



GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE



FOOD PRICE VARIABILITY ACROSS REGIONS IN GHANA



GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE

APRIL 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

Access to affordable food is a fundamental human necessity, yet geographic and financial barriers can limit access to food and exacerbate food insecurity and inequality. Factors such as transportation costs, local production expenses, supply chain disruptions, and seasonal fluctuations that influence access to food can also cause variations in prices over time and across geographic areas. Such disparities significantly impact individuals' ability to procure nutritious and affordable food, especially for those with limited financial resources.

Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030 underscores the importance of ensuring universal access to food, particularly for vulnerable populations, to eradicate hunger and promote food security. This is important because access to food is influenced by its availability, cost, and income, which can represent barriers for poorer households.

As part of efforts to increase food availability, the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) launched the second phase of the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ II) in 2023. PFJ II aims to promote food self-sufficiency as a pathway to the reduction of food prices. In addition to PFJ II and through a collaboration between MoFA, ECOWAS and the World Bank, the second phase of the West Africa Food System Resilience Programme (FSRP2) was implemented. The FSRP2 aims to mitigate potential fluctuations in food prices by strengthening regional food system risk management and enhancing the sustainability of agricultural production for greater price stability and affordability for consumers. Ultimately, the successful implementation of PFJ II and FSRP2 is poised to contribute significantly to increasing food access and enhancing food security and nutrition in Ghana.

In the basket of goods used for the computation of the consumer Price Index by the Ghana Statistical Service, food and non-alcoholic beverages carry a weight of 42.7 indicating that about two-fifths of household expenditure is on food. This highlights the importance of food prices for household welfare and the share of household income that is available for purchasing non-food goods and services.

This report is the second in the series of reports on food price variability from the Ghana Statistical Service. The findings from the maiden report on *"Food Price Variability Across Regions in Ghana, 2023"* revealed substantial price variation for selected food items with greater variation within regions than across regions. The report highlighted the need for regular assessment of regional price variability to support policy making at the regional level.

The purpose of institutionalising these reports is to present price disparities within and between regions, shedding light on critical insights for consumers, retailers, and producers regarding market price dynamics, which is expected to inform purchasing decisions. This report analyses the variations in food prices across Ghana's 16 regions

from January 2022 to February 2024, examining both absolute prices and differentials for selected food items.

The statistics in this report, which are premised mainly on average median prices of selected items are incomparable to consumer price indices and rates of inflation as the latter focuses on price changes relative to a fixed basket of items and their relative importance (weights), and a base year.

The next sections present the following: Definition of Concepts, Data Sources, and Methodology; Justification for the Selection of Food Items, Key Findings; and Conclusions.

2. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS, DATA SOURCE, AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Definition of Concepts

2.1.1. Inflation basket

It is the group of items on which prices are collected every month for the computation of CPI. Items are ordered in a hierarchy of 13 Divisions, 44 Groups, 98 Classes, 156 Subclasses and 307 Items in the basket.

2.1.2. Outlets

Outlets refers to the various locations (shops) where prices of items in the inflation basket are collected for the computation of monthly CPI.

2.1.3. Price per kilogramme/litre

It represents the amount of money required to purchase one unit of the food item, typically expressed in a standard unit such as kilograms or litres. Food items measured in kilograms and litres were standardised to per units and the prices estimated for units.

2.1.4. Price variation

For the purposes of this report, price variation is defined to be the difference in median prices across outlets and regions.

2.1.5. Imported and Local Foods

Food items in the basket are classified as imported and locally produced. Imported food items are those items that are not produced within the borders of Ghana. These items are produced in another country. Local foods on the other hand are food items in the basket that are produced within the borders of Ghana. For all food items on which prices were collected, imported food items constitute 52 percent and the remaining 48 percent are locally produced foods.

2.2. Data Source

Data for analysing variations in prices were sourced from price data collected for the monthly computation of CPI. The data is collected on 307 items from across all 16 regions in Ghana. Information on 10 food items was used. All values are in Ghana cedis. The data used include prices and quantities of food items collected across all outlets in all 16 regions.

2.3. Justification for the Selection of Food Items

This report presents price variability on 10 selected staple food items. Items in the inflation basket that were considered for the analysis were food items in the inflation basket on which prices were collected for the month of February 2024. Items with a standardisable unit of measurement, i.e., litres or kg were eligible for inclusion.

The selection of the items was done through a multi-stage selection process that is described below:

- a. The first stage of selection of food items for the analysis was based on the relative weights of these items in the inflation basket which represented their average share of household expenditure in the GLSS 7. Items in the top 50 items ranked by their weights in the inflation basket were selected.
- b. The second selection criterion was for the food item to have at least 10 standardisable price points in at least 10 regions. Price points for items measured in non-standardised units such as pans were excluded at this level. The rationale for including the number of price points as a criterion is to ensure that there are enough price points to compute meaningful statistics for each region and to have items available in more than half of the administrative regions. At the end of the selection process, beef, bread, noodles, cooking oil, imported rice, milk, iodated salt, beans, tomato paste, and yam made up the list of items used for the analysis.

Based on the selection criteria, milk was the only food item out of the 10 to have the requisite at least 10 standardisable price points in all 16 regions. Bread and beans had the fewest regions (10) with at least 10 price points.

2.4. Methodology

2.4.1. Unit of Measurement

The units of measurement of selected food items were standardised to either kg or litre depending on how they were measured. Units of measurements that could not be standardised into kg or litres were excluded from the analysis. Unit prices per kg/litre were computed and the median of the unit price for each of the selected food items estimated.

2.4.2. Estimation

The median prices for each food item were computed using the standardised units of measurement and dropping extreme price points from the data. The median prices of the 10 selected food items were ranked for each region to determine the top-ranked region for all the selected items. Trend plots are used to show the changes in median prices of the selected food items for each region from January 2023 to February 2024.

The Theil index was then used to estimate the between and within variations in median prices across all regions. To avoid the influence of extreme price values, median prices instead of mean prices were used since the median is not affected by these extreme prices.

2.4.3.Theil Index

The Theil index is a measure of inequality that provides information on the contribution of within group and between group inequality to overall inequality. The items that have been used for the within-group and between-group variation computations are the same as those used in the rest of the report. To ensure that extreme unit prices do not affect the estimates of the inequality, outliers were dropped before the Theil indexes were computed.

2.4.4.Computing of the interquartile range

The interquartile range (IQR) was used as a measure of deviation because the median is used as a measure of central tendency. The interquartile range represents the difference between the third quartile (also known as the 75th percentile) and the first quartile (or the 25th percentile). The larger the interquartile range, the greater the variation within the region.

The interquartile ranges for each selected item in each region were computed to measure the extent to which unit prices deviate from the median price within the region. The interquartile range measures within-regional variations of unit prices from the various outlets in the region where prices were collected.

3. KEY FINDINGS

3.1. Median Prices of Items

The median price per kg of beef in Ahafo Region (GH¢ 80.00), is more than three times the median price in the Upper East (GH¢ 25.00), and more than twice the median price in Northern (GH¢ 33.45).

Ahafo Region has the highest median price (GH¢ 45.00) per kg of bread, which is about four times the median price in the Volta (GH¢ 11.11), and about three times the prices in Upper East (GH¢ 15.68), and Eastern (GH¢ 15.15) regions.

The median price per litre of cooking oil is highest in the Oti Region (GH¢ 40.00), which is more than twice the median price in the Savannah Region (GH¢ 18.00), the region with the lowest median price.

Greater Accra Region has the highest median price (GH¢ 22.00) per kg of imported rice, which is about 27 percent higher than the national average (GH¢ 17.20)

Milk per litre has the least median price variability across regions with the median price ranging between GH¢43.75 (Volta) to GH¢53.82 (Bono East)

Seven regions have the same median price per kg of tomato paste (GH¢ 35.71). However, there is about GH¢ 12.00 difference between this median price and the highest recorded (Ahafo, GH¢ 47.62).

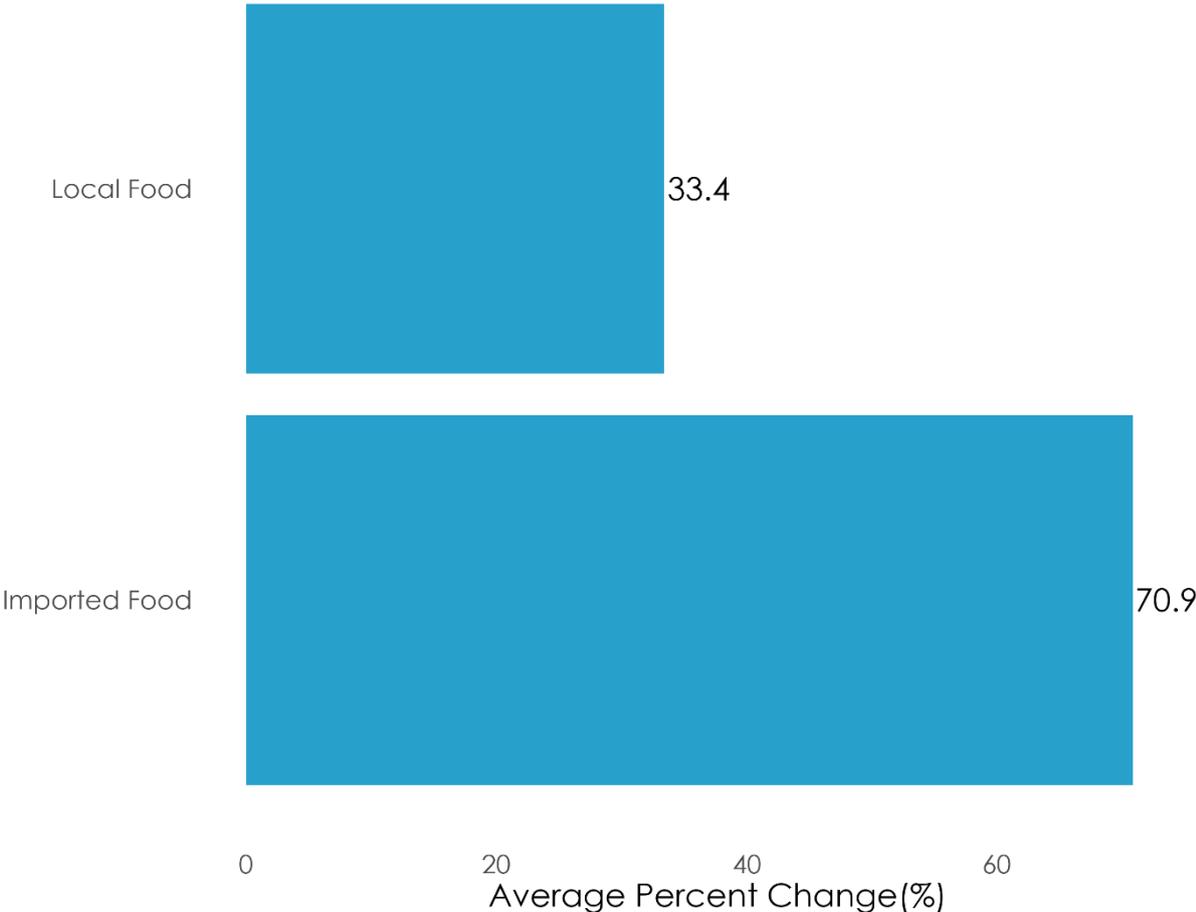
TABLE 1: MEDIAN PRICES OF SELECTED FOOD ITEMS IN GH¢ PER KG/LITRE FOR FEBRUARY 2024 BY REGION

Region	Imported Rice	Bread	Noodles	Beef	Milk	Cooking Oil	Beans	Yam	Tomato Paste	Iodated Salt
National	17.20	21.60	40.00	50.00	46.88	26.67	13.18	6.67	33.33	10.00
Ahafo	18.89	45.00	57.14	80.00	46.67	28.57	15.00	6.09	47.62	12.50
Ashanti	17.55	23.90	49.98	70.00	43.75	24.00	14.45	6.84	28.57	10.00
Bono	16.00	22.08	20.00	40.00	48.53	27.50	15.56	5.24	35.71	10.00
Bono East	15.80	-	64.29	60.00	53.82	-	9.48	5.00	33.33	6.99
Central	16.00	23.08	24.50	62.00	40.62	19.40	12.25	6.47	28.57	10.00
Eastern	18.00	15.15	24.00	50.00	50.00	26.67	17.09	9.95	30.95	10.00
Greater Accra	22.00	24.12	47.00	54.00	50.00	20.00	18.33	8.50	35.71	9.94
North East	18.00	25.00	-	-	50.00	-	7.50	-	35.71	10.00
Northern	18.00	21.75	-	33.45	47.06	25.64	12.33	6.06	35.71	10.00
Oti	17.00	23.31	64.29	-	45.94	40.00	11.41	5.18	35.71	12.50
Savannah	16.90	23.36	57.14	47.17	48.44	18.00	13.75	4.62	28.57	11.00
Upper East	17.00	15.68	38.00	25.00	46.67	32.00	7.56	4.20	35.71	10.00
Upper West	15.80	18.93	25.75	50.00	45.31	23.34	8.93	4.83	-	10.00
Volta	18.00	11.11	-	50.00	43.75	31.34	14.14	5.52	28.57	4.60
Western	16.90	23.29	32.00	50.00	46.67	22.00	13.12	9.81	35.71	12.00
Western North	16.80	23.26	22.22	-	50.00	33.56	15.24	9.46	38.10	17.78

