

One sausage or two?

You may be lucky to get half at this weekend's Memorial Day cookout, which is set to cost 29 per cent more than last year, thanks to inflation.

Those thinking of hosting a BBQ - even a modest one - can expect to fork out an extra \$45 on food to serve a dozen guests.

The total cost comes to \$199, or around 29 per cent more than last year... and that's before soda and alcohol, according to the latest data for metro New York.

Lettuce has sky-rocketed 28 per cent since last year's traditional BBQ, while an ear of sweet corn is now 50 cents, up from 20 cents last year.

Those who don't like tomatoes are in luck though: they're up a staggering 86 per cent on last year.

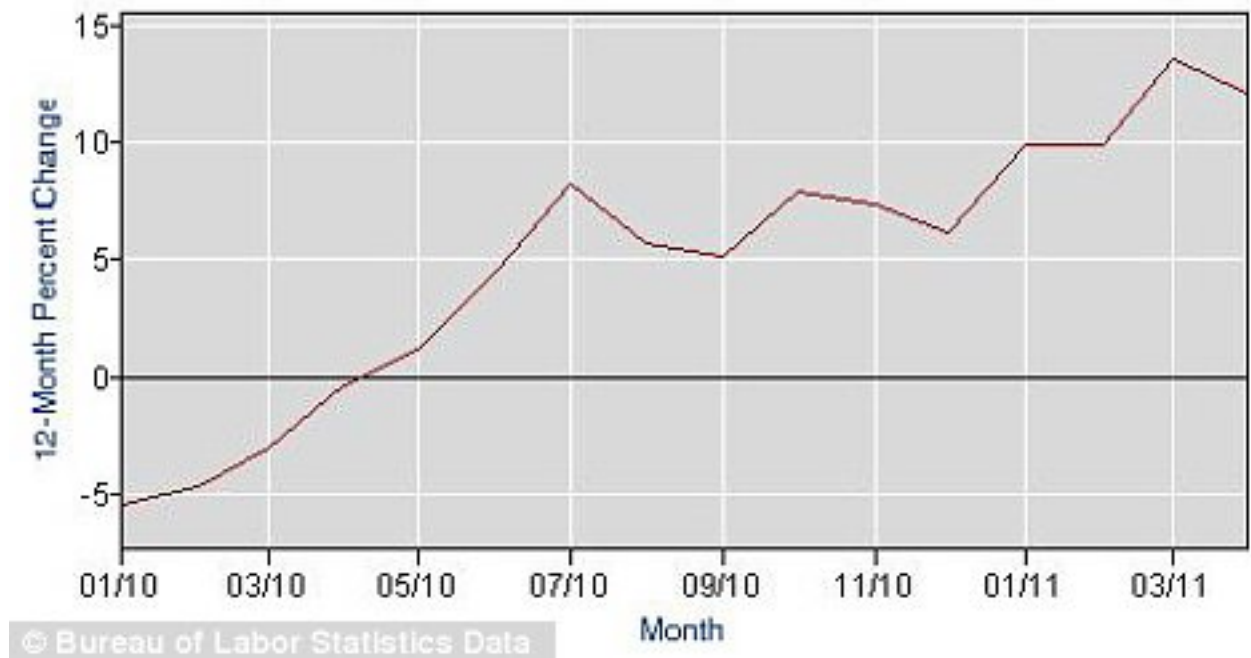
Nationwide the story is the same.

Ground beef is up 12.1 per cent on last year and sausages are up 6.2 per cent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

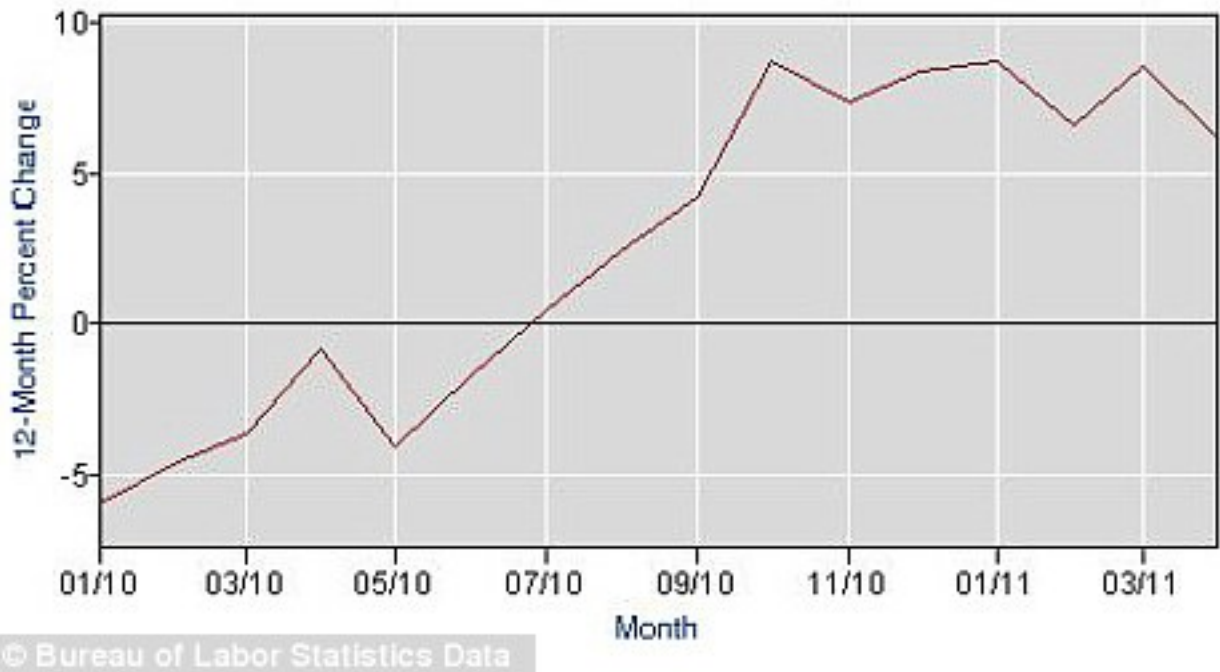
And don't even think about potato salad. The apple of the ground is up 13.4 per cent.

