

Then and Now: Prices

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Compare Prices During the Great Depression to Prices Today

How much did toys and clothing cost during the Great Depression of the 1930s? What would they cost today?

Look at the Then and Now: Prices table below. In the left column is a list of women's clothing, men's clothing, games and toys and household goods. In the middle column, the price of each of these items is listed based on advertisements from 1932. Look through a current copy of your local newspaper to find out what it would cost to buy the same item today. Write that amount in the right column.

Some of those 1930s prices look pretty low compared to today's costs, don't they? Why? Look at the Then and Now: Wages table. Do people earn more or less now than they did in the 1930s? How do the prices compare to the wages? How many weeks would it take to buy each of the items on the table of prices? If an item costs less than a week's wages, divide the week's wages by 40 to estimate the hourly wage and figure out how many hours it would take to earn the money to buy the item.

(If you would like to print the tables below on a single sheet, go to the [PDF](#) or the [graphic](#) (GIF) of the Then and Now: Prices and Then and Now: Wages page.

Then and Now: Prices		
WOMEN'S CLOTHES	THEN	NOW
Winter Coat	\$28.00	
Leather or Suede Bag	\$2.25	
Bathrobe	\$1.00	
Sweater	\$1.00	
MEN'S CLOTHES	THEN	NOW
Broadcloth Shirt	\$1.00	
Wool Sweater	\$1.00	
Bathrobe	\$4.90	
Overcoat	\$18.50	
GAMES AND TOYS	THEN	NOW
Sled that Steers	\$3.95 - \$8.95	
Ping Pong Table	\$23.50 to \$37.50	
Mechanical Toys	3 for \$.59	
Doll	\$1.95	
ITEMS FOR THE HOME	THEN	NOW
Table Lamp	\$1.00	
Portable Electric Sewing Machine	\$23.95	
Electric Washing Machine	\$33.50	
Gas Stove	\$19.95	

Then and Now: Wages		
WEEKLY WAGES (general averages)	THEN	NOW
Manufacturing--Production Worker	\$16.89	\$500
Cook	\$15.00	\$236
Doctor	\$61.11	\$1800
Accountant	\$45.00	\$700

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