

# Evolution of Food Consumption in Romania

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## Abstract

Closely connected to production, consumption plays an active catalyst role because all economic activities end in consumption. From this perspective, consumption research is a good solution to identify offer accurately and meet the needs and, on the other hand, it is an important source of information in marketing. Consumption ranges among the first in the process of goods use. Consumption is the process of using goods to meet consumption needs (though not all needs) since there is always a gap between needs and consumption.

**Keywords:** demand, offer, consumption, market

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## 1. Introduction

Food consumption is a concrete way of satisfying consumption needs: it lies between needs and demand. Food consumption as a fundamental element of the living standard is influenced by both physiological needs and socio-historical conditions of consumption. Solving population's needs for foods is the goal of any national food policy. Consumption analysis allows the highlighting of some relations of interdependence between physiological needs and the needs of the human body, between the size of the consumption and the satisfaction it provides; this determined the appearance of the economic law according to which for a given level of incomes and prices each consumption unit is a reunion of goods meant to maximise one own's satisfaction and the satisfaction provided by each supplementary amount of goods is decreasing.

## 2. Material and method

This study presents the evolution of Romania's national food consumption starting from the statistics available and using the statistics methods and techniques. Results can be used in the fundamenting of forecasts concerning consumption demand in foods.

## 3. Results and discussion

Food consumption can have its roots in the market, in personal households, or in other sources.

The shaping, rhythm, and evolution trends in food consumption depend on the factors influencing consumption needs as on the material possibilities of meeting these needs.

In all societies, consumption relies on the population's income. The income of the consumer is the main factor in consumption: its size, form, dynamics, time distribution, etc. are the material premises for the purchasing behaviour and, therefore, consumption.

Table 1 presents the total household incomes and the structure of consumption expenses in Romania between 2006 and 2011.

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**Table 1.** Total household incomes and the structure of consumption expenses in Romania (2006-2011)

Specification	Total incomes (RON/month/household)	Money incomes (%)	Total consumption (RON/month/household)	Food and soft drinks expenses (%)
2006	1386,32	80,7	962,50	42,3
2007	1688,74	81,1	1104,70	41,7
2008	2131,67	83,1	1365,36	40,9
2009	2315,99	83,7	1468,60	40,9
2010	2304,28	83,9	1468,43	41,0
2011	2417,26	81,7	1532,29	41,7

Source: Anuarul statistic al României, 2012 [15]

Analysing the data in Table 1, we can see that, during 2006-2011, the incomes of the population's households tended to increase. The most obvious increases were in 2009 and 2011, respectively.

Price increase can determine an increase of the wages through periodical indexing, but in most cases, they prove insufficient. Due to this fact, there is a long-term trend of the population's demand to decrease (or, at least, of a part of the demand). There can also be cases in which the decrease of the incomes is lower than the decrease of the prices, which means an increase of the purchase power and, hence, an increase of the consumption. Thus, the demand for certain foods or non-food goods is a sign for the producers only

if the population's purchase need is also supported by their purchase power. Normally, production should be oriented toward goods that meet the demand, in which case the market, using the uneven distribution of the incomes, proves to be an extremely efficient mechanism in facing goods scarcity.

As for the expenses structure, we can see that, during the analysed period, the Romanians spent 40.9-42.3% of their consumption expenses on foods.

Table 2 shows the dynamics of expenses on foods and soft drinks in households in Romania during the period 2006-2011.

**Table 2.** Dynamics of expenses on foods and soft drinks in households in Romania (2006-2011)

Years	Wages	Agriculture	Pensioners
2006	37.9	57.1	45.2
2007	37.1	56.5	45.2
2008	37.2	55.9	43.2
2009	37.4	53.2	42.6
2010	37.6	53.8	42.4
2011	37.9	54.4	43.3

Source: Anuarul statistic al României, 2012 [15]

As for food and soft drink expenses, there was a decrease in the families of employees of -0.80% in 2007 compared to 2006, and an increase in 2011 compared to 2007.

In farmers and pensioners' families, food and soft drinks expenses decreased until 2010, after which there has been a slight increase.

