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Retail trade sales (Preliminary)

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Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for March 2026

Table A – Key growth rates in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices

	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	3,0	3,6	2,5	4,4	1,6	2,6
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	1,0	0,6	-0,6	0,9	-1,1	0,1
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted ¹	0,3	0,6	0,7	1,1	0,3	0,0

¹ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2019 prices), retail trade sales increased by 2,6% year-on-year in March 2026. The largest positive contributors to this increase were:

- general dealers (1,7% and contributing 0,8 of a percentage point); and
- all 'other' retailers (7,1% and contributing 0,7 of a percentage point) – see Table 5 and Table 6.

Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales increased by 0,1% in March 2026 compared with February 2026. This followed month-on-month changes of -1,1% in February 2026 and 0,9% in January 2026.

Table B – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Jan – Mar 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Jan – Mar 2026 (R million)	% change between Jan – Mar 2025 and Jan – Mar 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	128 205	45,1	129 485	1,0	0,5
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	24 748	8,7	23 348	-5,7	-0,5
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	21 387	7,5	22 562	5,5	0,4
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	45 880	16,2	48 630	6,0	1,0
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	11 717	4,1	12 923	10,3	0,4
Hardware, paint and glass	20 832	7,3	20 974	0,7	0,1
All other retailers	31 187	11,0	34 119	9,4	1,0
Total	283 956	100,0	292 041	2,8	2,8

Retail trade sales increased by 2,8% in the first quarter of 2026 compared with the first quarter of 2025. The largest positive contributors to this increase were:

- all 'other' retailers (9,4% and contributing 1,0 percentage point); and
- retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods (6,0% and contributing 1,0 percentage point).

The only negative contributor was retailers in food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores (-5,7% and contributing -0,5 of a percentage point) – see Table B.

Table C – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Oct – Dec 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Jan – Mar 2026 (R million)	% change between Oct – Dec 2025 and Jan – Mar 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	135 202	43,9	134 612	-0,4	-0,2
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	25 369	8,2	24 857	-2,0	-0,2
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	22 660	7,4	22 992	1,5	0,1
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	54 794	17,8	54 922	0,2	0,0
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	13 659	4,4	13 909	1,8	0,1
Hardware, paint and glass	22 719	7,4	22 646	-0,3	0,0
All other retailers	33 322	10,8	33 695	1,1	0,1
Total	307 725	100,0	307 633	0,0	0,0

Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales was flat in the first quarter of 2026 compared with the fourth quarter of 2025. The largest negative contributors were general dealers (-0,4% and contributing -0,2 of a percentage point) and retailers in food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores (-2,0% and contributing -0,2 of a percentage point).

The largest positive contributors were:

- retailers in household furniture, appliances and equipment (1,8% and contributing 0,1 of a percentage point);
- retailers in pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries (1,5% and contributing 0,1 of a percentage point); and
- all ‘other’ retailers (1,1% and contributing 0,1 of a percentage point) – see Table C.

