

**Prices of Spices in Antwerp, London, and Oxford in 1438-39
in pence groot Brabant and English pence sterling, compared to prices in Toronto
in Nov. 2011 (in Canadian dollars) per lb. avoirdupois and kilograms
and the quantities that could be purchased with a master carpenter's daily wage**

Name of the Spice	Antwerp d. gr. Brab. per lb.	Antwerp d. gr. Brab. per kg.	Oxford d. ster. per lb.	Oxford d. ster. per kg	London d. ster. per lb.	London d. ster. per kg.	Toronto 2011 \$ CAD per lb.	Toronto 2011 \$ CAD per kg.
Cloves	74.63	153.14	48.00	105.82	35.56	78.39	9.48	20.900
Cinnamon	22.54	46.26	20.00	44.09	24.15	53.24	3.49	7.700
Ginger	15.55	31.90	28.00	61.73	12.00	26.46	9.12	20.100
Mace			36.00	79.37			36.29	80.000
Pepper	20.21	41.48	12.75	28.11	18.03	39.74	8.57	18.900
Saffron	373.15	765.70	176.00	388.01	182.86	403.13	4,077.80	8,990.000
White Sugar	12.44	25.52	24.00	52.91	16.00	35.27	4.81	10.600
	Antwerp Daily Wage in d groot 12 hrs	Antwerp Daily Wage in d groot 12 hrs	Oxford Daily Wage in d ster. 12 hrs	Oxford Daily Wage in d ster. 12hrs	London Daily Wage in d ster. 12 hrs	London Daily Wage in d ster. 12 hrs	Toronto Daily Wage in \$ CAD \$35.39 per hr for 8 hours	Toronto Daily Wage in \$ CAD* \$35.39 per hr for 8 hours
	10.00d	10.00d	6.00d	6.00d	8.00d	8.00d	\$283.12	\$283.12
Name of the Spice	lb. bought with daily wage	grams bought with daily wage	lb. bought with daily wage	grams bought with daily wage	lb. bought with daily wage	grams bought with daily wage	lb. bought with daily wage	grams bought with daily wage
Cloves	0.13	65.30	0.13	56.70	0.22	102.06	29.86	13,546.411
Cinnamon	0.44	216.17	0.30	136.08	0.33	150.25	81.06	36,768.831
Ginger	0.64	313.44	0.21	97.20	0.67	302.39	31.05	14,085.572
Mace			0.17	75.60			7.80	3,539.000
Pepper	0.49	241.11	0.47	213.46	0.44	201.28	33.03	14,979.894
Saffron	0.03	13.06	0.03	15.46	0.04	19.84	0.07	31.493
White Sugar	0.80	391.80	0.25	113.40	0.50	226.80	58.88	26,709.434

	Antwerp Daily Wage in d groot 12 hrs	Antwerp Daily Wage in d groot 12 hrs	Oxford Daily Wage in d ster. 12 hrs	Oxford Daily Wage in d ster. 12hrs	London Daily Wage in d ster. 12 hrs	London Daily Wage in d ster. 12 hrs	Toronto Daily Wage in \$ CAD \$35.39 per hr for 8 hours	Toronto Daily Wage in \$ CAD* \$35.39 per hr for 8 hours
	10.00d	10.00d	6.00d	6.00d	8.00d	8.00d	\$283.12	\$283.12
Spice	No. of Days' Wages To Buy 1 lb.	No. of Days' Wages To Buy 100 g.	No. of Days' Wages To Buy 1 lb.	No. of Days' Wages To Buy 100 g.	No. of Days' Wages To Buy 1 lb.	No. of Days' Wages To Buy 100 g.	No. of Minutes to Buy 1 lb.	No. of Minutes to Buy 100 g
Cloves	7.46	1.53	8.00	1.76	4.44	0.98	16.07	3.543
Cinnamon	2.25	0.46	3.33	0.73	3.02	0.67	5.92	1.305
Ginger	1.55	0.32	4.67	1.03	1.50	0.33	15.46	3.408
Mace			6.00	1.32			61.52	13.563
Pepper	2.02	0.41	2.13	0.47	2.25	0.50	14.53	3.204
Saffron	37.31	7.66	29.33	6.47	22.86	5.04	6,913.47	1,524.159
White Sugar	1.24	0.26	4.00	0.88	2.00	0.44	8.15	1.797

* Saffron has always been the world's most expensive spice or herb. It currently sells, at a bulk foods store, for \$8.99 a gram. When saffron is called for in late-medieval English and French recipes, or in modern Asian recipes, I use instead the much cheaper but similarly-coloured turmeric. Turmeric currently sells, in Toronto, for \$4.08 CAD per pound or \$9.00 per kilogram.

In Antwerp, 1d groot Brabant = 0.667d groot Flemish; 1d groot Flemish = 1.5d groot Brabant

The Antwerp lb. = 470.156 grams; and it was converted into English pounds (lb. avoirdupois = 453.592 grams) and kilograms

Sources:

Herman Van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy (fourteenth-sixteenth centuries)*, vol. I: *Statistics* (The Hague, 1963).

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London Guildhall Manuscripts Library: MS 5174, vol. 1; Brewers' Guild, Warden's Accounts (1424-1562); Corporation of London Record Office: Bridge Master's Account Rolls, 1381-1398; Bridge Master's Accounts: Weekly Payment Series, 1404 - 1510 (Vols. I - III).

Toronto Carpenters' Wages: Carpenters Union, the District Council of Ontario (whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged).