

The R24 million cabbage: Why Shoprite is keeping SA's superfood affordable

- Shoprite quietly invests millions each year to keep cabbage affordable for South Africans.
- In FY2025, the Group spent R24 million to cap the price in Usave stores to just R12.99 and Shoprite at R14.99 - though it is often sold for less.
- Even when the cost price rose to as much as R25 during the year, prices never exceeded these caps.
- By keeping cabbage affordable, the Group is helping safeguard food security with one of the country's most nutritious and versatile staples.

Cabbage has been many things – a wartime lifesaver, a symbol of resilience, even a French term of endearment. For millions of South Africans, though, it is a daily staple that's filling, packed with nutrition, and affordable, and the Shoprite Group is working hard to keep it that way.

Because the Group understands the importance of cabbage in South Africans' diets, it has, for the past two-and-a-half years, been quietly investing millions to keep it affordable. Between June 2024 and July 2025, the Group spent R24 million to subsidise the price of cabbage for its customers.

A South African staple worth protecting

Cabbage isn't just another vegetable. In many ways, it stands as an original "superfood", just without the modern-day marketing hype.

During the Second World War, cabbage was promoted as a "Victory Garden" crop because it was hardy, easy to grow, and versatile enough to stretch family meals when meat was scarce. Today, it remains just as important in communities under economic pressure.

Cabbage is a low-calorie food rich in vitamins C and K, fibre, antioxidants, and minerals. It's one of the most nutrient-dense foods available, but also one of the cheapest. Unlike some regional fruits and vegetables, it also grows easily across South Africa, from Limpopo to the Western Cape. Because of this, it has long been a cornerstone of informal markets and household food gardens.

Why Shoprite stepped in

In 2024, South Africa produced more than 160,000 tons of cabbage for the formal market – and far more if informal and smallholder production is included. Yet despite its abundance, it isn't immune to rising costs. Fuel, fertiliser, water shortages, and transport challenges have driven prices up, making it harder to afford by the families who rely on it most.

By absorbing costs and capping prices at a maximum of R12.99 in Usave and R14.99 in Shoprite supermarkets – even though actual prices in stores may vary by region and are often lower – the Group has taken another deliberate step to support household food security. When the cost price rose to as much as R25 during the year, the capped prices remained firmly in place.

"Cabbage is an integral part of many South African diets. It is resilient, nutritious, tasty, and familiar. By keeping it affordable, we are investing in food security, dignity, and health for millions," says Quintin Paladin, General Manager: Freshmark & Fresh Foods.

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