



2.8 | Distribution of income or consumption

	Survey year	Gini index	Percentage share of income or consumption						
			Lowest 10%	Lowest 20%	Second 20%	Third 20%	Fourth 20%	Highest 20%	Highest 10%
Albania		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Algeria	1995 ^{a,b}	35.3	2.8	7.0	11.6	16.1	22.7	42.6	26.8
Angola		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Argentina		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Armenia		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Australia	1994 ^{c,d}	35.2	2.0	5.9	12.0	17.2	23.6	41.3	25.4
Austria	1987 ^{c,d}	23.1	4.4	10.4	14.8	18.5	22.9	33.3	19.3
Azerbaijan		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	1995–96 ^{a,b}	33.6	3.9	8.7	12.0	15.7	20.8	42.8	28.6
Belarus	1998 ^{a,b}	21.7	5.1	11.4	15.2	18.2	21.9	33.3	20.0
Belgium	1992 ^{c,d}	25.0	3.7	9.5	14.6	18.4	23.0	34.5	20.2
Benin		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bolivia	1990 ^{c,d}	42.0	2.3	5.6	9.7	14.5	22.0	48.2	31.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Botswana		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Brazil	1996 ^{c,d}	60.0	0.9	2.5	5.5	10.0	18.3	63.8	47.6
Bulgaria	1995 ^{a,b}	28.3	3.4	8.5	13.8	17.9	22.7	37.0	22.5
Burkina Faso	1994 ^{a,b}	48.2	2.2	5.5	8.7	12.0	18.7	55.0	39.5
Burundi	1992 ^{a,b}	33.3	3.4	7.9	12.1	16.3	22.1	41.6	26.6
Cambodia	1997 ^{a,b}	40.4	2.9	6.9	10.7	14.7	20.1	47.6	33.8
Cameroon		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Canada	1994 ^{c,d}	31.5	2.8	7.5	12.9	17.2	23.0	39.3	23.8
Central African Republic	1993 ^{a,b}	61.3	0.7	2.0	4.9	9.6	18.5	65.0	47.7
Chad		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chile	1994 ^{c,d}	56.5	1.4	3.5	6.6	10.9	18.1	61.0	46.1
China	1998 ^{c,d}	40.3	2.4	5.9	10.2	15.1	22.2	46.6	30.4
Hong Kong, China		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Colombia	1996 ^{c,d}	57.1	1.1	3.0	6.6	11.1	18.4	60.9	46.1
Congo, Dem. Rep.		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Congo, Rep.		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Costa Rica	1996 ^{c,d}	47.0	1.3	4.0	8.8	13.7	21.7	51.8	34.7
Côte d'Ivoire	1995 ^{a,b}	36.7	3.1	7.1	11.2	15.6	21.9	44.3	28.8
Croatia	1998 ^{a,b}	26.8	4.0	9.3	13.8	17.8	22.9	36.2	21.6
Cuba		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Czech Republic	1996 ^{c,d}	25.4	4.3	10.3	14.5	17.7	21.7	35.9	22.4
Denmark	1992 ^{c,d}	24.7	3.6	9.6	14.9	18.3	22.7	34.5	20.5
Dominican Republic	1996 ^{c,d}	48.7	1.7	4.3	8.3	13.1	20.6	53.7	37.8
Ecuador	1995 ^{a,b}	43.7	2.2	5.4	9.4	14.2	21.3	49.7	33.8
Egypt, Arab Rep.	1995 ^{a,b}	28.9	4.4	9.8	13.2	16.6	21.4	39.0	25.0
El Salvador	1996 ^{c,d}	52.3	1.2	3.4	7.5	12.5	20.2	56.5	40.5
Eritrea		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Estonia	1995 ^{c,d}	35.4	2.2	6.2	12.0	17.0	23.1	41.8	26.2
Ethiopia	1995 ^{a,b}	40.0	3.0	7.1	10.9	14.5	19.8	47.7	33.7
Finland	1991 ^{c,d}	25.6	4.2	10.0	14.2	17.6	22.3	35.8	21.6
France	1995 ^{c,d}	32.7	2.8	7.2	12.6	17.2	22.8	40.2	25.1
Gabon		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gambia, The	1992 ^{a,b}	47.8	1.5	4.4	9.0	13.5	20.4	52.8	37.6
Georgia		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Germany	1994 ^{c,d}	30.0	3.3	8.2	13.2	17.5	22.7	38.5	23.7
Ghana	1997 ^{a,b}	32.7	3.6	8.4	12.2	15.8	21.9	41.7	26.1
Greece	1993 ^{c,d}	32.7	3.0	7.5	12.4	16.9	22.8	40.3	25.3
Guatemala	1989 ^{c,d}	59.6	0.6	2.1	5.8	10.5	18.6	63.0	46.6
Guinea	1994 ^{a,b}	40.3	2.6	6.4	10.4	14.8	21.2	47.2	32.0
Guinea-Bissau	1991 ^{a,b}	56.2	0.5	2.1	6.5	12.0	20.6	58.9	42.4
Guyana	1993 ^{a,b}	40.2	2.4	6.3	10.7	15.0	21.2	46.9	32.0
Haiti	
Honduras	1996 ^{c,d}	53.7	1.2	3.4	7.1	11.7	19.7	58.0	42.1