3.2 Percentage Change in Prices

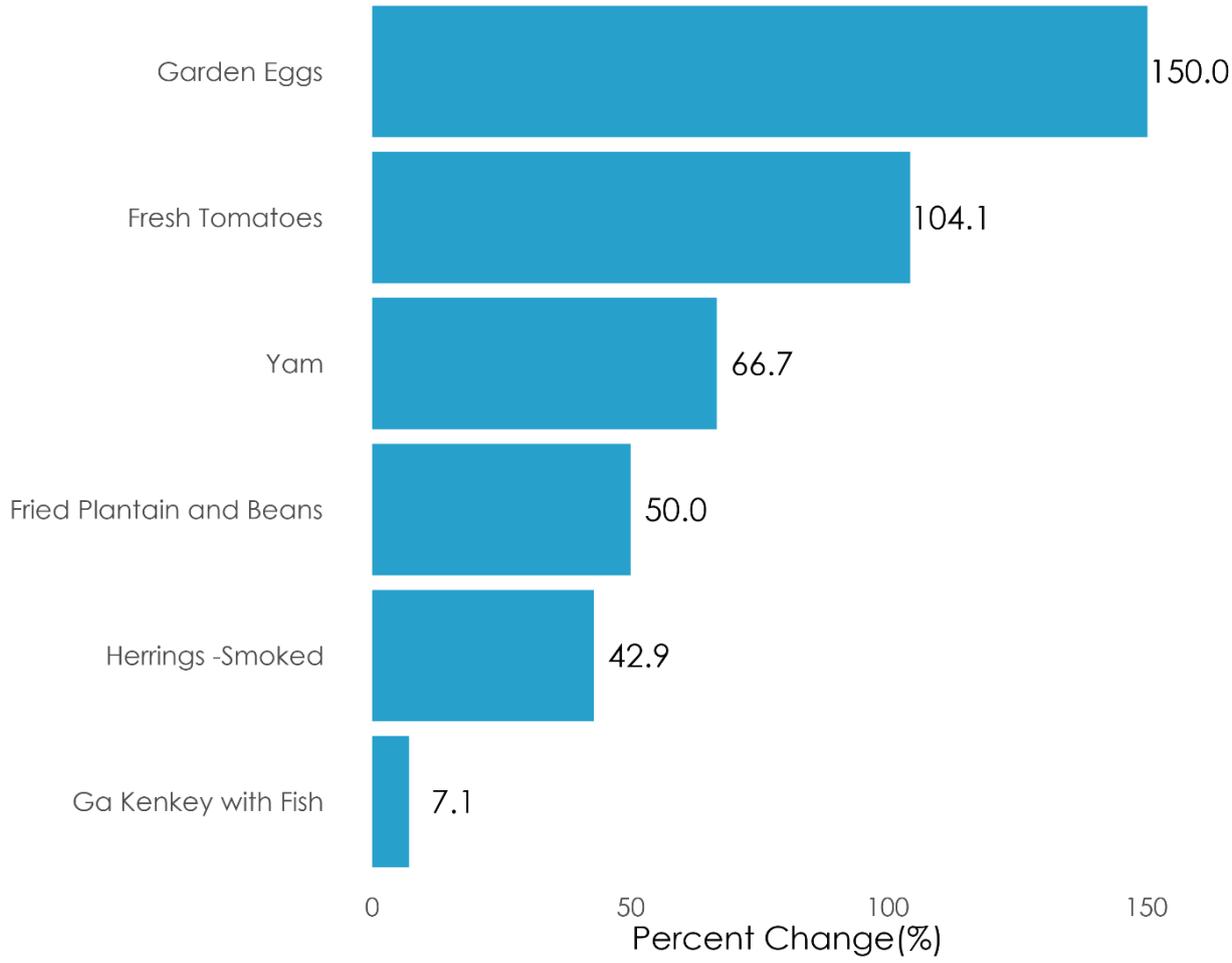
Between February 2023 and February 2024, the average percentage change in prices of imported food items is more than twice (70.9%) the average percentage change in prices of local food (33.4%).

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PRICES OF LOCAL AND IMPORTED FOOD BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2023 AND FEBRUARY 2024



Among the six selected local food items, the percentage change in prices of garden eggs is the highest (150.0%) between February 2023 and February 2024. Raw local foods (garden eggs, fresh tomatoes, and yam) experienced the highest percentage changes in prices, while processed local foods had a lower percentage change in prices between the two periods.

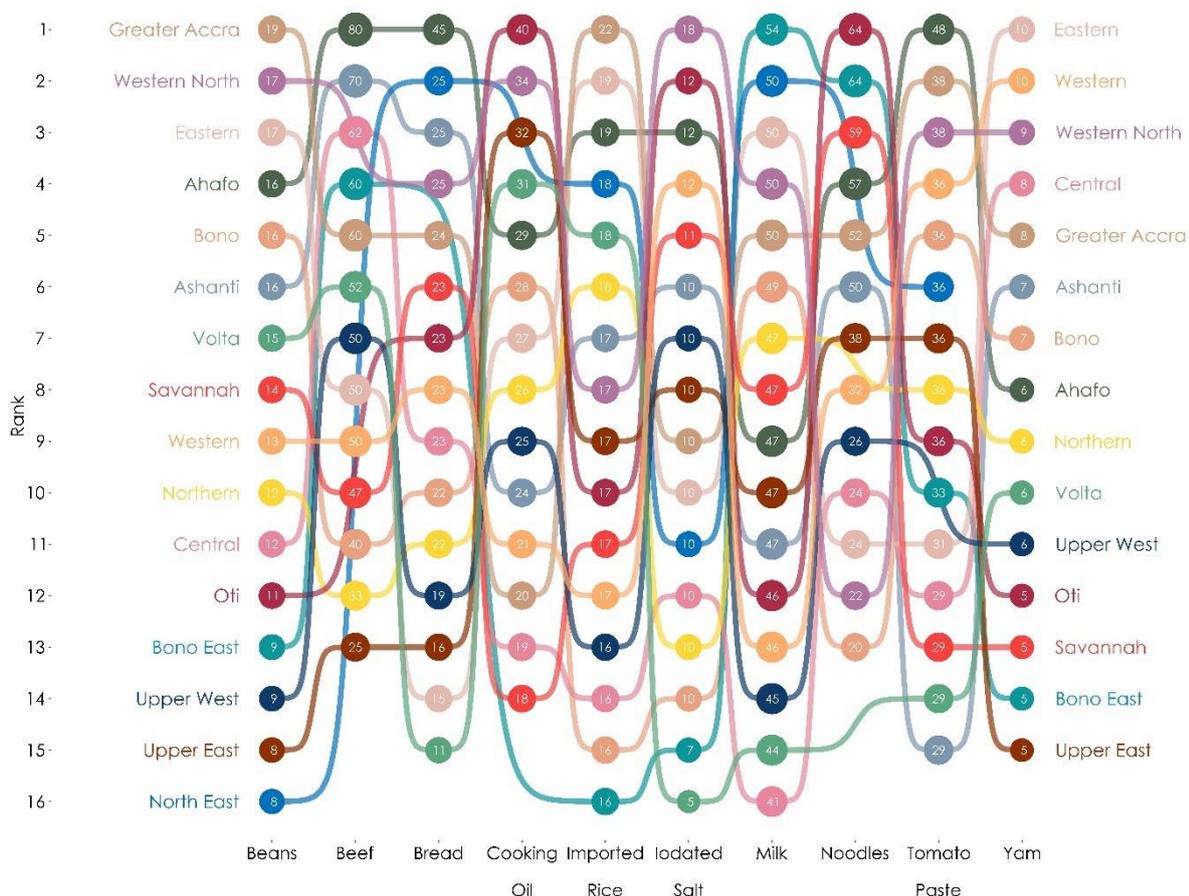
FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PRICES OF SOME SELECTED LOCAL FOOD BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2023 AND FEBRUARY 2024



3.3 Ranking of Regions by Median Prices

In February 2024, one region – Ahafo ranked highest in median prices three times; Greater Accra and Oti ranked first for two items each, while Western North, Bono East and Eastern ranked first once.

FIGURE 3: MEDIAN PRICES FOR SELECTED FOOD ITEMS BY REGION



The horizontal axis represents the selected food items while the vertical axis represents the regions and the rank of each region. Median prices are compared across regions and the region with the highest median price is ranked highest. For example, Ahafo Region is ranked highest in the median price of beef with bones, bread, and tomato paste. Each region's ranks can be traced across the various food items by using the colours of the region.

The median prices for six items in the Western North Region were ranked in the top three, and the region's median rank was 3.0, making it the most expensive region for the group of selected food items, followed by Ahafo with a median rank of 3.5.

Upper West Region, with the lowest median rank of 12, was the least expensive region for the 10 selected food items.

TABLE 2: RANKING OF SELECTED FOOD ITEMS IN ALL REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024

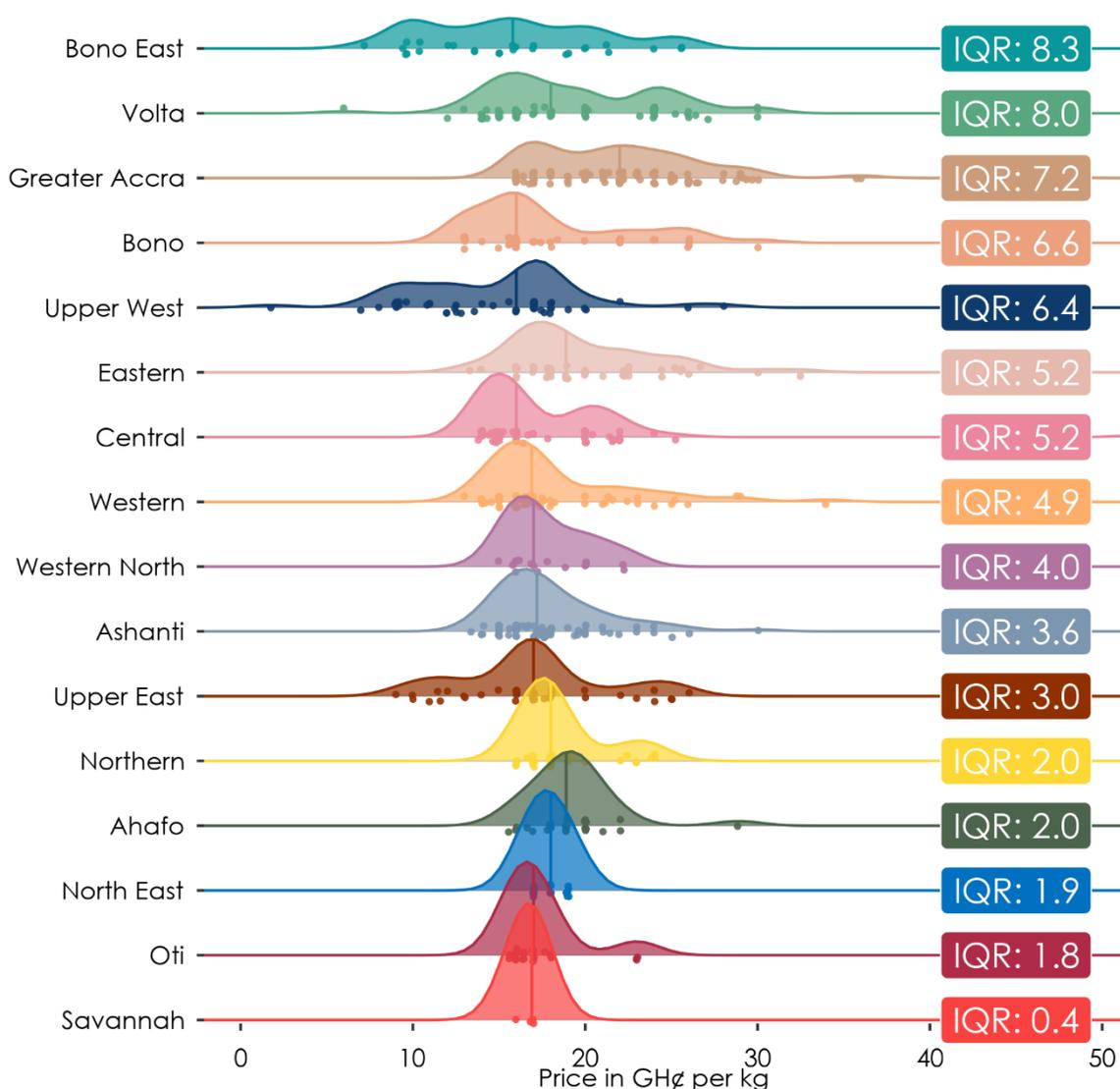
S/N	Region	Median rank across food items	Number of times region had the highest median price	Number of times region was ranked in top 3	Number of items included
1	Western North	3	1	6	9
2	Ahafo	3.5	3	5	10
3	Greater Accra	5	2	4	10
4	Ashanti	6	0	2	10
5	North East	6	0	1	6
6	Eastern	7	1	3	10
7	Western	8	0	1	10
8	Bono	9	0	0	10
9	Northern	9	0	0	9
10	Oti	9	2	3	9
11	Savannah	9	0	1	10
12	Volta	10	0	0	9
13	Upper West	11	0	0	9
14	Bono East	11.5	1	2	8
15	Central	11.5	0	1	10
16	Upper East	12	0	1	10

3.4 Comparison of Within Region and Between Region Differences of Prices

The figures in this section present density plots of all prices for each selected food item. The bell-shaped area shows observations clustered around the median price. The peak of the distribution represents the median price with outliers spreading through the tails. Regions are ranked by the size of the interquartile range which represents the extent of the within region variation in prices. The list of median prices and interquartile ranges of prices of the selected food items by region is presented in the appendix.

