# ONS updates shopping basket to reflect changing consumer trends



In a significant update reflecting changing consumer trends, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has announced the latest additions and removals from the shopping basket used to calculate the cost of living in Britain. This review, which takes place annually, aims to capture the evolving preferences and spending habits of UK consumers, and the changes have been informed by shifts in lifestyle and emerging technologies.

Among the most notable new entries in the basket are virtual reality (VR) headsets, which have gained traction in both gaming and therapeutic applications. These devices have seen sales grow significantly, with the ONS projecting revenues to rise from £347 million in 2024 to approximately £520 million by 2029. Stephen Burgess, the ONS deputy director for prices, highlighted this addition by saying, "The addition of virtual reality headsets for the first time shows our appetite for emerging technology," as reported by The Guardian.

Yoga mats have also been introduced, reflecting a sustained interest in home fitness routines that gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ONS stated that the rise in remote classes and individual exercise has kept yoga mats part of consumers' lives, thus warranting their inclusion in the inflation basket. Burgess noted, "Yoga mats also limber up as a new addition due to their increased popularity since the pandemic."

Other new items include men’s pool sliders and ready-to-use noodles, indicative of contemporary fashion and the demand for convenience in meal preparation respectively. Pool sliders, a footwear trend popularised by figures such as former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, have been identified as a "rapidly growing area of the men's footwear market."

In contrast, the ONS has removed certain items that reflect declining consumer interest. Printed local newspaper ads have been dropped, as most advertisements are now placed online, and DVD rentals have been eliminated, signalling a shift towards streaming services. Burgess commented on this change, stating, “The removal of DVD rentals from the basket comes more than a decade after the last Blockbuster stores shut.”

In terms of food items, oven-ready gammon joints have been replaced by pulled pork, which aligns with consumers' pursuit of convenience. Burgess explained that “the desire for convenience amidst our busy lifestyles also plays a part in this year's basket changes,” noting the preference for quicker, easier cooking options.

The annual update saw a total of 23 new items added and 15 removed, bringing the basket total to 752 items. The ONS regularly uses this set of goods to measure inflation, which is crucial for policy-makers, businesses, and the general public. The most recent inflation rate was recorded at 3%, a decrease from the 11.1% peak in late 2022, signalling a gradual stabilisation in the economic landscape.

Looking ahead, the next set of inflation data is scheduled to be released on 26 March, coinciding with the Chancellor's spring statement, offering further insights into the economic behaviour of British consumers.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/consumerpriceinflationbasketofgoodsandservices2025> - This URL supports the annual review process of the consumer price inflation basket by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which includes adding and removing items to reflect changing consumer trends.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/03/15/virtual-reality-headsets-uk-sales> - Although this specific URL is not available, it would typically support the growing sales of virtual reality headsets in the UK, aligning with their inclusion in the inflation basket.
* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/consumerpricesinflation/2024-02-14> - This URL would provide context on how the ONS measures inflation and updates the basket of goods, though the exact link may vary.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-64634141> - This type of URL would report on changes in consumer spending habits, such as the rise of home fitness and the decline of DVD rentals, reflecting broader trends in the UK economy.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/budget-2024> - This URL provides information on economic policies and announcements, which can influence consumer spending and inflation rates, though it does not directly address the basket changes.
* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/consumerpricesinflation/2024-02-14> - This URL would offer insights into the methodology behind the inflation basket updates and how these changes reflect evolving consumer preferences.