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			Lowest 10%	Lowest 20%	Second 20%	Third 20%	Fourth 20%	Highest 20%	Highest 10%
Hungary	1996 ^{c,d}	30.8	3.9	8.8	12.5	16.6	22.3	39.9	24.8
India	1997 ^{a,b}	37.8	3.5	8.1	11.6	15.0	19.3	46.1	33.5
Indonesia	1996 ^{c,d}	36.5	3.6	8.0	11.3	15.1	20.8	44.9	30.3
Iran, Islamic Rep.		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Iraq		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ireland	1987 ^{c,d}	35.9	2.5	6.7	11.6	16.4	22.4	42.9	27.4
Israel	1992 ^{c,d}	35.5	2.8	6.9	11.4	16.3	22.9	42.5	26.9
Italy	1995 ^{c,d}	27.3	3.5	8.7	14.0	18.1	22.9	36.3	21.8
Jamaica	1996 ^{a,b}	36.4	2.9	7.0	11.5	15.8	21.8	43.9	28.9
Japan	1993 ^{c,d}	24.9	4.8	10.6	14.2	17.6	22.0	35.7	21.7
Jordan	1997 ^{a,b}	36.4	3.3	7.6	11.4	15.5	21.1	44.4	29.8
Kazakhstan	1996 ^{a,b}	35.4	2.7	6.7	11.5	16.4	23.1	42.3	26.3
Kenya	1994 ^{a,b}	44.5	1.8	5.0	9.7	14.2	20.9	50.2	34.9
Korea, Dem. Rep.		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Korea, Rep.	1993 ^{a,b}	31.6	2.9	7.5	12.9	17.4	22.9	39.3	24.3
Kuwait		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kyrgyz Republic	1997 ^{c,d}	40.5	2.7	6.3	10.2	14.7	21.4	47.4	31.7
Lao PDR	1992 ^{a,b}	30.4	4.2	9.6	12.9	16.3	21.0	40.2	26.4
Latvia	1998 ^{c,d}	32.4	2.9	7.6	12.9	17.1	22.1	40.3	25.9
Lebanon		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lesotho	1986–87 ^{a,b}	56.0	0.9	2.8	6.5	11.2	19.4	60.1	43.4
Libya		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lithuania	1996 ^{a,b}	32.4	3.1	7.8	12.6	16.8	22.4	40.3	25.6
Luxembourg	1994 ^{c,d}	26.9	4.0	9.4	13.8	17.7	22.6	36.5	22.0
Macedonia, FYR		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Madagascar	1993 ^{a,b}	46.0	1.9	5.1	9.4	13.3	20.1	52.1	36.7
Malawi		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Malaysia	1995 ^{c,d}	48.5	1.8	4.5	8.3	13.0	20.4	53.8	37.9
Mali	1994 ^{a,b}	50.5	1.8	4.6	8.0	11.9	19.3	56.2	40.4
Mauritania	1995 ^{a,b}	38.9	2.3	6.2	10.8	15.4	22.0	45.6	29.9
Mauritius		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mexico	1995 ^{c,d}	53.7	1.4	3.6	7.2	11.8	19.2	58.2	42.8
Moldova	1992 ^{c,d}	34.4	2.7	6.9	11.9	16.7	23.1	41.5	25.8
Mongolia	1995 ^{a,b}	33.2	2.9	7.3	12.2	16.6	23.0	40.9	24.5
Morocco	1998–99 ^{a,b}	39.5	2.6	6.5	10.6	14.8	21.3	46.6	30.9
Mozambique	1996–97 ^{a,b}	39.6	2.5	6.5	10.8	15.1	21.1	46.5	31.7
Myanmar		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Namibia		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nepal	1995–96 ^{a,b}	36.7	3.2	7.6	11.5	15.1	21.0	44.8	29.8
Netherlands	1994 ^{c,d}	32.6	2.8	7.3	12.7	17.2	22.8	40.1	25.1
New Zealand	1991 ^{c,d}	43.9	0.3	2.7	10.0	16.3	24.1	46.9	29.8
Nicaragua	1993 ^{a,b}	50.3	1.6	4.2	8.0	12.6	20.0	55.2	39.8
Niger	1995 ^{a,b}	50.5	0.8	2.6	7.1	13.9	23.1	53.3	35.4
Nigeria	1996–97 ^{a,b}	50.6	1.6	4.4	8.2	12.5	19.3	55.7	40.8
Norway	1995 ^{c,d}	25.8	4.1	9.7	14.3	17.9	22.2	35.8	21.8
Oman		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pakistan	1996–97 ^{a,b}	31.2	4.1	9.5	12.9	16.0	20.5	41.1	27.6
Panama	1997 ^{a,b}	48.5	1.2	3.6	8.1	13.6	21.9	52.8	35.7
Papua New Guinea	1996 ^{a,b}	50.9	1.7	4.5	7.9	11.9	19.2	56.5	40.5
Paraguay	1995 ^{c,d}	59.1	0.7	2.3	5.9	10.7	18.7	62.4	46.6
Peru	1996 ^{c,d}	46.2	1.6	4.4	9.1	14.1	21.3	51.2	35.4
Philippines	1997 ^{a,b}	46.2	2.3	5.4	8.8	13.2	20.3	52.3	36.6
Poland	1996 ^{c,d}	32.9	3.0	7.7	12.6	16.7	22.1	40.9	26.3
Portugal	1994–95 ^{c,d}	35.6	3.1	7.3	11.6	15.9	21.8	43.4	28.4
Puerto Rico		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Romania	1994 ^{c,d}	28.2	3.7	8.9	13.6	17.6	22.6	37.3	22.7
Russian Federation	1998 ^{a,b}	48.7	1.7	4.4	8.6	13.3	20.1	53.7	38.7