Ice cream is up 5.1 per cent, beer up 2.4 per cent and coffee has increased by 13.8 per cent nationwide.

The ever increasing price of gasoline is being blamed for the hike in food prices. Over the past year the cost of gas has increased by 33.6 per cent, along with similar diesel hikes nationwide.



Steady rise: The price of ground beef has risen in the past year spiking last month with a 13.6 per cent increase

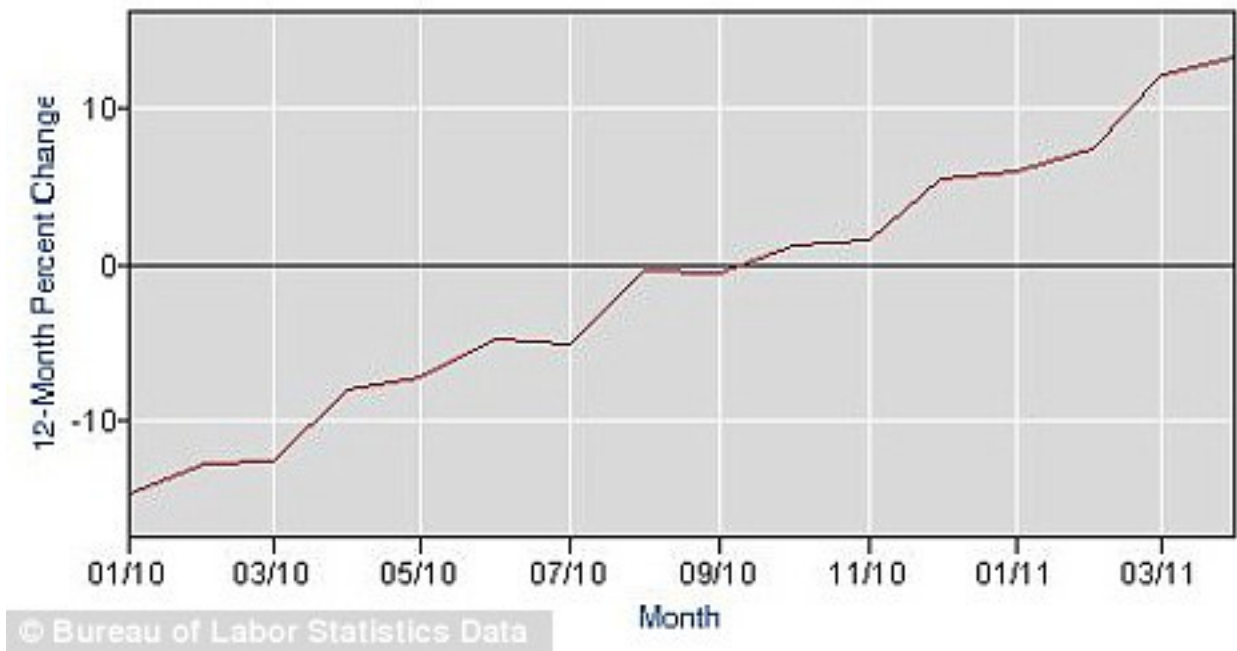


Extra expense: The cost of sausages has also risen, spiking last month with a 8.6 per cent rise

This is squeezing the food industry to the max and farmer and food markets are being forced to pass on their growing costs to consumers at the fastest pace in several years, according to analysts.

Growers are also abandoning their usual crops of grains and vegetables in favour of acres of corn for ethanol in gas blends.

A record 43 per cent of the U.S.' corn crop went into gas tanks in 2010, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Costing the earth: The price of potatoes has also increased over the last year with a high of 13.4 per cent in April