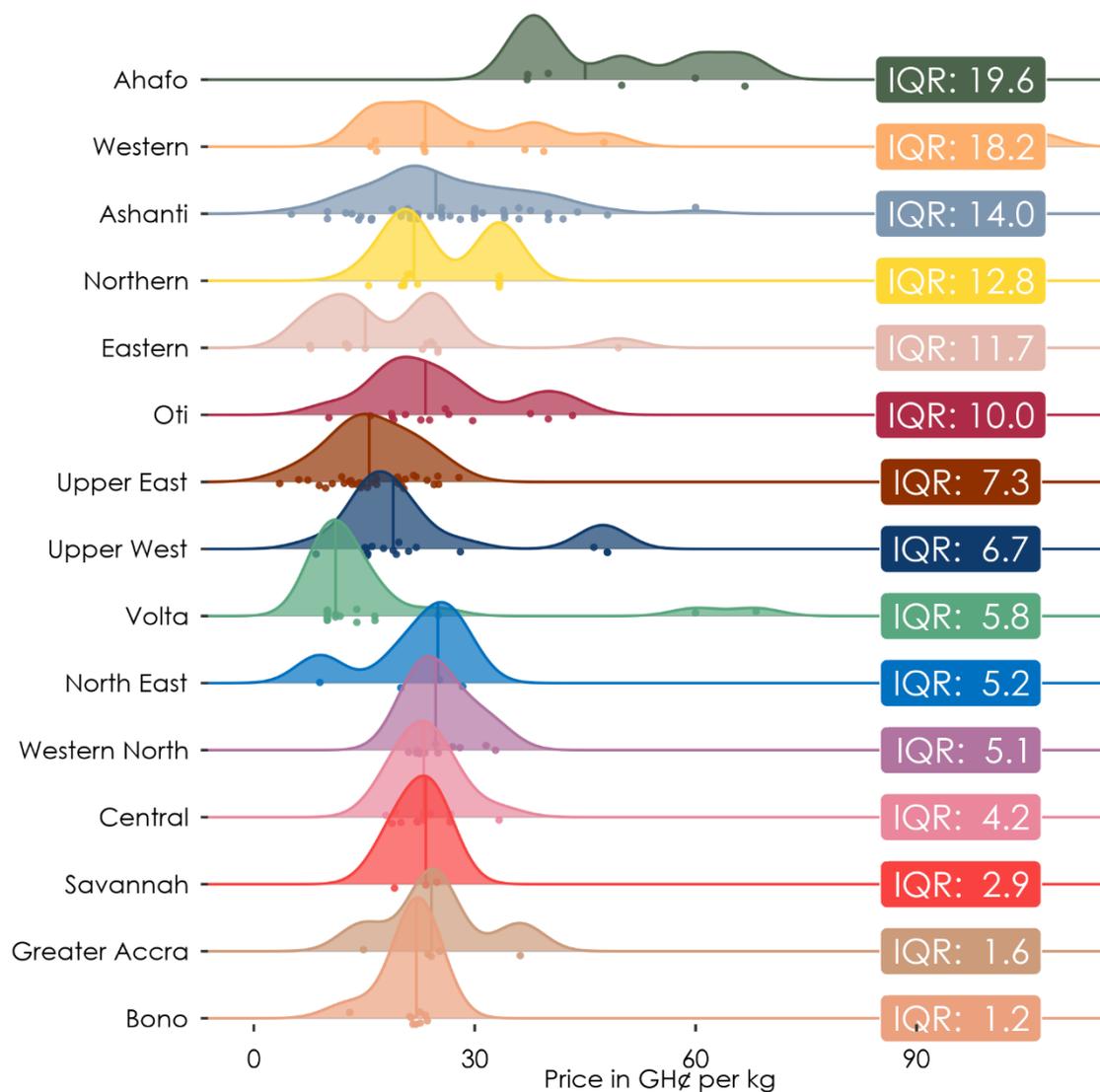
The within region price variability for imported rice is highest in the Bono East (8.3), which is more than twenty times the within region variability in the Savannah Region (0.4), the lowest ranked.

FIGURE 4: Price of imported rice within and between regions in February 2024



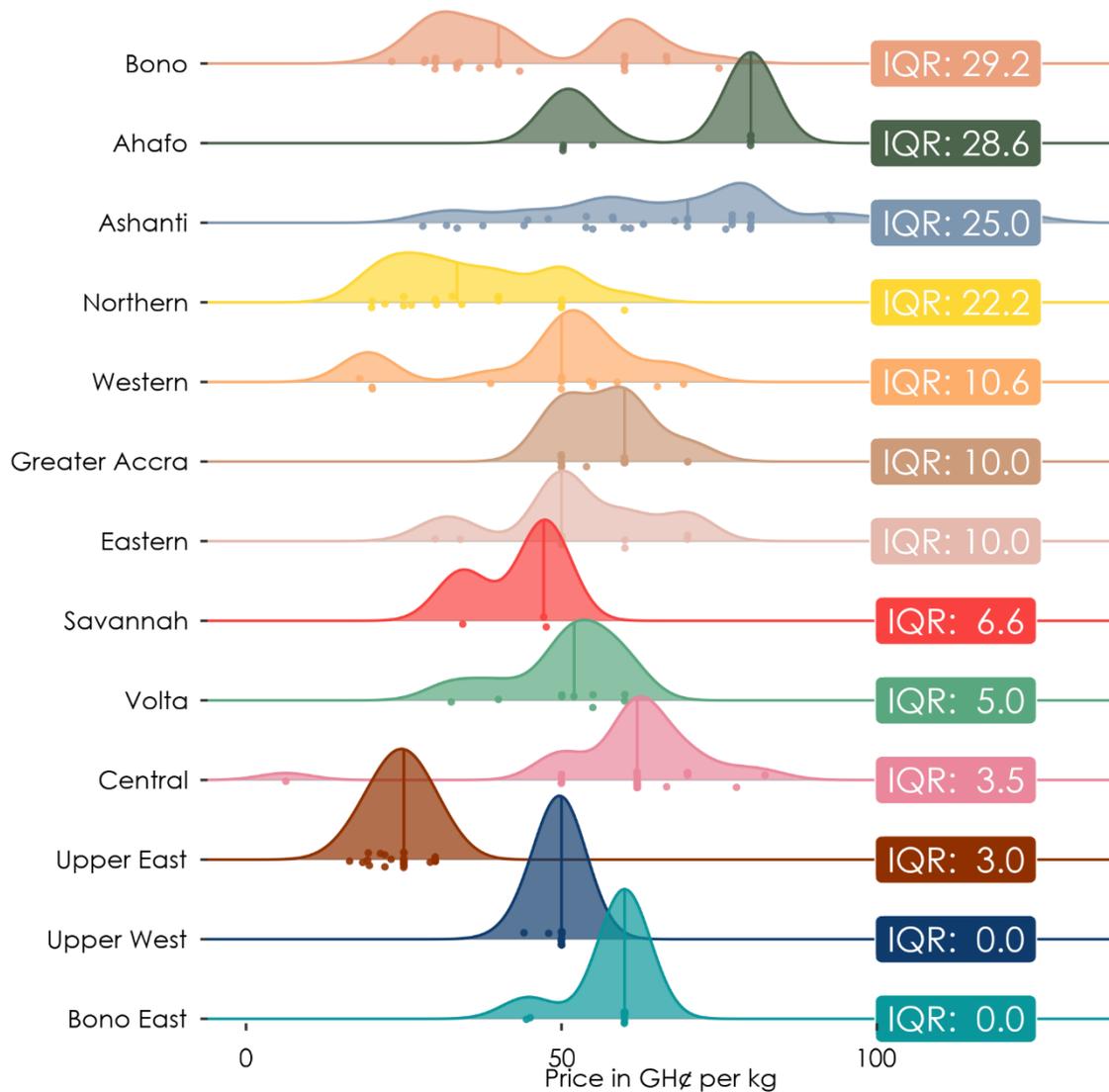
The deviation of prices from the median price of bread per kg is highest in the Ahafo Region (19.6). This deviation is about 15 times the deviation in the Bono Region (1.2), the region with the lowest deviation.

FIGURE 5: PRICE OF BREAD WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



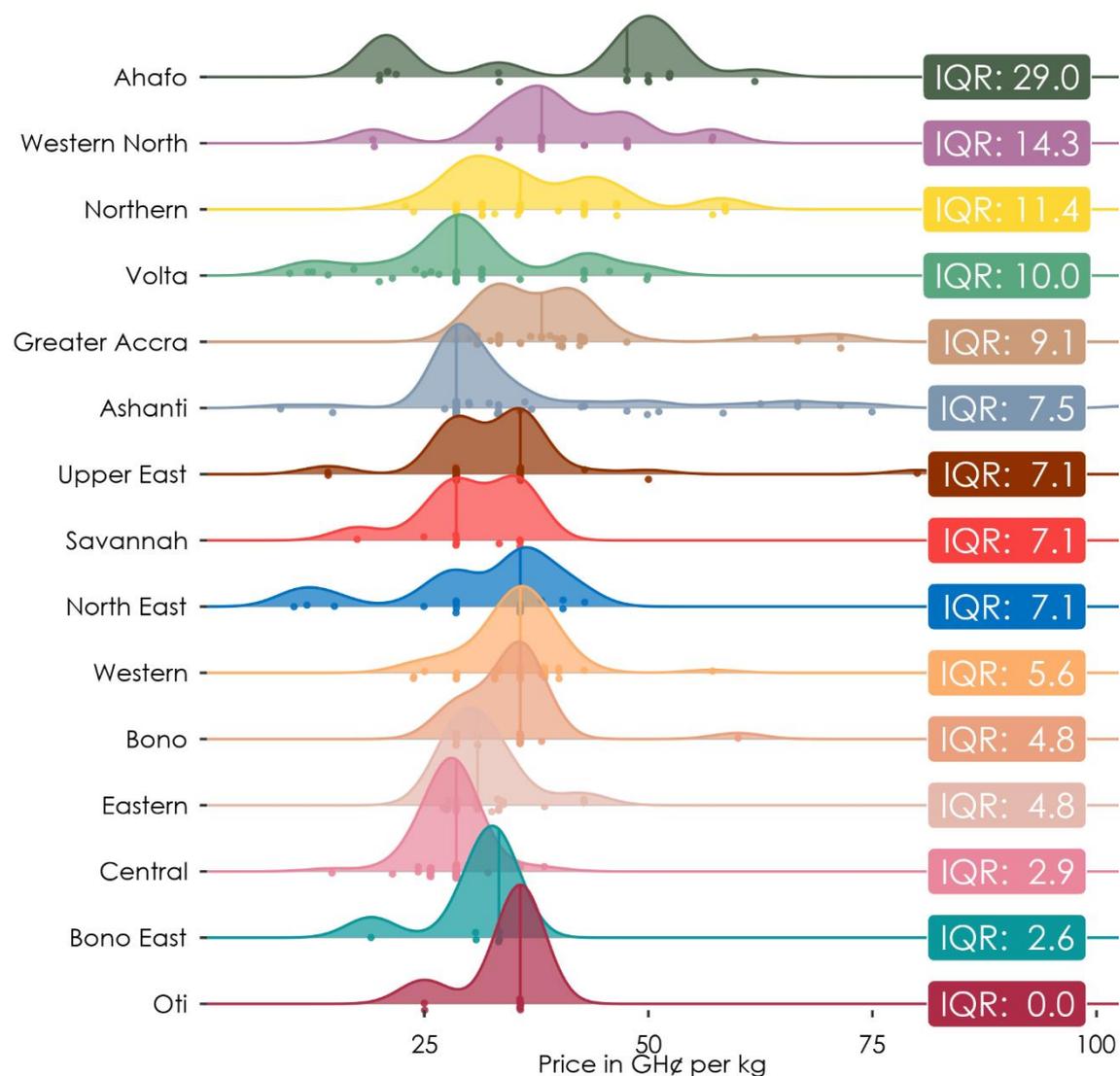
Upper West and Bono East regions record zero IQR indicating nearly equal median prices of beef per kg in these regions.

