.
- Give us all the information you can, not only on products, but also services, utilities, exchange rates, inflation and currencies. This is all important for us to create accurate indices, fully reflecting day-to-day living expenses.
- Use the latest version of the questionnaire supplied alongside these guidelines and follow the instructions within the questionnaire as closely as possible.

### **Please DO NOT:**

- Copy and return a questionnaire completed by another expatriate. We cannot use identical surveys.
- Return an old version of the cost of living questionnaire, completed during a previous survey. We will not be able to use out of date information.
- Inflate prices. Your input to the survey is very important to us as we hope it reflects the true experiences you have. We do, however, run checks and balances on all the data we use in order to make sure it is statistically sound.

### **Dates for this survey are:**

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Prices to be collected by:              | <b>16 September</b> |
| Questionnaire to be returned to ECA by: | <b>22 September</b> |

### **Deadline extensions:**

Please get in touch with us directly at [colparticipation@eca-international.com](mailto:colparticipation@eca-international.com) if you are not able to complete the full questionnaire within the timeframe specified. We may be able to offer an extension to the deadline on a case-by-case basis dependent on your circumstances and location.

---

### More information

With this letter, you will also find a number of supporting documents to help you:

- More information about ECA's cost of living indices, how they are calculated and used
- A list of all the items in our basket to help you plan your shopping trip
- A letter for showing to shopkeepers if asked

### Returning the questionnaire

Please return your completed questionnaire to the Cost of Living team at:

Email: [colparticipation@eca-international.com](mailto:colparticipation@eca-international.com)

Fax: +44 (0)20 7351 9396

Post: ECA International  
16 Great Queen Street  
London WC2B 5DG  
England

### Thank you!

Thank you in advance for taking part. We have a number of gift vouchers and other prizes to give away to people selected at random who have completed and returned questionnaires. Good luck in the draw!

Best regards



**Oliver Graham**  
Cost of Living Manager

---

# About ECA's cost of living data

If you'd like to know more about how your data is used, read on...

**ECA's cost of living indices measure the differences** in day-to-day living costs between an expatriate's home country and their country of assignment and is typically applied to an appropriate proportion of salary to protect **spending power** in the host location.

**The items in the shopping basket** have been selected because they are generally available in the locations surveyed, and so facilitate inter-country **comparisons**. Some items are used to represent **expenditure** on other similar items for which we do not request price collection – for example bread also represents expenditure on flour, so you may not see all of the items you are likely to buy on the shopping list, but they are factored into the final **index**.

**The basket deliberately has some exclusions** including **accommodation** costs, **utilities** and **school fees** which are often provided for separately within an expatriate salary; including them in an index would therefore be tantamount to counting them twice. It is still important for us to know what these costs are, however, and that is why the **second part of the questionnaire** briefly asks you about your expenditure on those items. This part can largely be completed at home, with the use of the internet and a local telephone directory, and/or your own bills. We also do not ask for prices of **luxury items** such as **holidays** or **jewellery** – expenditure on these falls outside of the definition of day-to-day spending for the purpose of salary calculations and would not, therefore, be indexed.

ECA uses a **multisource approach** to data collection comprising information from expatriates, from independent agencies and from our own data researchers. **We ask expatriates to complete surveys because** our indices need to reflect the shopping conditions you experience and the way you shop.

**Once we have received data from expatriates** like you, each questionnaire is coded and undergoes objective **statistical tests**; the prices, shops and brands quoted are validated and compared against those in the large database of other questionnaires returned. Larger **sample sizes** assist sample construction and data validation. After rigorous analysis, an average price for each item is computed.

**The index is calculated from the price ratios between home and host country average prices** taking into account the home country spending patterns. The **exchange rate** used in the index calculation is the average exchange rate prevailing at the time of price collection and is always quoted with the index. This rate, used in conjunction with the index, gives the correct amount of **host country currency** required to **maintain the home country consumption** pattern.

## Results of the survey – what happens next?

Analysis of the cost of living data takes approximately ten weeks from the close of the survey period and **survey results are released to subscribing organisations via our website**. For more information about how your organisation makes use of ECA's cost of living data we recommend consulting your internal HR / Global Mobility policies and / or contact.

