

Grocery store spending on the decline

By Eliza Barclay, NPR

When admiring such enticing items at the grocery store as an avocado for \$1.50, an \$8 chocolate bar or fresh wild Alaskan salmon for \$20 a pound, you've probably experienced sticker shock.

Indeed, retailers and restaurants offer myriad opportunities to blow your food budget in one fell swoop.

But our spending on food – proportional to our income – has actually declined dramatically since 1960, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The average share of per capita income spent on food declined from 17.5 percent in 1960 to 9.6 percent in 2007. (It has since risen slightly, reaching 9.9 percent in 2013.)

Because of the overall rise in income, and the consistent shrinking of food prices adjusted for inflation, we actually have more disposable income than our grandparents did, according to Annette Clauson, an agricultural economist with USDA's Economic Research Service who helped calculate the data in the chart.

Read the whole story