FIGURE 6: PRICE OF BEEF WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



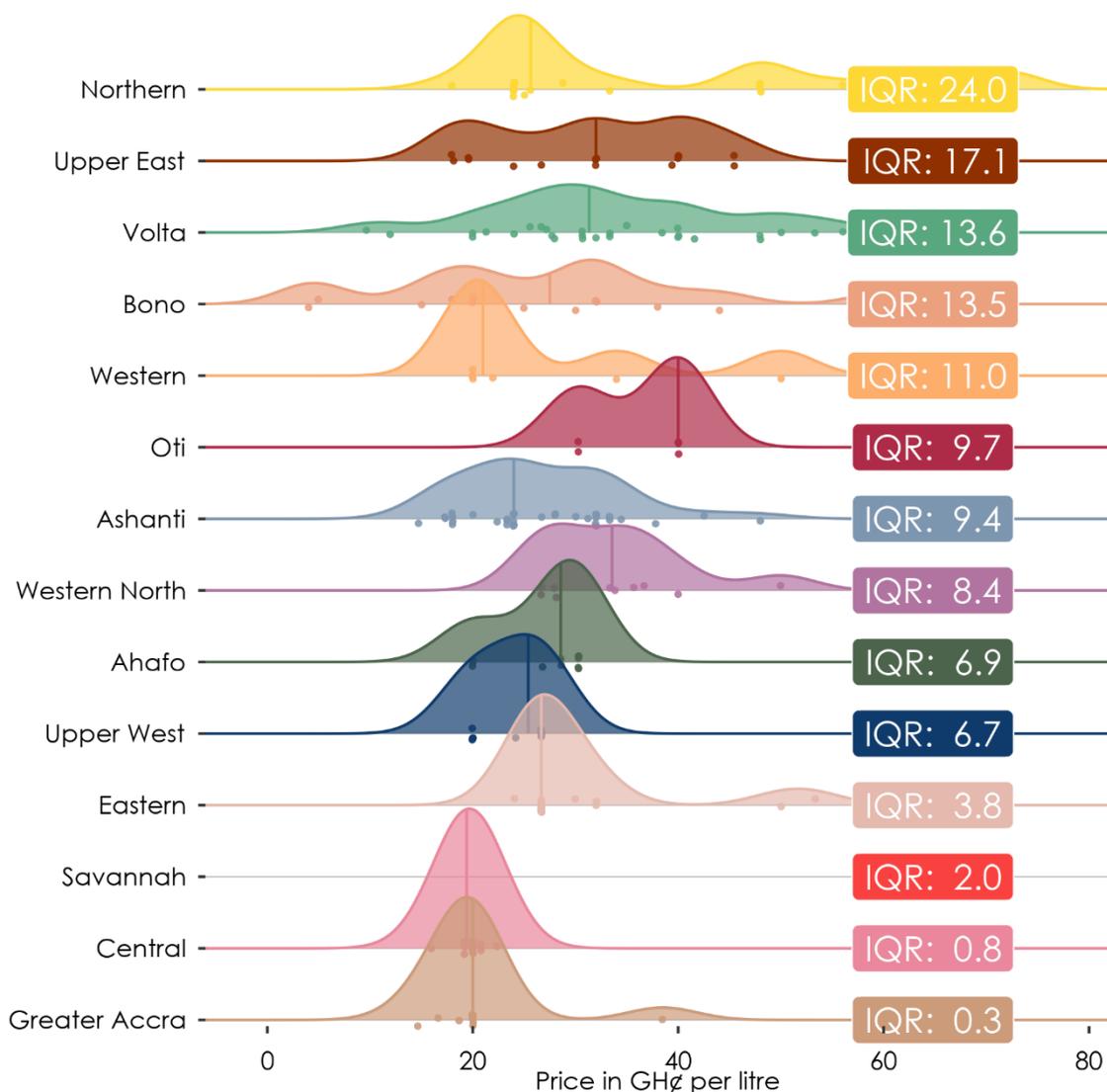
The deviation in median prices for tomato paste is highest in the Ahafo Region (29.0) which is more than three times as high as the Greater Accra Region (9.1), the region with the third highest median price.

FIGURE 7: PRICE OF TOMATO PASTE WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



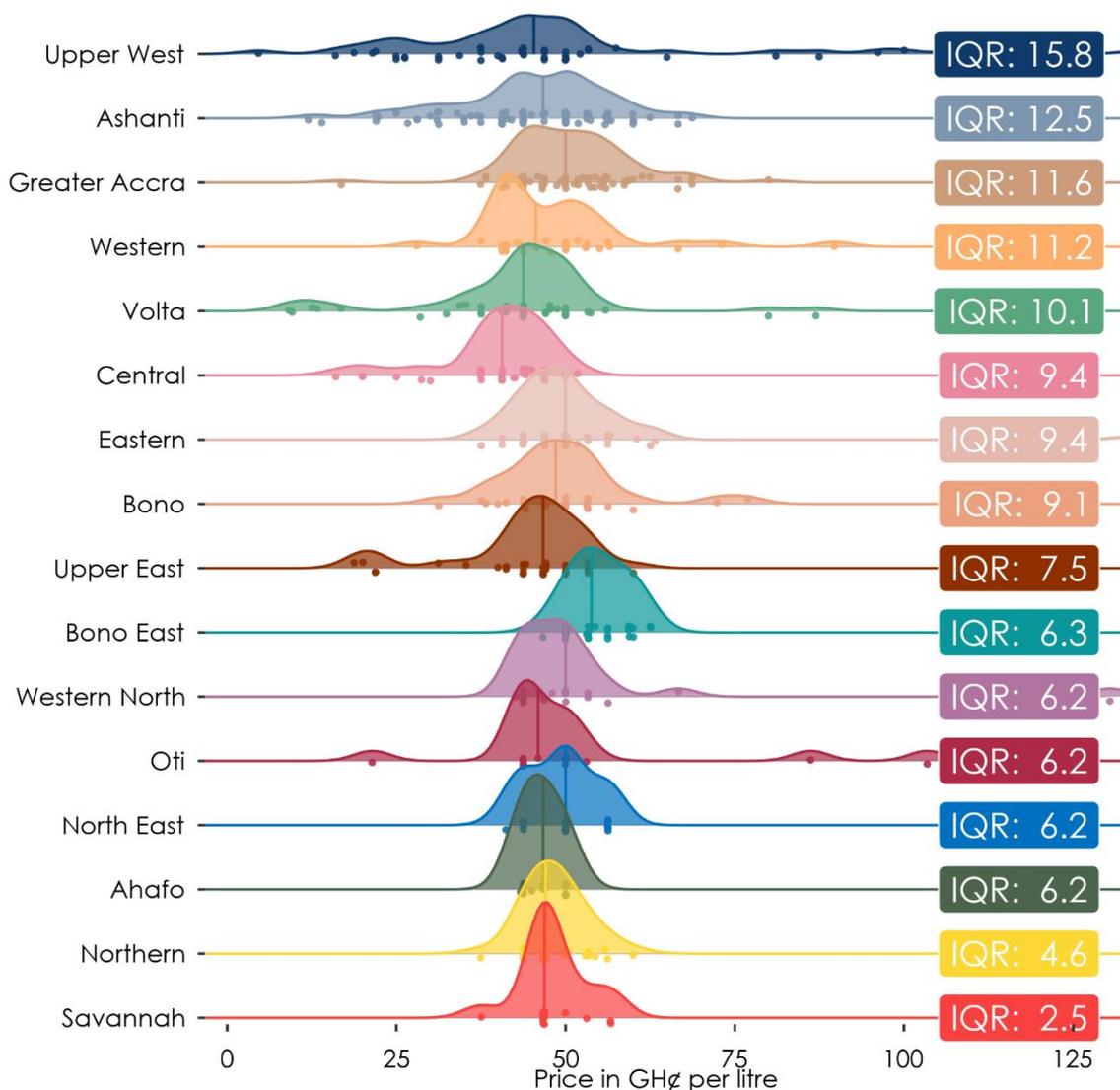
The within region variation in prices of cooking oil is highest in Northern Region (24.0) and is more than twice that of the Oti Region (9.7), which recorded the highest median price.

FIGURE 8: PRICE OF COOKING OIL WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



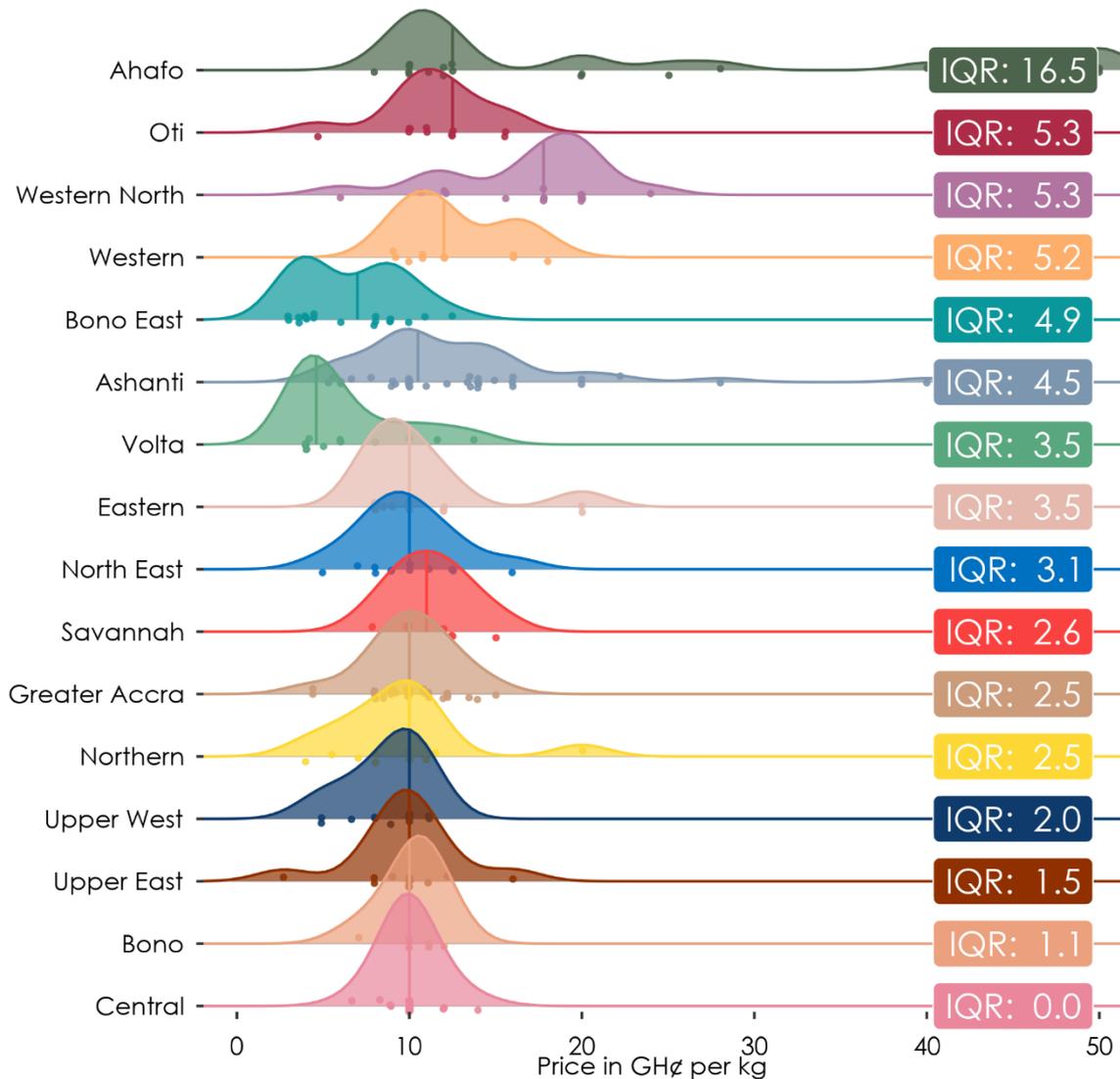
The variation in the unit prices of milk is highest in the Upper West Region (15.8), which is about six times the dispersion in Savannah (2.5), the region with the lowest variation.