# SHOPPING PLANNER

## Groceries

Bread: white loaf  
Bread: brown / wholemeal loaf  
Biscuits: sandwich type  
Sugar: white, granulated  
Jam or marmalade  
Rice: long grain  
Rice: Japanese / sushi  
Pasta  
Instant packet noodles  
Breakfast cereal  
Tea bags  
Green tea bags  
Coffee: ground  
Coffee: instant  
Infant milk formula  
Canned fruit  
Coconut milk  
Canned soup  
Canned tomatoes  
Canned tuna fish  
Frozen pizza  
Frozen vegetables  
Tofu: soft  
Tomato ketchup  
Soy sauce  
Miso  
Potato chips  
Peanuts  
Bar of chocolate  
Cooking oil  
Olive oil  
Soft drink: can  
Orange juice  
Mineral water

## Dairy Produce

Milk: fresh pasteurised  
Milk: UHT  
Milk: soy  
Yoghurt  
Ice cream  
Butter  
Margarine  
Eggs  
Cheese: medium hard type  
Cheese: soft type

## Meat and Fish

Lamb: joint  
Beef: joint  
Beef: steak  
Beef: mince  
Sausages  
Pork: joint  
Pork: chops  
Bacon: sliced  
Salami  
Fresh or chilled chicken  
Chicken breasts  
Fresh fish  
Fresh salmon  
Fresh prawns / shrimps

## Fresh Fruit/Vegetables

Apples  
Oranges  
Bananas  
Pineapple  
Potatoes  
Onions  
Fresh ginger  
Mushrooms  
Tomatoes  
Green peppers / capsicums  
Aubergines / eggplants  
Courgettes / zucchini  
Broccoli

## Household Goods

Toilet paper  
Disposable nappies  
Sanitary towels  
Pain relief tablets  
Allergy relief tablets  
Throat lozenges  
Multivitamins  
Plasters  
Razor blades  
Toothpaste  
Lipstick  
Deodorant  
Moisturising body lotion  
Toilet soap  
Shampoo  
Washing powder  
Cream cleaner  
Dishwashing liquid  
Frying pan  
Bedset  
Batteries  
Energy-saving light bulb

## Recreational Goods

Micro SD Memory card  
Tennis balls  
Monopoly or Scrabble  
Playing cards  
Video game  
Paperback book: fiction  
Local daily newspaper  
International news magazine  
Printer paper

## General Services

Airmail stamp  
Broadband internet  
Mobile phone contract  
Dry-cleaning  
Shoe repairs  
Men's haircut  
Women's haircut and blow dry  
Domestic help

## Leisure Services

Cinema ticket  
Theatre ticket  
Concert ticket  
Tennis court hire  
Fitness club membership  
Video streaming subscription

## Alcohol and Tobacco

Bottled beer  
Canned beer  
Scotch whisky  
Gin  
Red wine  
White wine  
Aperitif: vermouth  
Sake  
Cigarettes

## Motoring

Petrol  
Diesel  
Tyre: radial  
Car servicing  
Car oil change

## Electrical Goods

Flat screen TV  
Headphones  
Tablet computer  
Mobile phone  
Microwave  
Rice cooker  
Fridge freezer or fridge  
Washing machine  
Vacuum cleaner  
Electric iron  
Hairdryer

## Clothing

Men's business suit  
Men's jacket or blazer  
Men's trousers  
Men's shirt  
Men's shoes  
Women's smart jacket  
Women's blouse  
Women's skirt  
Women's shoes  
Women's jeans  
Boxer shorts  
Brassiere  
Trainers / sneakers  
Boy's jeans  
Girl's skirt

## Meals Out

Take-away meal  
Breakfast  
Lunch at café  
Dinner at restaurant  
Business dinner  
Alcoholic drink at bar  
Beer at bar  
Soft drink at bar  
Coffee at café

---

## ECA International

New Brook Buildings  
16 Great Queen Street  
London WC2B 5DG  
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7351 5000  
F +44 (0)20 7351 9396  
[www.eca-international.com](http://www.eca-international.com)  
[eca@eca-international.com](mailto:eca@eca-international.com)



To whom it may concern,

The person carrying this letter has been asked by their company to participate in a worldwide Cost of Living survey on behalf of our organisation. This involves the collection of prices of various items, some of which can be found in your outlet.

ECA International is an independent company, not linked to any government organisation, which provides information to companies sending their staff to work abroad. The Cost of Living survey tries to establish the difference in the cost of living between the employee's home country and the country to which they have been sent to work.

We would be most grateful if you could let this participant collect prices in your outlet. All information collected in this manner is strictly for our use only and no individual price or outlet is reproduced. Prices are only used to calculate an average of individual items. Your outlet has not been targeted specifically; it is simply where the participant would choose to purchase these items.

If you wish to know any more about our organisation or our business, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address above.

Thanking you in advance for your kind co-operation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Graham', written in a cursive style.

**Oliver Graham**  
Cost of Living Manager