MALAWI IFPRI

MAIZE MARKET REPORT DECEMBER 2025

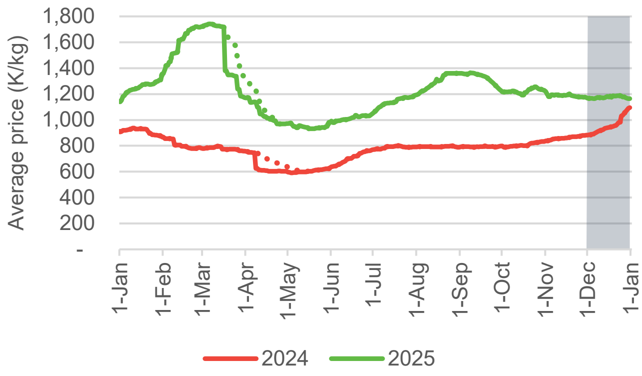
## Highlights

- Retail prices of maize remained unusually stabile in December, when prices typically rise.
- Retail prices were stabilized by sustained informal imports at stable prices.

## Average maize prices recorded a marginal increase in December

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in December 2025, and for comparison, over the 12 months ending in December 2024. At the beginning of the harvest season, we start reporting prices of newly harvested maize, which has a higher moisture content than maize from the previous harvest. High moisture content makes maize unsuitable for storage or milling. During drying, it loses up to 20 percent of its weight. Solid lines in Figure 1 represent observed maize prices. Dotted lines represent prices adjusted for moisture content, reflecting the true price trend.

**Figure 1:** Trends in maize retail prices




The national average retail price of maize remained stable, increasing only marginally from K1,169/kg in the last week of November to K1,178/kg in the last week of December. Across the markets, maize prices rose slightly during the first half of December before stabilizing and declining marginally in the final week of the month (Table 1). Overall, maize prices remained relatively stable in December, contrasting with the same period last year when maize prices increased by 15 percent.

## Regional price trends

In December, maize prices showed limited price movements in most markets, with slightly more pronounced changes observed in the Southern Region. Apart from Mangochi, which recorded the highest month-on-month increase of 12 percent, price changes in other markets were relatively moderate, with both the highest increases and declines limited to about 4 percent. Overall, the Northern Region continued to register the lowest maize prices, averaging K1,007/kg in the final week of December, followed by the Central Region at K1,157/kg and the Southern Region at K1,244/kg (Table 1 and Figure 2).

## Informal imports keep maize prices stable

In continuation of a trend that began in November, there was a strong flow of maize exports to Zambia through Mchinji border for much of December. Maize was also exported to Zambia through Jenda and Mqocha in Mzimba. The final week of the month also saw local exports from Karonga to Tanzania and from Chikwawa to Mozambique. However, other border crossings recorded steady imports of maize throughout most of December (Table 2 and Figure 3). In fact, stable import prices seem to be the main reason why retail prices of maize also remained unusually stable in the last quarter of 2025 (Figure 4). The stability of import parity prices can in turn be attributed to stabilized informal exchange rates used for much cross-border trade (Figure 5).

**Table 1**: Weekly average retail prices (K/kg)

| Market | 31-Nov | 7-Dec | 14-Dec | 21-Dec | 28-Dec | Monthly change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Week ending on | | | | | |
| 1 Chitipa | 915 | 876 | 889 | 925 | 914 | 0% |
| 2 Karonga | 930 | 930 | 905 | 940 | 935 | 1% |
| 3 Rumphi | 1,031 | 1,000 | 994 | 993 | 1,017 | -1% |
| 4 Mzuzu (boma) | 1,101 | 1,059 | 1,067 | 1,067 | 1,077 | -2% |
| 5 Mzimba (boma) | 1,064 | 1,046 | 1,042 | 1,040 | 1,054 | -1% |
| 6 Mzimba (Jenda) | 946 | 962 | 970 | 893 | 987 | 4% |
| North | 1,009 | 989 | 989 | 984 | 1,007 | 0% |
| 7 Salima | 1,142 | 1,136 | 1,130 | 1,124 | 1,130 | -1% |
| 8 Mchinji | 1,159 | 1,189 | 1,195 | 1,207 | 1,203 | 4% |
| 9 Kasungu | 1,099 | 1,067 | 1,090 | 1,107 | 1,119 | 2% |
| 10 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi) | 1,210 | 1,133 | 1,141 | 1,201 | 1,187 | -2% |
| 11 Lilongwe (Mitundu) | 1,152 | 1,142 | 1,176 | 1,167 | 1,181 | 2% |
| 12 Dedza (Chimbiya) | 1,107 | 1,090 | 1,076 | 1,083 | 1,096 | -1% |
| Center | 1,157 | 1,123 | 1,132 | 1,156 | 1,157 | 0% |
| 13 Balaka | 1,231 | 1,198 | 1,225 | 1,239 | 1,205 | -2% |
| 14 Mangochi (M'baluku) | 1,200 | 1,199 | 1,196 | 1,200 | 1,200 | 0% |
| 15 Mangochi (boma) | 1,076 | 1,152 | 1,155 | 1,200 | 1,200 | 12% |
| 16 Machinga (Liwonde) | 1,210 | 1,227 | 1,248 | 1,227 | 1,212 | 0% |
| 17 Phalombe (Chiringa) | 1,288 | 1,288 | 1,288 | 1,261 | 1,235 | -4% |
| 18 Zomba (Mpondabwino) | 1,302 | 1,333 | 1,331 | 1,300 | 1,326 | 2% |
| 19 Blantyre (Lunzu) | 1,190 | 1,200 | 1,212 | 1,218 | 1,209 | 2% |
| 20 Blantyre city (Mbayani) | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,298 | 0% |
| 21 Mwanza | 1,270 | 1,289 | 1,304 | 1,313 | 1,314 | 4% |
| 22 Mulanje | 1,300 | 1,296 | 1,281 | 1,300 | 1,259 | -3% |
| 23 Thyolo (Luchenza) | 1,245 | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,299 | 4% |
| 24 Chikwawa (boma) | 1,266 | 1,317 | 1,320 | 1,320 | 1,320 | 4% |
| 25 Chikwawa (Ngabu) | 1,289 | 1,278 | 1,286 | 1,263 | 1,273 | -1% |
| 26 Nsanje (Bangula) | 1,229 | 1,264 | 1,238 | 1,276 | 1,262 | 3% |
| 27 Nsanje (boma) | 1,253 | 1,278 | 1,258 | 1,291 | 1,248 | 0% |
| South | 1,233 | 1,248 | 1,252 | 1,256 | 1,244 | -1% |
| **Malawi** | **1,169** | **1,158** | **1,164** | **1,175** | **1,173** | **0%** |