FIGURE 9: PRICE OF MILK WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



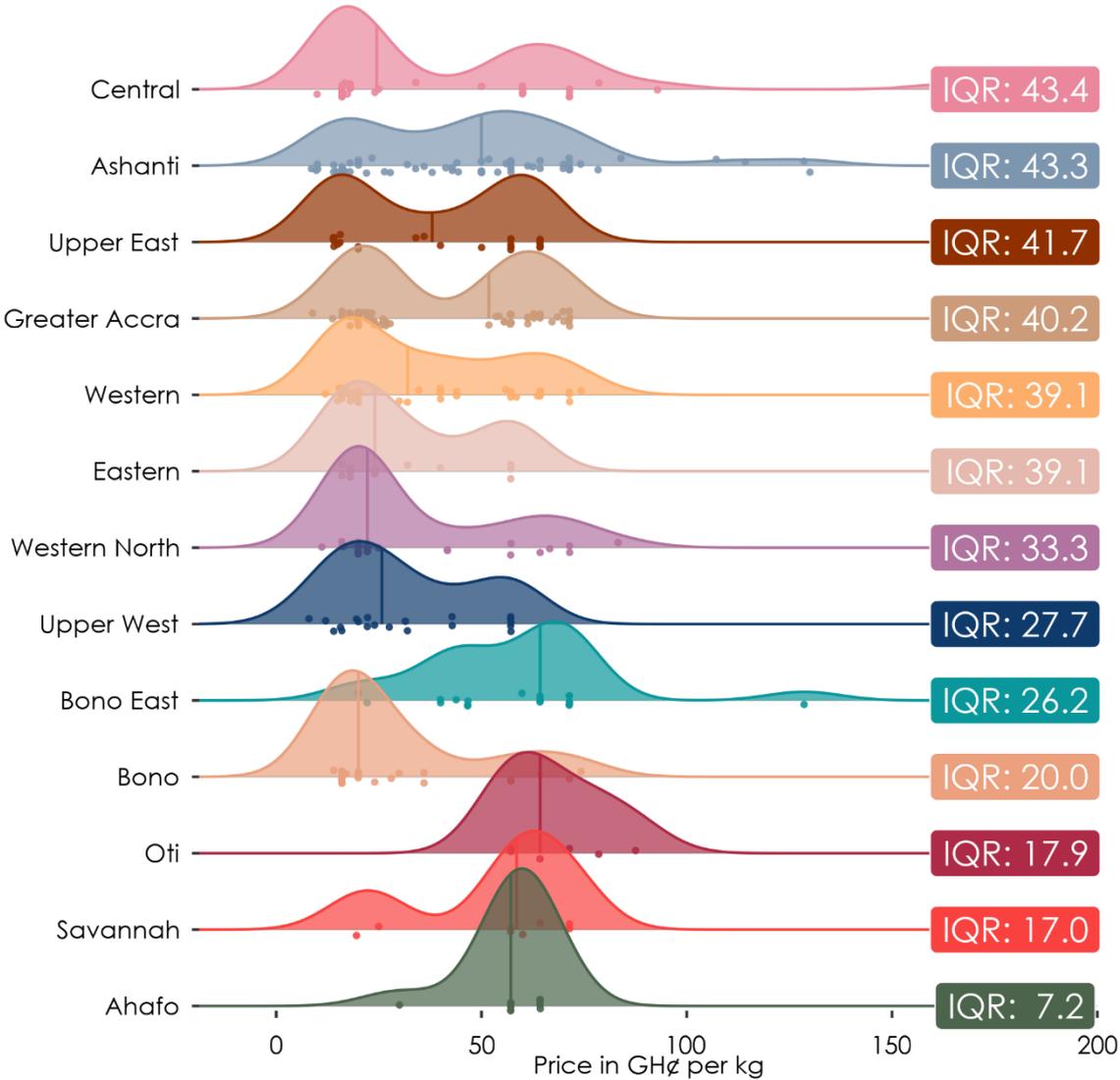
Within region variation in prices of iodated salt is highest in Ahafo Region (16.5), which is more than three times that of the Western North, the region with the highest median price (GH¢ 17.78).

FIGURE 10: PRICE OF IODATED SALT WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



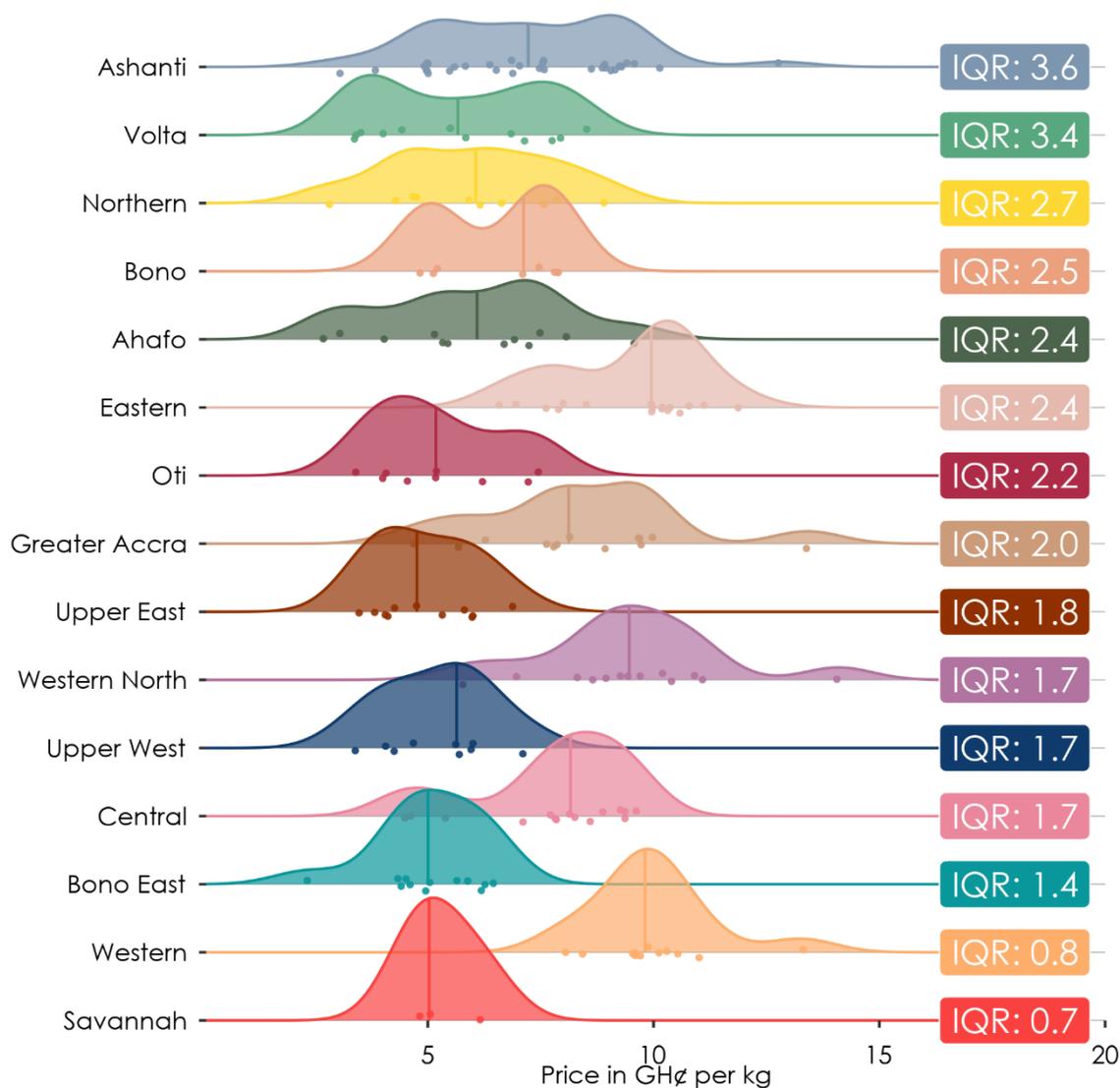
Within region variation in unit prices of noodles is highest in Central Region (43.4) despite the region having one of the lowest median prices for food.

FIGURE 11: PRICE OF NOODLES WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



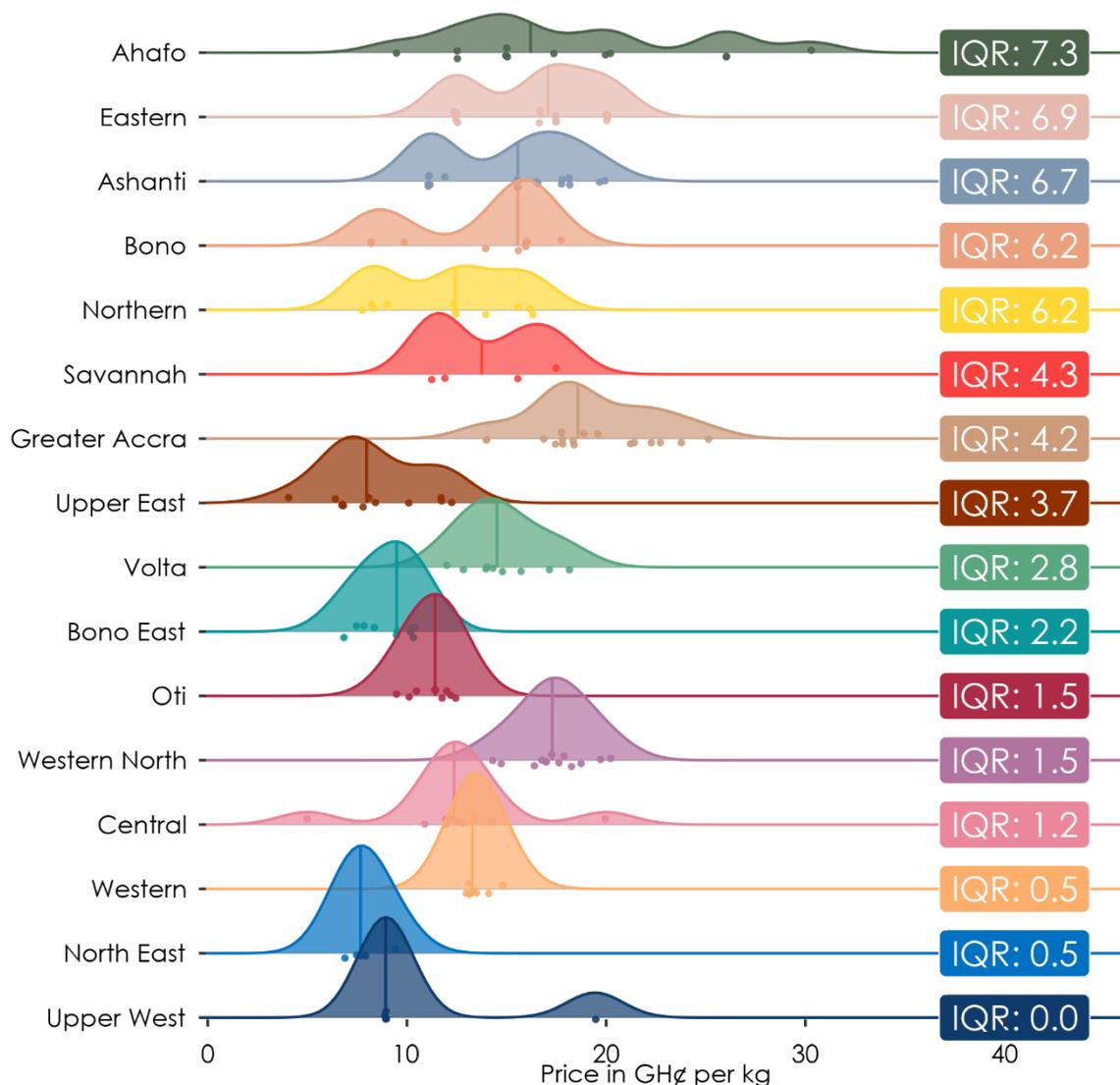
The median price of yam per kg is highest for Western Region (GH¢ 9.81) with the within region variation in prices for the region being the second lowest (0.8).

FIGURE 12: PRICE OF YAM WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



The region with the second lowest median prices per kilogram of beans [Upper East (GH¢ 7.56)] has a within region variation of (3.7), which is more than twice the region (Western North) with the second lowest median price.

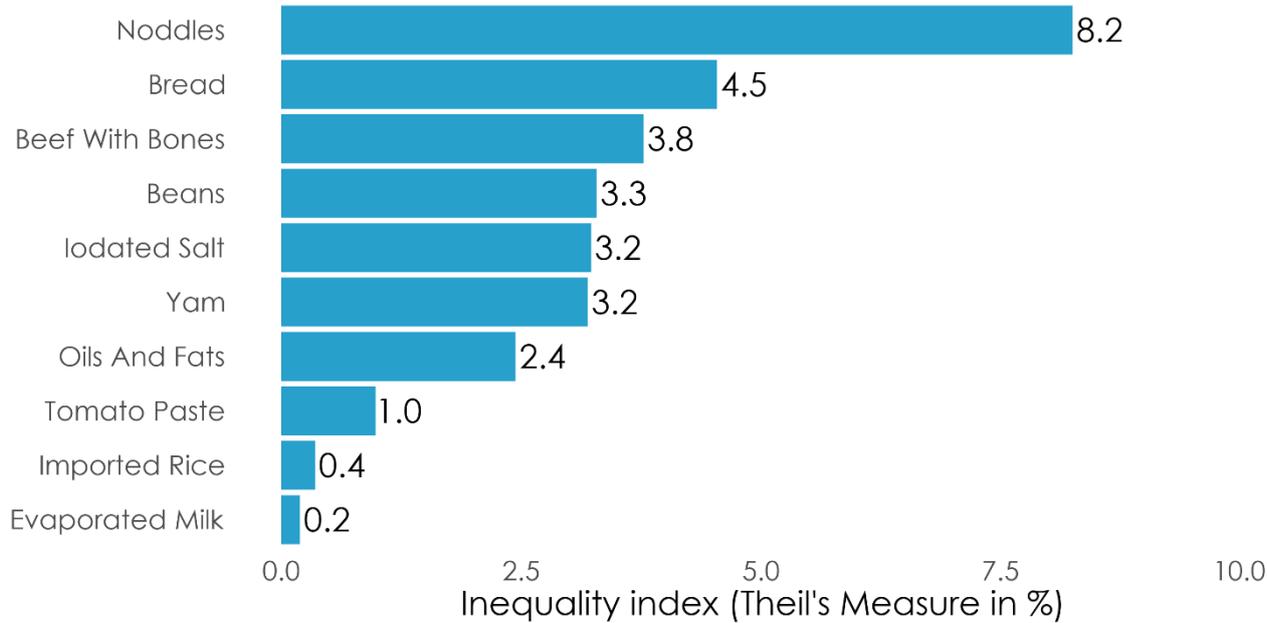
FIGURE 13: PRICE OF BEANS WITHIN AND BETWEEN REGIONS IN FEBRUARY 2024



3.5 Theil Index Comparison of Prices

The median price of noodles is the most unequal between regions (8.2%), which is about 40 times that of milk, the item with the least inequality (0.2 %) across regions.