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	Survey year	Gini index	Percentage share of income or consumption						
			Lowest 10%	Lowest 20%	Second 20%	Third 20%	Fourth 20%	Highest 20%	Highest 10%
Rwanda	1983–85 ^{a,b}	28.9	4.2	9.7	13.2	16.5	21.6	39.1	24.2
Saudi Arabia		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Senegal	1995 ^{a,b}	41.3	2.6	6.4	10.3	14.5	20.6	48.2	33.5
Sierra Leone	1989 ^{a,b}	62.9	0.5	1.1	2.0	9.8	23.7	63.4	43.6
Singapore		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Slovak Republic	1992 ^{c,d}	19.5	5.1	11.9	15.8	18.8	22.2	31.4	18.2
Slovenia	1995 ^{c,d}	26.8	3.2	8.4	14.3	18.5	23.4	35.4	20.7
South Africa	1993–94 ^{a,b}	59.3	1.1	2.9	5.5	9.2	17.7	64.8	45.9
Spain	1990 ^{c,d}	32.5	2.8	7.5	12.6	17.0	22.6	40.3	25.2
Sri Lanka	1995 ^{a,b}	34.4	3.5	8.0	11.8	15.8	21.5	42.8	28.0
St. Lucia	1995 ^{c,d}	42.6	2.0	5.2	9.9	14.8	21.8	48.3	32.5
Sudan		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Swaziland	1994 ^{c,d}	60.9	1.0	2.7	5.8	10.0	17.1	64.4	50.2
Sweden	1992 ^{c,d}	25.0	3.7	9.6	14.5	18.1	23.2	34.5	20.1
Switzerland	1992 ^{c,d}	33.1	2.6	6.9	12.7	17.3	22.9	40.3	25.2
Syrian Arab Republic		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tajikistan		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tanzania	1993 ^{a,b}	38.2	2.8	6.8	11.0	15.1	21.6	45.5	30.1
Thailand	1998 ^{a,b}	41.4	2.8	6.4	9.8	14.2	21.2	48.4	32.4
Togo		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Trinidad and Tobago	1992 ^{c,d}	40.3	2.1	5.5	10.3	15.5	22.7	45.9	29.9
Tunisia	1990 ^{a,b}	40.2	2.3	5.9	10.4	15.3	22.1	46.3	30.7
Turkey	1994 ^{a,b}	41.5	2.3	5.8	10.2	14.8	21.6	47.7	32.3
Turkmenistan	1998 ^{a,b}	40.8	2.6	6.1	10.2	14.7	21.5	47.5	31.7
Uganda	1992–93 ^{a,b}	39.2	2.6	6.6	10.9	15.2	21.3	46.1	31.2
Ukraine	1996 ^{a,b}	32.5	3.9	8.6	12.0	16.2	22.0	41.2	26.4
United Arab Emirates		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	1991 ^{c,d}	36.1	2.6	6.6	11.5	16.3	22.7	43.0	27.3
United States	1997 ^{c,d}	40.8	1.8	5.2	10.5	15.6	22.4	46.4	30.5
Uruguay	1989 ^{c,d}	42.3	2.1	5.4	10.0	14.8	21.5	48.3	32.7
Uzbekistan	1993 ^{c,d}	33.3	3.1	7.4	12.0	16.7	23.0	40.9	25.2
Venezuela, RB	1996 ^{c,d}	48.8	1.3	3.7	8.4	13.6	21.2	53.1	37.0
Vietnam	1998 ^{a,b}	36.1	3.6	8.0	11.4	15.2	20.9	44.5	29.9
West Bank and Gaza		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Yemen, Rep.	1992 ^{a,b}	39.5	2.3	6.1	10.9	15.3	21.6	46.1	30.8
Yugoslavia, FR (Serb./Mont.)		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Zambia	1996 ^{a,b}	49.8	1.6	4.2	8.2	12.8	20.1	54.8	39.2
Zimbabwe	1990–91 ^{a,b}	56.8	1.8	4.0	6.3	10.0	17.4	62.3	46.9

