

# **GLOBAL NUTRITION DATABASE FOR PACKAGED FOODS: USER GUIDE**

## **FILTERING THE DATA**

Begin your search by selecting a nutrient from the dropdown menu to populate the table and activate additional filters. Once selected, you can filter the data by Geography, Year, and Category. The dropdown menus use the categorization system developed for the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) [Global Sodium Benchmarks, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#), which are based on the categorization found in the WHO Regional Nutrient Profile Models. When filtering sodium data, you can filter by both main category and subcategory. When filtering sugar and saturated fat data, only main category filters are available. Note that because countries have used their own system for categorizing data, the categories listed in the country data tables may not be an exact match to the WHO categories used in the dropdown menus used for filtering.

## **EXPANDING DATAPPOINTS**

Once you've selected the filters of interest, the main table will begin to populate with country datasets. Each row in these datasets can be expanded to reveal more comprehensive data. In the expanded dataset rows, you'll find additional summary statistics, including the minimum, maximum, inter-quartile range (Q1-Q3), median, and mean values, depending on data available.

The categories shown in the unexpanded rows reflect those provided by each country; expanding a row reveals a mapping from the country-specific categories to the most closely aligned category (or two categories when more than one closely aligns) from the [WHO Global Sodium Benchmarks 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#). For countries within the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) region, both the [2025 PAHO Regional Sodium Targets](#) and [WHO Global Sodium Benchmarks](#) are provided for comparison. Where the country-reported category is an exact match to the WHO or PAHO category, a checkmark (✓) appears beside the category name. Note that category definitions and inclusion criteria differ between countries and those used for global/regional/national targets, so alignment may vary.

Argentina/2022 Sodium (mg/100g) Country Profile and Data Source Export Data Expand All

Expandable data row	CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	MEAN Sodium (mg/100g)	2025 PAHO TARGET Sodium (mg/100g)	WHO BENCHMARK Sodium (mg/100g)	COUNTRY TARGET Mandatory/Max/2025
	Convenience foods	Soup	295	230	230/1200	—
	Soaps, Bouillons, and Dressings	Cream Soup	257.2	230	230	290
	SAMPLE SIZE	—	MIN / MEAN / MEDIAN / MAX	Expanded summary statistics, where reported		290
	16	—	— / 257.2 / 283.2 / —			
	CLOSEST PAHO CATEGORY	CLOSEST PAHO SUBCATEGORY	2025 PAHO TARGET			
	Soaps	Wet and dry soups (as consumed)	230		—	
	CLOSEST WHO CATEGORY	CLOSEST WHO SUBCATEGORY	WHO BENCHMARK			
	Ready-made and convenience foods and composite dishes	Soups (ready-to-serve, canned and refrigerated soups)	—		230	
	Soaps, Bouillons, and Dressings	Instant Soup	230.7	230	230	330

Closest relevant category (or categories) from the WHO Benchmarks or PAHO targets

## UNDERSTANDING WHO BENCHMARKS, PAHO TARGETS, AND COUNTRY TARGETS

This database primarily includes sodium data, reflecting the global availability of sodium information compared to other nutrients. When looking at **sodium data**:

- You can compare the mean or median sodium content as reported by the country for each category with the **relevant global/regional limits**: [WHO Global Sodium Benchmarks \(maximum limits\)](#), the [2025 PAHO Regional Sodium Reduction Targets \(maximum limits\)](#). Countries not in the PAHO region will not be compared to the PAHO targets. The WHO benchmarks and PAHO targets were developed to guide countries in establishing national targets for sodium content in packaged foods, recognizing national targets as a “best buy” policy intervention to reduce sodium consumption.
  - Please note: WHO benchmark/PAHO target maximum values are only set at the subcategory level (not the main category level). In some cases, where there is not an appropriate match between the country provided subcategory and WHO/PAHO subcategory, only the main WHO/PAHO category is displayed in the expanded rows. In these cases, no WHO benchmark/PAHO target values are displayed.
- Country data can also be compared to **country targets**, as available. Under the Country Target column heading, it will be specified whether the target is voluntary (vol) or mandatory (man), whether the target represents a mean, sales-weighted mean (SWM), or maximum (max) value, and the designated target year (compliance date; in some cases, this may be a range of dates, depending on the national strategy). More information about the nutrient targets set by a country can be found on that country’s Country Profile page.

**Argentina/2018** Sodium (mg/100g) Country Profile and Data Source Export Data Expand All

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	MEAN Sodium (mg/100g)	2025 PAHO TARGET Sodium (mg/100g)	WHO BENCHMARK Sodium (mg/100g)	COUNTRY TARGET <small>min/max/2015</small>
Meat and meat products	Breaded chicken products	468.7	500	300	736
Meat and meat products	Hamburgers	771	500	300	850

When looking at **sugar or saturated fat data**:

- Country targets, where available, will be shown alongside reported nutrient data.

**United Kingdom/2015** sugar (g/100ml (liquid), g/100g (solid)) Data Source Export Data Expand All

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	MEAN sugar (g/100ml (liquid), g/100g (solid))	COUNTRY TARGET <small>vol/SWM/2020</small>
Biscuits		–	26.2

## DATA SOURCES AND TRANSPARENCY

For data sources and more information on how the data was collected, as well as a summary of the policy landscape for packaged foods in each country, follow the link to the Country Profile and Data Source Page.

**Argentina/2018** Sodium (mg/100g) Country Profile and Data Source Export Data Expand All

Click here or here Redirects to study article link

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	MEAN Sodium (mg/100g)	2025 PAHO TARGET Sodium (mg/100g)	WHO BENCHMARK Sodium (mg/100g)	COUNTRY TARGET <small>min/max/2015</small>
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## DATA LIMITATIONS

The datasets within this database originate from a diverse set of independent research studies, each employing its own unique methodologies for food categorization and sampling and inclusion criteria. Reported statistics may also vary; some countries report mean values only, while others provide medians, and a few include additional statistics such as minimum/maximum or interquartile ranges, while others do not. Categorization and subcategorization depend on each country's food availability and consumption patterns, and countries are encouraged to explore these classifications according to their specific context. While this ensures relevance, it also introduces variability. As a result of the variations, the presentation of the data displayed may vary significantly from one dataset to another. Users should exercise caution when attempting to draw direct

comparisons between different datasets or countries, or comparisons to country/regional targets or global benchmarks.

## EXPORTING THE DATA

Argentina/2018 Sodium (mg/100g) Country Profile and Data Source Export Data Expand All

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	MEAN Sodium (mg/100g)	2025 PAHO TARGET Sodium (mg/100g)	WHO BENCHMARK Sodium (mg/100g)	COUNTRY TARGET <u>man/max/2015</u>
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To download a dataset from the database, select the export button on the top right-hand side of the dataset. The downloaded excel file will include whatever results your filtering search displays, and in a second tab, a data dictionary which outlines the definition of each variable included. For example, if you have filtered for a single country in the geography dropdown filtering menu, the exported file will include all datasets from that country, but none from other countries. If you have selected a country as well as a year, the data exported will include data from only that country and within only that year. Filtering only by nutrient will allow you to export all countries available for that particular nutrient. The data exported will include all the data which is presented in the expanded data rows, as reported (with the exception of PAHO target data).