

# U.S. Pricing Myths vs. Facts

With lots of inaccurate information, we thought it might be helpful to share some of the common myths and facts:

**Myth**

**“McDonald’s raised prices at a rate nearly double the national rate of inflation.”** <sup>[1]</sup>

**Fact**

**FALSE.** McDonald’s overall, five-year price increases are closely connected to the increase of costs to run restaurants, which have gone up. This includes increases in restaurant crew salaries (up ~40% since 2019, from data accessible) and food/paper costs, also known as “cost of goods” (up ~35% since 2019).

Otherwise said, the average “input costs” (salaries, food and paper) are up ~40% over the past five years. The average price of McDonald’s menu items is up ~40% over the past five years.

**Myth**

**“McDonald’s raised prices so much that their average menu prices increased more than three times the national rate of inflation.”** <sup>[1]</sup>

**Fact**

**FALSE.** This is just simply not true. McDonald’s overall, five-year price increases are closely connected to the increase of costs to run restaurants, which have gone up. These prices (and these costs) do not reflect a 3X increase over the national rate of inflation.

In fact, when you look at average 2019 menu prices of core food entrees that were not promoted/discounted and compare their prices today, the rate of increase is lower than the rate of inflation (Food Away From Home was 29% between 2019 and 2024).

For example, the average price of an Egg McMuffin in 2019 was \$3.49 and in 2024 is \$4.29 (23%). The average price of a QPC in 2019 was \$4.49 and in 2024 is \$5.39 (20%). The average price of a Filet-O-Fish in 2019 was \$3.99 and in 2024 is \$4.79 (20%).

**Myth**

**“McDonald’s price increases are the result of...greed and price gouging.”** <sup>[2]</sup>

**Fact**

**FALSE.** McDonald’s overall, five-year price increases are closely connected to the increase of costs to run restaurants, which have gone up. This includes increases in restaurant crew salaries (up ~40% since 2019, from data accessible) and food/paper costs, otherwise known as “cost of goods” (up ~35% since 2019).

Average price increases at McDonald’s are within the range of other quick service restaurant price increases over the past five years.

Restaurant margins are largely the same today as they were in 2019, which is the opposite of so-called “gouging.”

**Myth**

**“McDonald’s Big Mac Meal has increased in price by 104% since 2019.”** <sup>[3]</sup>

**Fact**

**FALSE.** The average price of a Big Mac Meal in 2019 was \$7.29 and in 2024 is \$9.29 (27%). The average price of a Big Mac in 2019 was \$4.39 and is now \$5.29 (21%).

**Myth**

**“McDonald’s 10-piece McNuggets Meal has increased in price by 95.5% since 2019.”** <sup>[3]</sup>

**Fact**

**FALSE.** The average price of a 10-piece McNuggets Meal in 2019 was \$7.19 and in 2024 is \$9.19 (28%). The average price of a 10-piece McNuggets in 2019 was \$4.39 and in 2024 is \$5.29 (21%).

**Myth**

**“McDonald’s Medium Fries increased by +138% since 2019.”** <sup>[1]</sup>

**Fact**

**FALSE.** The average price of a Medium size World Famous Fries® in 2019 was \$2.29 and in 2024 is \$3.29 (44%).

**Myth**

**“The price of a Big Mac has doubled since pre-pandemic.”** <sup>[4]</sup>

**Fact**

**FALSE.** The average price of a Big Mac in 2019 was \$4.39 and is now \$5.29 (21%).

## 2019 vs. 2024 Average Menu Prices



### Quarter Pounder with Cheese

Average Price  
2019 \$4.49  
2024 \$5.39  
Actual percent increase 20%



### Big Mac

Average Price  
2019 \$4.39  
2024 \$5.29  
Actual percent increase 21%



### Egg McMuffin

Average Price  
2019 \$3.49  
2024 \$4.29  
Actual percent increase 23%



### 10-piece McNuggets Meal

Average Price  
2019 \$7.19  
2024 \$9.19  
Actual percent increase 28%



<sup>1</sup> Finance Buzz via <https://financebuzz.com/fast-food-prices-vs-inflation>

<sup>2</sup> Elect Blue 2024 via <https://x.com/electblue2024/status/1792915590670454489?s=46&t=ab8x3nqKCeOTCtod4Fygjg>

<sup>3</sup> @HouseGOP

<sup>4</sup> Star Tribune via <https://x.com/StarTribune/status/1793250620578676881>