**Figure 2:** Location of monitored markets

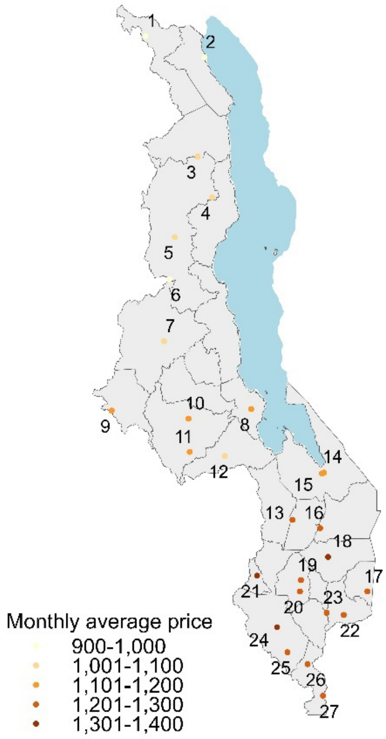
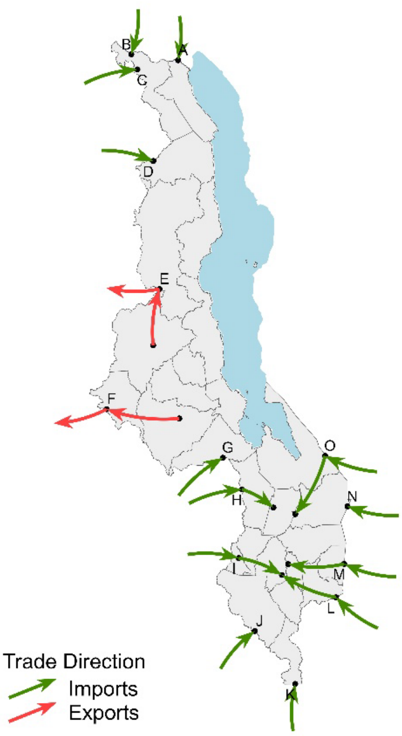