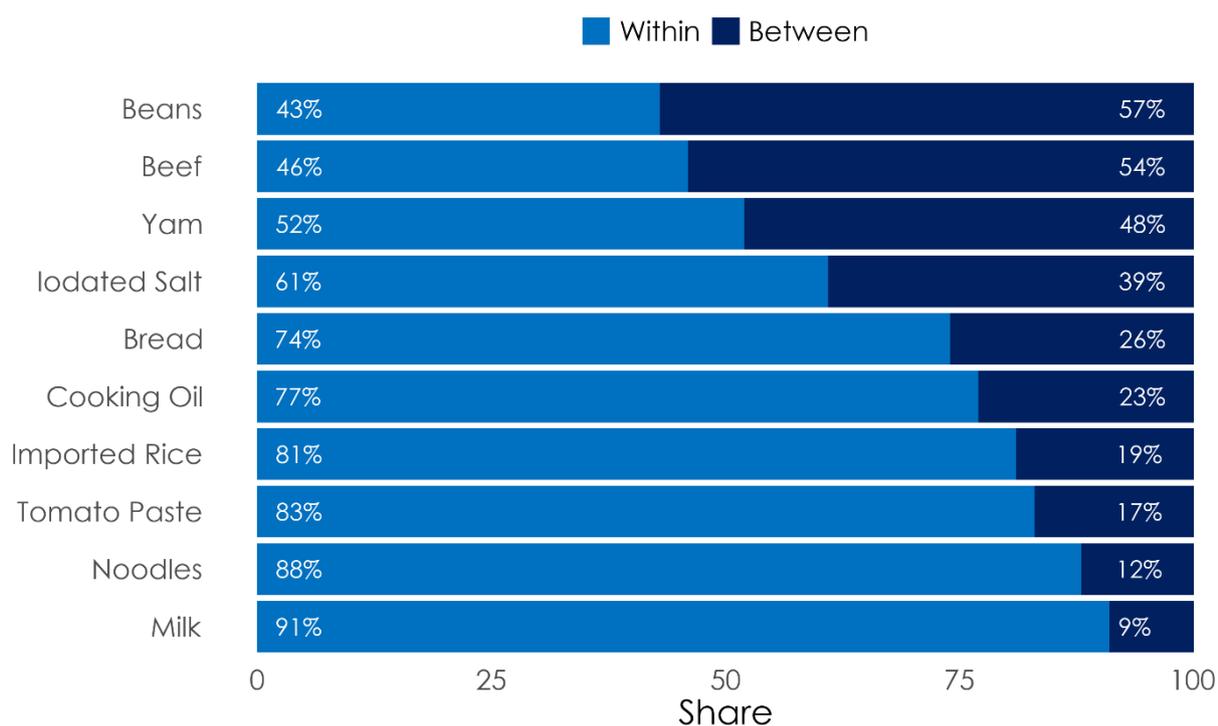
FIGURE 14: THEIL INDEX OF INEQUALITY IN REGIONAL MEDIAN PRICES OF SELECTED FOOD ITEMS



Eight out of the 10 selected food items (yam, iodated salt, noodles, bread, tomato paste, cooking oil, imported rice, milk) have within region inequality higher than between region inequality.

Beans and beef are the only food items having more between region variation in prices than that of within region variation.

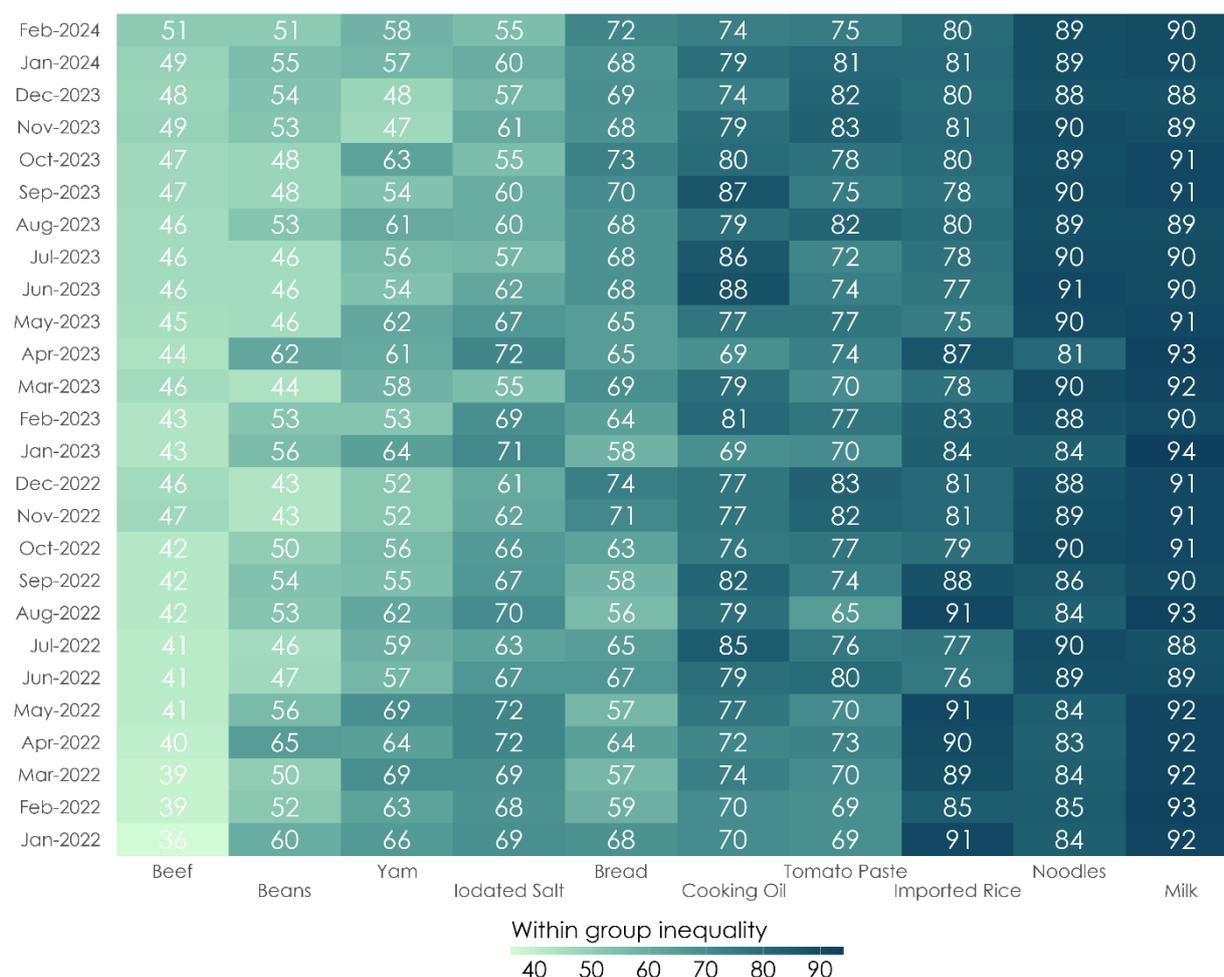
FIGURE 15: SHARE OF WITHIN REGION AND BETWEEN REGION INEQUALITY IN MEDIAN PRICES OF SELECTED FOOD ITEMS



Half of the selected food items experienced an increase in within region inequality [cooking oil (70 to 77), bread (68 to 74), noodles (84 to 88), tomato paste (69 to 83), beef (36 to 46)] between January 2022 and February 2024.

Within region inequality declined in the other five items [imported rice (91 to 81), milk (92 to 91), iodated salt (69 to 61), beans (60 to 43), yam (66 to 52)] over the period.

FIGURE 16: WITHIN REGION INEQUALITY (THEIL INDEX) OF UNIT PRICES OF SELECTED FOOD ITEMS OVER TIME

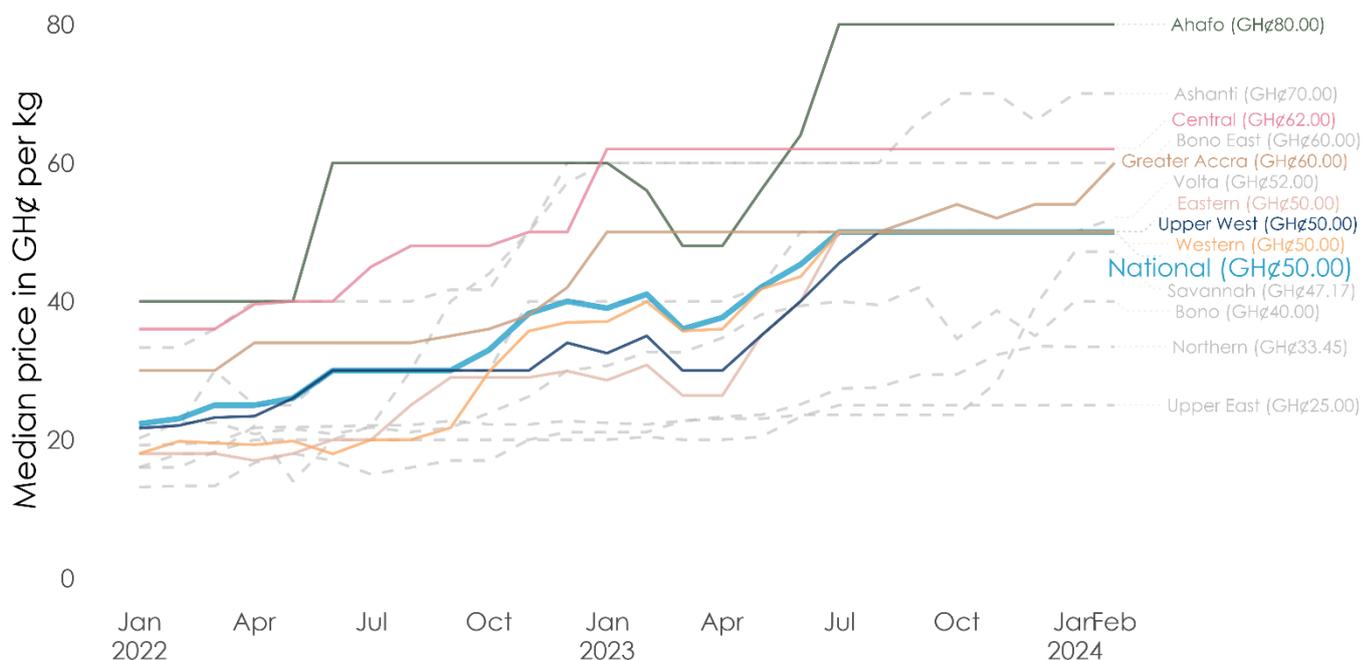


3.6 Prices of Selected Food Items from January 2022 to February 2024

The median price of beef per kg peaked in February 2023, decreased between March and May, peaked again in July 2023 and remained stable until February 2024. The national prices of beef are driven by prices in Greater Accra and Central regions.

The median price of beef per kg in the Ahafo Region declined significantly between February and March 2023, increased again between May and July and remained at GH¢ 80.00 between July 2023 and February 2024.