The largest share (57.10%) was in 2006 in the farmers' families, followed by the pensioners' families.

Consumption can be analysed globally, individually, or as an average.

The most important factor in the consumption act is the level of physiological needs.

Food consumption differs from individual to individual in both volume and structure.

Working and living conditions also influence consumption level. Literature shows that the daily food needs of an average individual is 2,400-3,000

calories, 70 g of proteins, 70 g of fats, 0.8-6 g of calcium, 50-100 mg of vitamin C, etc. [2]

The mean annual consumption of the main foods per capita in Romania is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Mean annual consumption of the main foods per capita in Romania

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Cereal produce (kg)</b>	207.9	206.9	204.0	200.8	199.6	205.4
<b>Vegetables and vegetable produce (kg)</b>	181.7	164.1	176.0	168.2	174.4	181.0
<b>Fruits and fruit produce(kg)</b>	83.2	67.8	66.7	62.3	63.3	70.5
<b>Sugar and sugar produce(kg)</b>	29.0	24.9	23.8	25.8	22.1	22.4
<b>Milk and dairy milk (l)</b>	246.6	252.8	254.7	233.2	224.0	227.7
<b>Meat and meat produce (kg)</b>	69.9	66.7	66.6	67.5	60.0	56.0

Source: Anuarul statistic al României, 2012 [15]

In cereals and cereal produce, there is an annual decreasing trend: the amounts representing the annual mean consumption decrease 1.21% (from 207.9 to 205.4 kg/capita);

In vegetables and vegetable produce, there was a decrease of the mean consumption in 2007 (9.69% compared to 2006), after which it increased and almost reached the level of 2006 (181 kg/capita);

In fruits and fruit produce, there is a decrease of 15.27% (from 83.5 to 70.5 kg/capita);

There was also an annual decrease in sugar and sugar produce (22.76%);

Animal produce (milk and meat) consumption decreased with 7.66% in milk and dairy produce and 19.88% in meat and meat produce.

The structure and level of food consumption changes depending on geographical location, consumption tradition, social mutations etc.

The diversification of agricultural production, the decrease of the animal production can change the ratio between foods from the point of view of their contribution to the necessary calories, determining an improvement of the food consumption (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Daily food consumption per capita in Romania (calories and nutrients)

Specification	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
1. Calories	3455	3290	3300	3273	3212	3199
- of which of animal origin	925	912	920	888	833	809
2. Proteins (g)	114.3	111.2	111.5	107.7	103.4	103.8
- of which of animal origin	58.6	57.6	57.7	55.8	51.7	50.4
3. Lipids	107.5	101.3	104.4	105.3	105.9	98.4
- of which of animal origin	59.1	57.8	58.6	57.3	53.6	51.5
4. Sugars	485.4	462.4	457.8	452.7	440.6	454.2

Source: Anuarul statistic al României, 2012 [15]

Daily food consumption per capita, as shown in Table 4, decreased from 3455 calories in 2006 to

3199 calories in 2011. This was caused by the decrease of the consumers' incomes and by the

increase of the share of expenses on food consumption.

Protein consumption decreased during the period analysed from 114.3 to 103.8 g.

As for animal proteins, consumption was relatively constant (around 57.0 g) until 2008, after which it started to decrease reaching 50.4 g in 2011.

The diminution of the consumption of lipids is closely related to the diminution of the consumption of meat, meat produce, oils, and fats. Sugar consumption went back, after the decrease of 2010, to the level of 454 g.

Food consumption, its quantitative and qualitative structure is a barometer of the economic development level of a country and, at the same time, an important component of the population's living standard.

The model of food consumption depends on both the need for consumption (determined by the type of existence and by the economic activity of the consumer) and on the consumption possibilities (represented by the economic power of the consumer and by the offer, which is determined, in its turn, by domestic production and economic internationalisation).

#### 4. Conclusions

The model of food consumption of the Romanian population is characterised by the following:

A relatively high share of food expenses of the total consumption expenses;

A relatively high share of food consumption of the agricultural production of one own's household;

An excessive consumption of cereals;

A relatively low presence of native organic products in the daily food basket of the households.

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