

Cocktail prices continue to climb

By Catey Hill, MarketWatch

You're not seeing double: Your bar tab really is that big.

Margaritas, screwdrivers and Bloody Mary's are among the cocktails that could become more expensive in coming months. And drinkers can't blame the actual alcohol for that. Thanks to a convergence of factors ranging from weather to bacteria, the price of many of the ingredients in cocktail mixers has jumped. In general, the prices for fresh fruits – including many used as cocktail mixers – climbed 2.5 percent from January to February this year, compared with just 0.4 percent for food overall. And Vernon Crowder, the senior vice president and senior analyst at Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory, says that fruit prices could continue to climb through the summer.

Take limes and lemons, used in everything from a Long Island iced tea to margaritas (not to mention sour mix). The retail price of limes has jumped 152 percent to \$0.53 apiece since last year, according to USDA data. Lemons too have seen a price jump with the cost climbing nearly 41 percent to \$0.62 apiece.

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