FIGURE 17: MEDIAN PRICE OF BEEF, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024

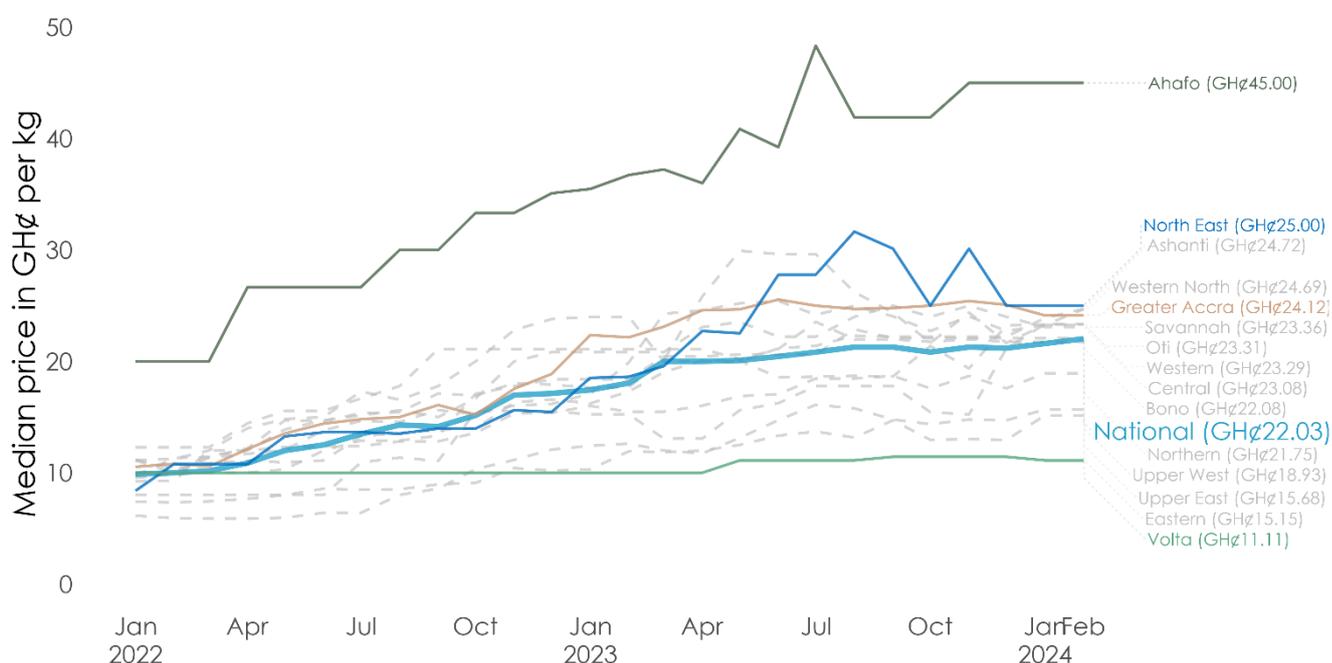


In the reference period, January 2022 to February 2024, the median price of bread per kg was largely driven by prices in the Ahafo Region.

The region's median price (ranging from GH¢20.00 to GH¢45.00) consistently remained about twice the national median price (GH¢10.00 to GH¢24.00) for the period.

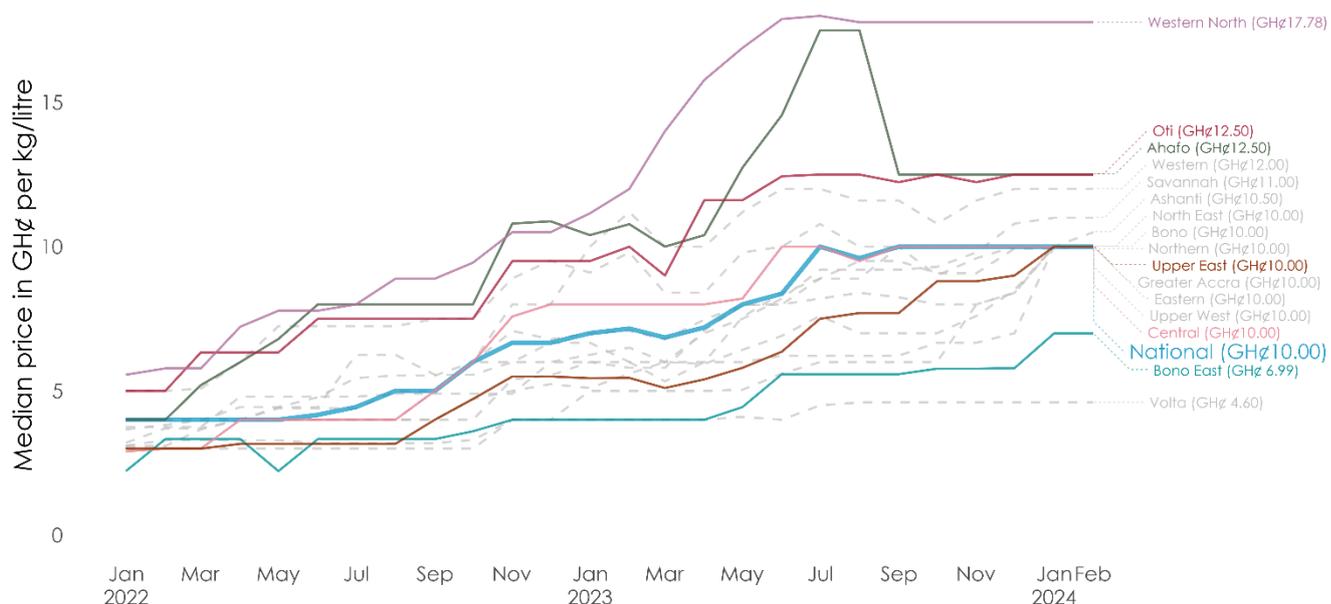
The national median price peaked at the same time (November, 2023) as Ahafo's and remained stable when there was a marginal decline in Ahafo Region.

FIGURE 18: PRICE OF BREAD, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024



The median price of iodated salt per kg consistently remained highest for Western North Region, with the region's price consistently remaining four times higher than the price in Bono East, the region with the lowest median price.

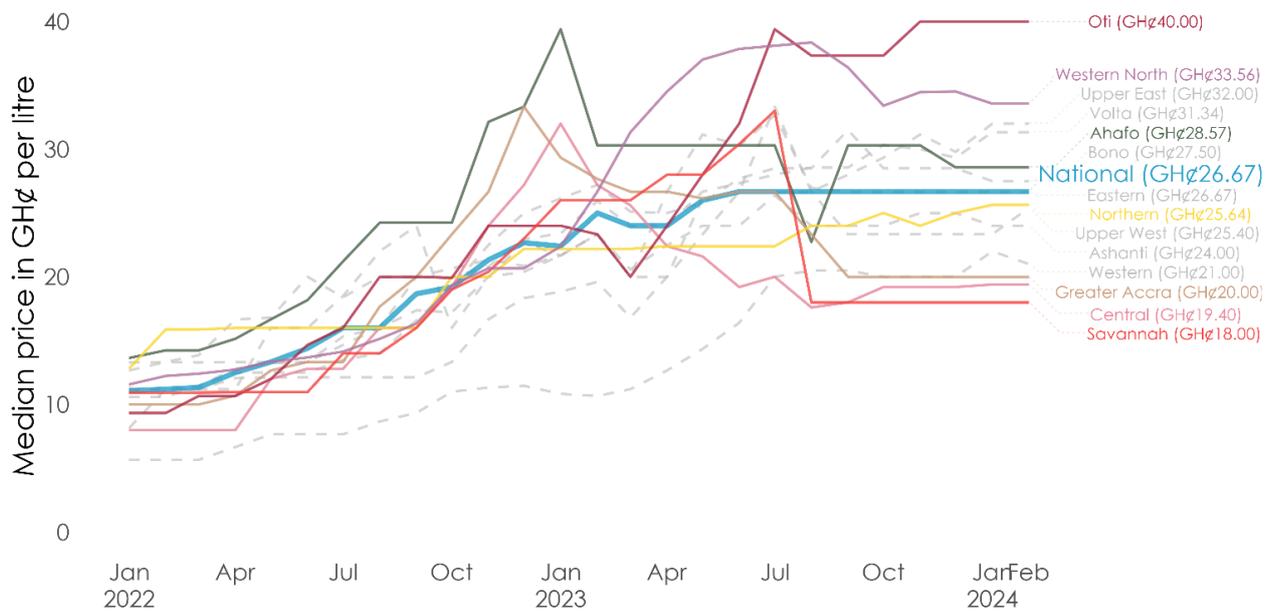
FIGURE 19: PRICE OF IODATED SALT, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024



Consistently, six regions recorded median prices of cooking oil per litre higher than the national median price.

The median price of cooking oil per litre peaked in Jan 2023, declined for March and April 2023 and continued to increase.

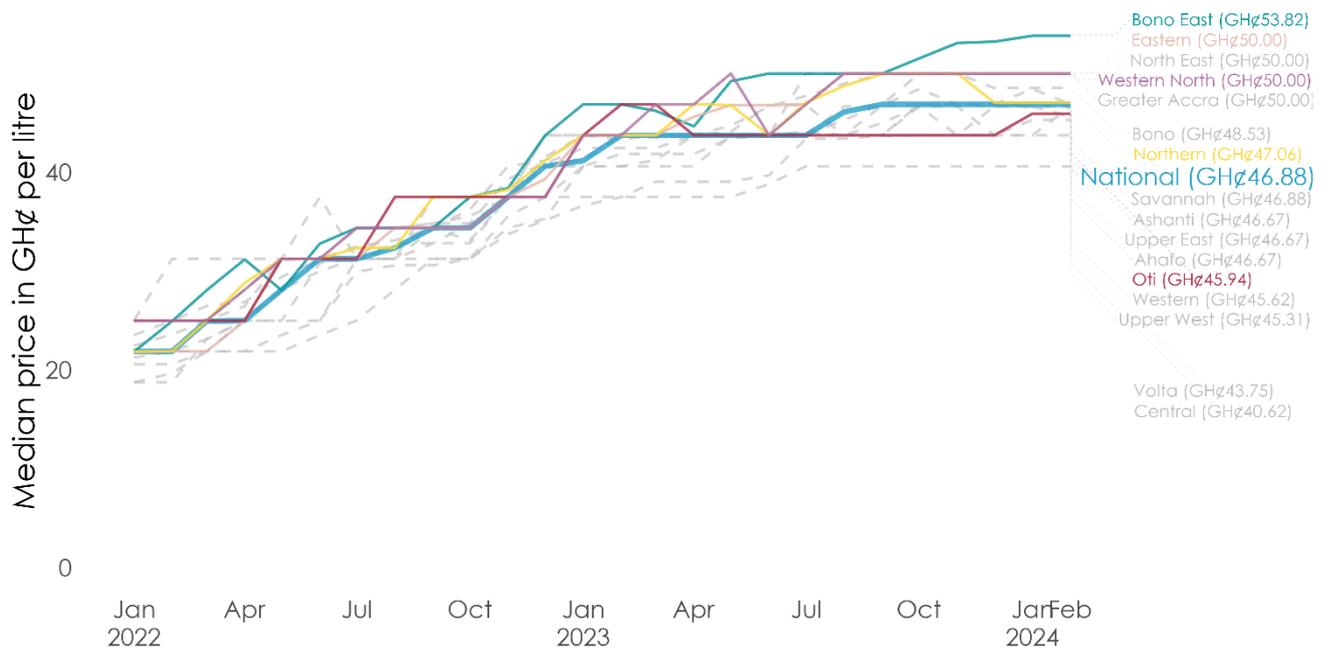
FIGURE 20: PRICE OF COOKING OIL, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024



The price of milk remained stable for five months (October 2023 to February 2024)

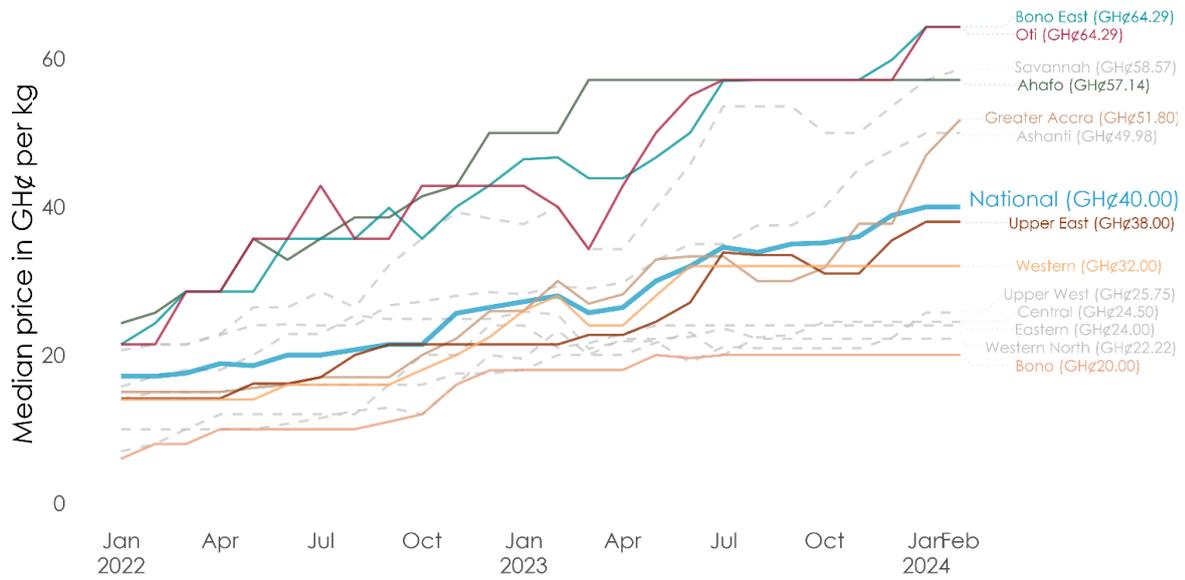
The between region variation in the median price of milk is relatively small for milk as the median price for all regions are clustered around the national median price.