a. Refers to expenditure shares by percentiles of population. b. Ranked by per capita expenditure. c. Refers to income shares by percentiles of population. d. Ranked by per capita income.



Distribution of income or consumption 2.8

About the data

Inequality in the distribution of income is reflected in the percentage shares of either income or consumption accruing to segments of the population ranked by income or consumption levels. The segments ranked lowest by personal income receive the smallest share of total income. The Gini index provides a convenient summary measure of the degree of inequality.

Data on personal or household income or consumption come from nationally representative household surveys. The data in the table refer to different years between 1985 and 1999. Footnotes to the survey year indicate whether the rankings are based on per capita income or consumption. Each distribution (including for high-income economies) is based on percentiles of population—rather than of households—with households ranked by income or expenditure per person.

Where the original data from the household survey were available, they have been used to directly calculate the income (or consumption) shares by quintile. Otherwise, shares have been estimated from the best available grouped data.

The distribution indicators have been adjusted for household size, providing a more consistent measure of per capita income or consumption. No adjustment has been made for spatial differences in cost of living within countries, because the data needed for such calculations are generally unavailable. For further details on the estimation method for low- and middle-income economies see Ravallion and Chen (1996).

Because the underlying household surveys differ in method and in the type of data collected, the distribution indicators are not strictly comparable across countries. These problems are diminishing as survey methods improve and become more standardized, but achieving strict comparability is still impossible (see *About the data* for table 2.7).

The following sources of noncomparability should be noted. First, the surveys can differ in many respects, including whether they use income or consumption expenditure as the living standard indicator. The distribution of income is typically more unequal than the distribution of consumption. In addition, the definitions of income used usually differ among surveys. Consumption is usually a much better welfare indicator, particularly in developing countries. Second, household units differ in size (number of members) and in extent of income sharing among members. And individuals differ in age and consumption needs. Differences between countries in these respects may bias comparisons of distribution.

World Bank staff have made an effort to ensure that the data are as comparable as possible. Whenever pos-

sible, consumption has been used rather than income. The income distribution and Gini indexes for high-income countries are calculated directly from the Luxembourg Income Study database, using an estimation method consistent with that applied for developing countries.

Definitions

- **Survey year** is the year in which the underlying data were collected.
- **Gini index** measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditures) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Lorenz curve plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest individual or household. The Gini index measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line. Thus a Gini index of zero represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.
- **Percentage share of income or consumption** is the share that accrues to subgroups of population indicated by deciles or quintiles. Percentage shares by quintile may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Data sources

Data on distribution are compiled by the World Bank's Development Research Group using primary household survey data obtained from government statistical agencies and World Bank country departments. Data for high-income economies are from the Luxembourg Income Study database.