**Table 2:** Cross-border trade and import/export parity prices

| District (border post) | Neighbor | | 7-Dec | | 14-Dec | | 21-Dec | | 28-Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Week ending on | | | | | | | |
| A. Karonga (Songwe) | TZ | - | - | ⟨ | 850 | ⟨ | 950 | ⟩ | 1,150 |
| B. Chitipa (Mbirima) | TZ | ⟨ | 767 | ⟨⟨ | 750 | ⟨ | 950 | - | - |
| C. Chitipa (Sopolera) | ZM | ⟨ | 750 | ⟨ | 775 | ⟨ | 900 | ⟨ | 775 |
| D. Rumphi (Hewe) | ZM | ⟨⟨ | 750 | ⟨⟨ | 950 | ⟨ | 1,033 | ⟨ | 725 |
| E. Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda) | ZM | ⟩ | 875 | ⟩⟩ | 1,027 | ⟩⟩ | 950 | ⟩ | 970 |
| F. Mchinji | ZM | ⟩⟩ | 1,100 | ⟩⟩ | 1,033 | ⟩⟩ | 1,020 | - | - |
| G. Dedza | MZ | ⟨⟨ | 980 | ⟨⟨ | 1,000 | ⟨ | 1,020 | ⟨ | 987 |
| H. Ntcheu (Tsangano) | MZ | ⟨ | 900 | ⟨ | 950 | ⟨⟨ | 1,000 | ⟨ | 1,033 |
| I. Mwanza | MZ | ⟨⟨ | 1,200 | ⟨⟨ | 1,200 | ⟨⟨ | 1,150 | ⟨⟨ | 1,200 |
| J. Chikwawa (Mkumaniza) | MZ | ⟨⟨ | 1,000 | ⟨ | 1,000 | ⟨ | 1,150 | ⟩ | 1,000 |
| K. Nsanje (Marka) | MZ | ⟨⟨ | 1,200 | ⟨ | 1,200 | ⟨ | 1,133 | ⟨ | 1,200 |
| L. Mulanje (Muloza) | MZ | ⟨ | 1,167 | ⟨⟨ | 1,175 | ⟨⟨ | 1,200 | ⟨ | 1,167 |
| M. Phalombe (Kolowiko) | MZ | ⟨ | 950 | ⟨ | 1,050 | ⟨⟨ | 950 | ⟨ | 1,000 |
| N. Machinga (Nayuchi) | MZ | ⟨ | 940 | ⟨ | 950 | ⟨ | 1,033 | ⟨ | 1,000 |
| O. Mangochi (Chiponde) | MZ | ⟨⟨ | 1,200 | ⟨ | 950 | ⟨⟨ | 1,200 | ⟨ | 1,300 |

Notes: ⟨ net imports passing through to other districts, ⟨⟨ net imports into border district only, ⟨⟩ similar volume of trade in both directions, ⟩ net exports sourced from border district only, ⟩⟩ net exports sourced from other districts, - no cross-border trade. Import and export parity prices, i.e., the prices at which imported maize can be bought and those at which maize for export can be sold on the Malawi side of the border, are reported in K/kg.

**Figure 3:** Cross-border trade




Notes: Arrows illustrate net imports and net exports in the week ending on 21 December 2025.

**Figure 4:** Import parity and retail prices in 2025

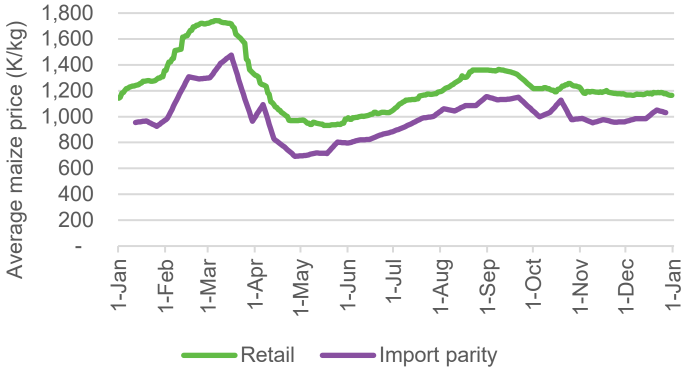
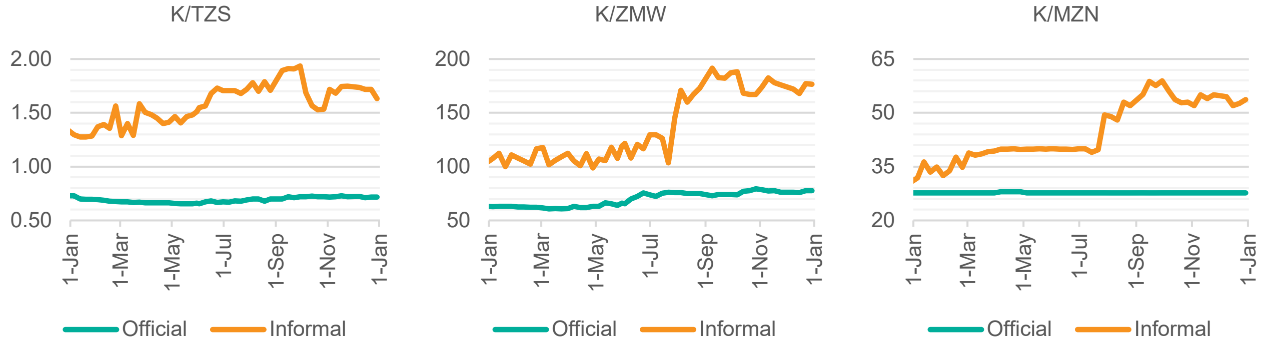



**Figure 5:** Exchange rates in 2025




Notes: Official rates are the selling rates published by the Reserve Bank of Malawi. Informal rates are reported by cross-border traders.

## How data were collected

IFPRI Malawi has been monitoring maize retail prices in selected markets since November 2016. Price data are collected telephonically six times per week (excluding Sundays) from 27 markets across the country. Additionally, local import and export prices as well as the direction and terms of trade are collected on a weekly basis from 15 border locations. Three monitors (typically small grain traders) report from each location. All prices are reported in Malawi kwacha (K).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