FIGURE 21: PRICE OF MILK, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024



Five regions over the period have consistently recorded median prices of noodles per kg higher than the national median prices.

FIGURE 22: PRICE OF NOODLES, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024

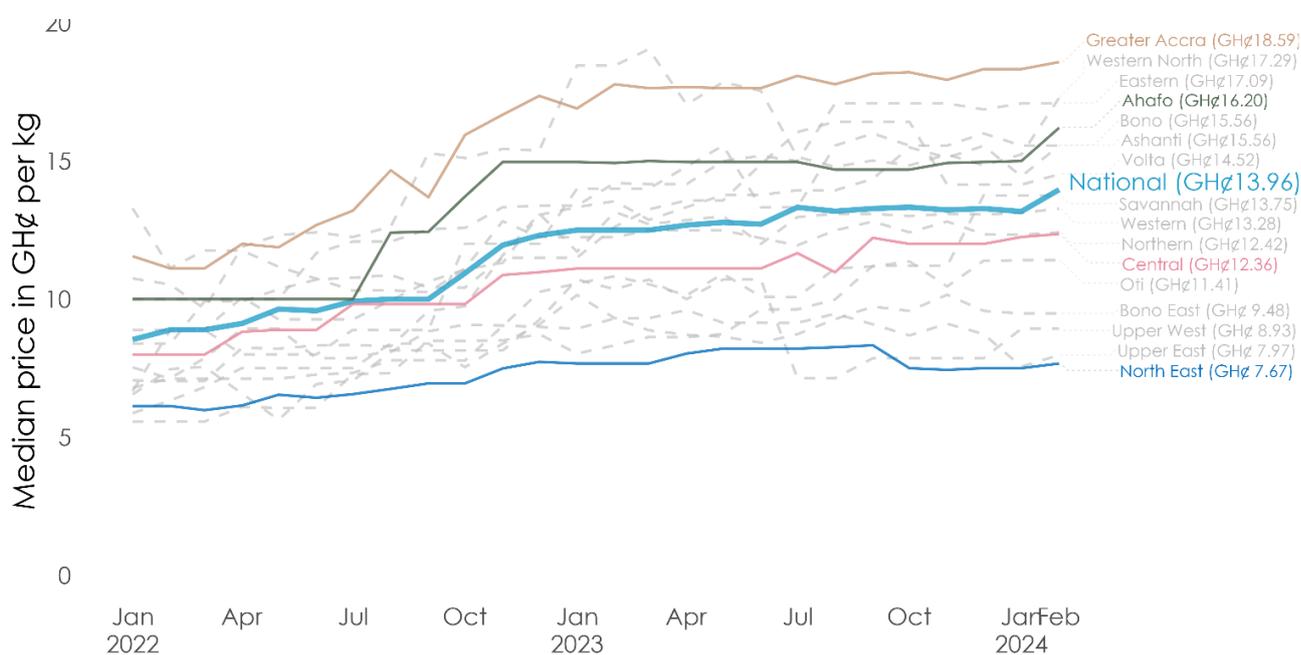


Out of the 16 regions, eight of them consistently recorded median prices of beans per kg higher than the national median prices.

The median price for beans per kg in Greater Accra Region has been about three times the price in North East Region.

The national median price for beans is largely driven by the price in Central Region.

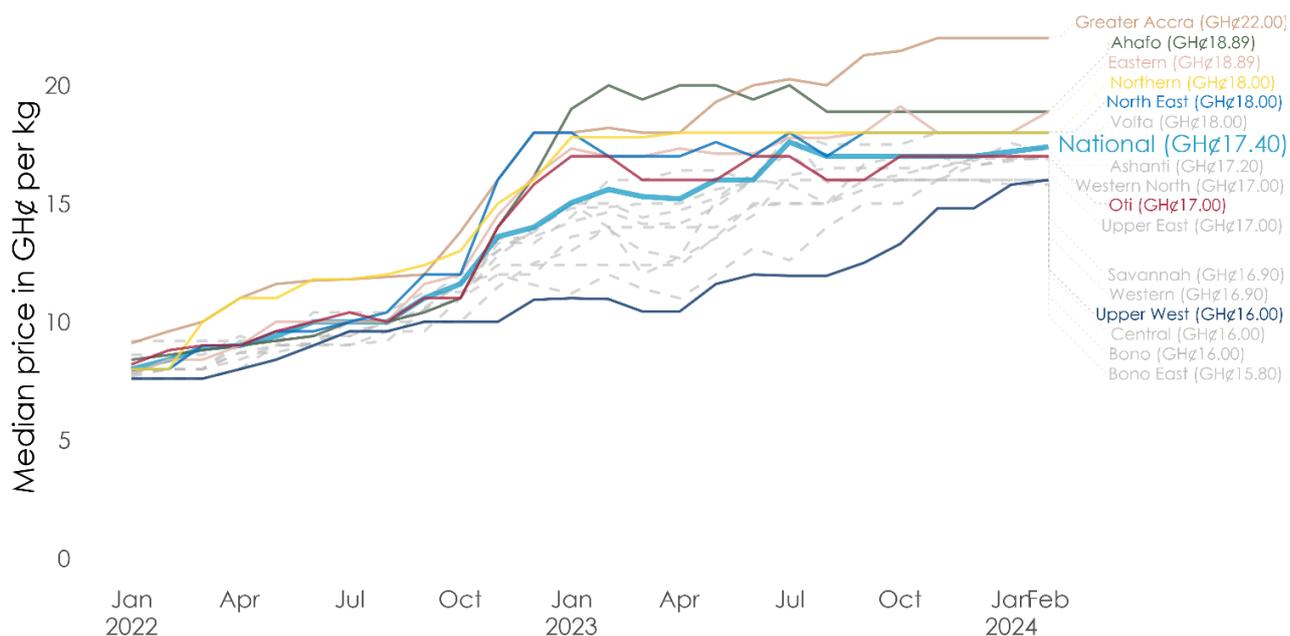
FIGURE 23: PRICE OF BEANS, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024



In February 2024, the median price of imported rice per kg in the Greater Accra Region (GH¢ 22.00) had more than doubled over the 26 month period.

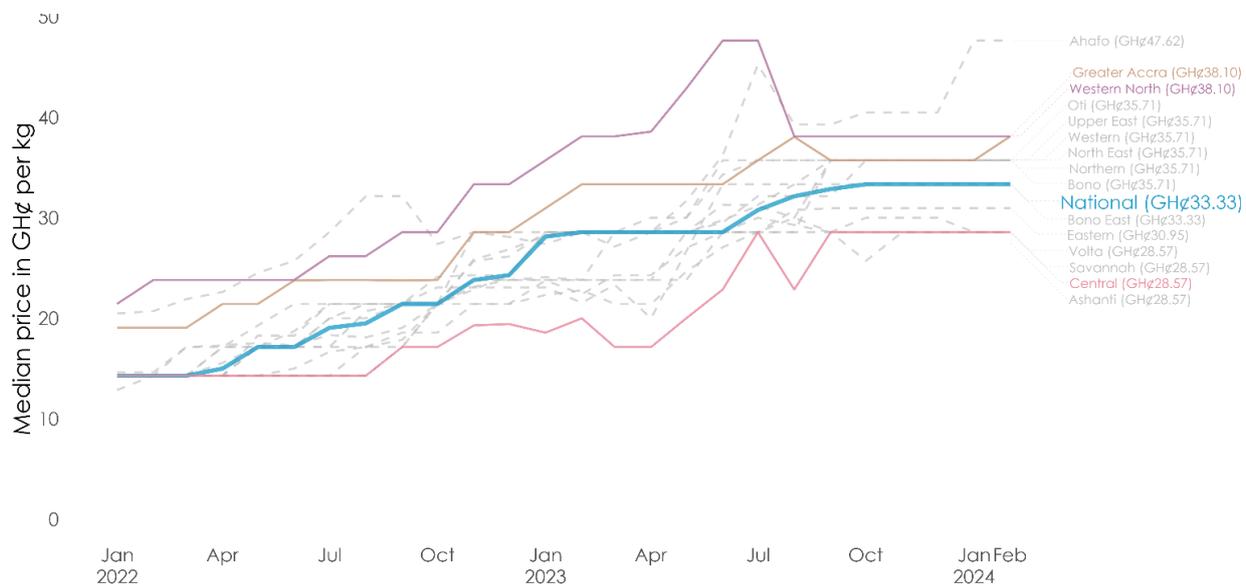
For the 26 month period, the median price of imported rice per kg trended upward in almost all regions and remained lowest in the Upper West Region.

FIGURE 24: PRICE OF IMPORTED RICE, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024



From September 2023 to February 2024, the median price of tomato paste in the Ahafo Region remained the highest, which is about twice the lowest (Central Region).

FIGURE 25: PRICE OF TOMATO PASTE, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024

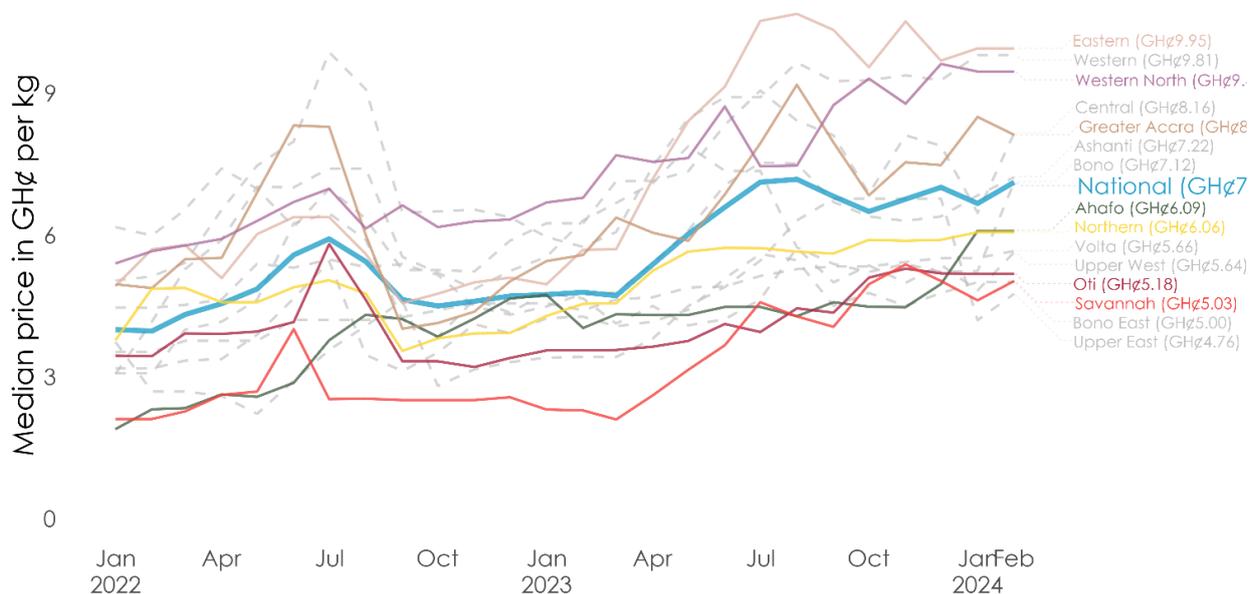


The median price of yam first peaked in July 2022, declined in August, and remained stable until January 2023 and increased until July 2023.

In the over two-year period (January 2022 to February 2024), median prices of yam per kg peaked in the month of July.

The median price of yam consistently remained high in Eastern Region from March 2023 through to February 2024 when it ended with a median price of GH¢ 9.95.

FIGURE 26: PRICE OF YAM, JANUARY 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2024



4. CONCLUSIONS

This report provides information on price variations of 10 selected food items within and across regions from January 2023 to February 2024. The food items were bread, beans, yam, noodles, cooking oil, tomato paste, milk, beef, iodated salt and imported rice. The findings indicate there is substantial variation in prices within and across regions.

The findings from the report show that for the month of February 2024, the Western North Region is the most expensive region of the ten selected food items. The region has the highest median rank and is ranked six times in the top 3 regions for the 10 food items.

An analysis of the share of within region inequality in unit prices of selected food items shows that greater price variations generally exist within regions rather than across regions. Within region inequality is higher than between region inequality for eight of the selected food items. The implications of these findings for consumer decision-making are that purchasing choices can be guided by the knowledge that food prices can vary substantially by outlet.

The findings also reveal that unprocessed local food items such as fresh tomatoes, yam and garden eggs experienced a higher percentage change in prices over the period compared to processed local foods (Ga kenkey, fried plantain with beans, and smoked herrings).

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