Figure 1 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices

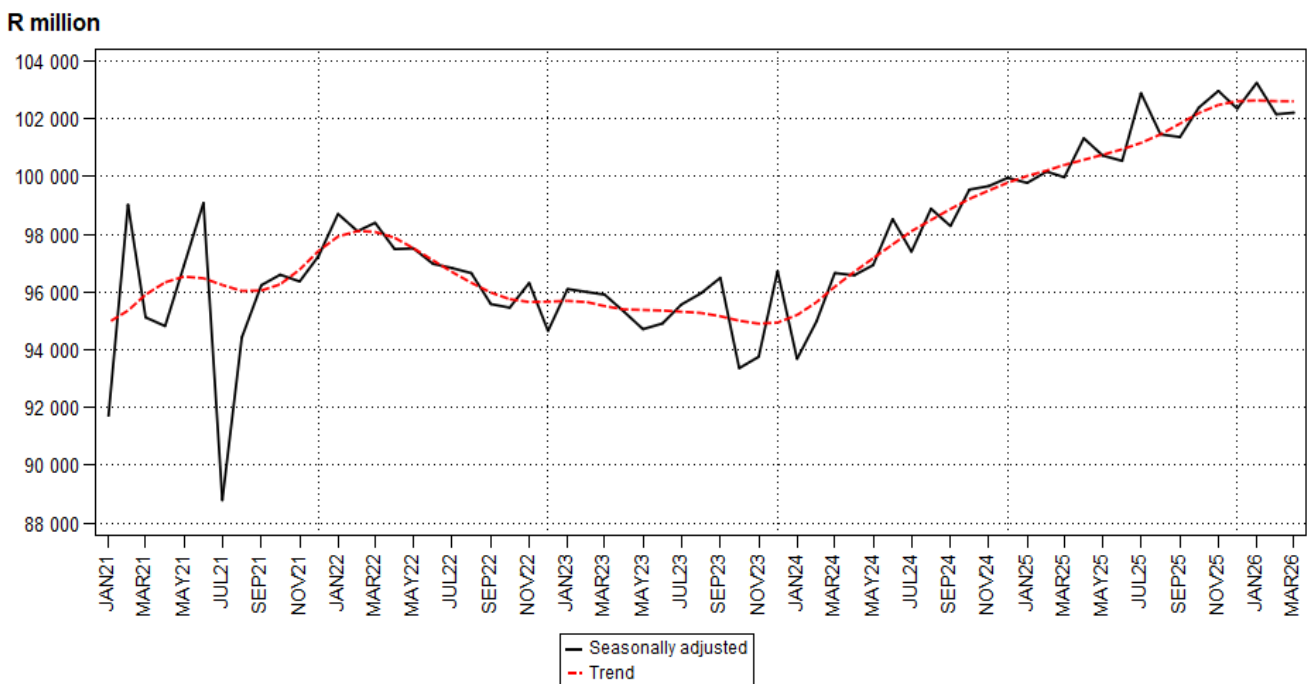
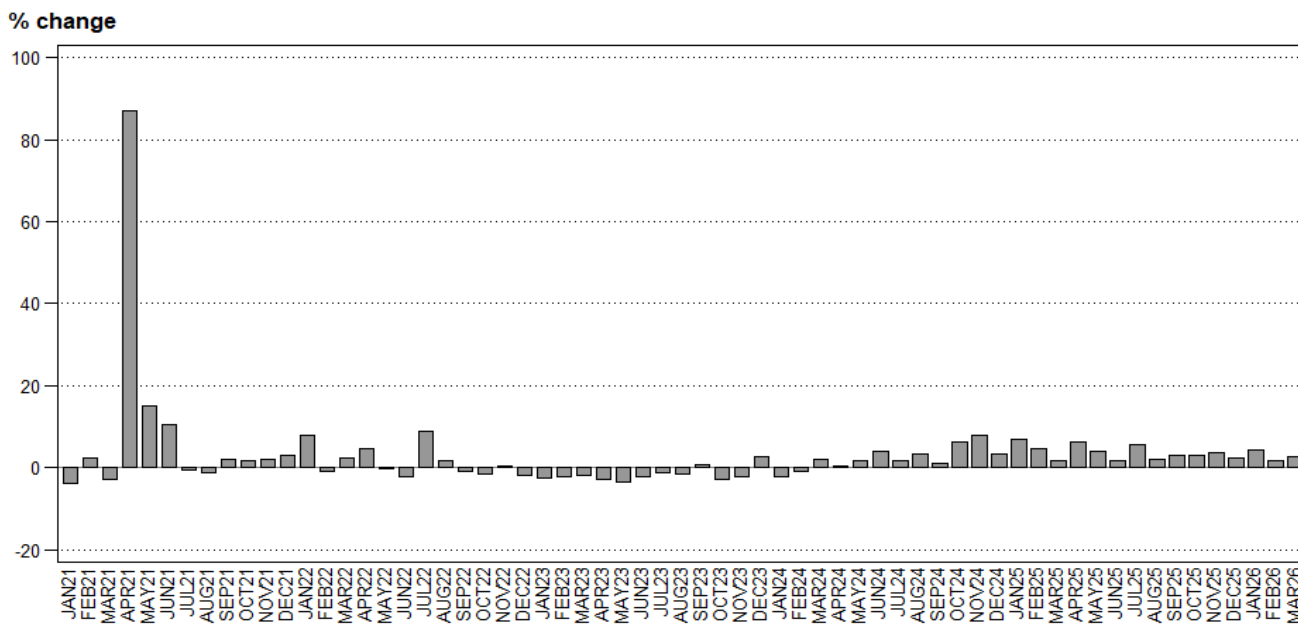


Figure 2 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices: year-on-year percentage change



Sales at current prices: results for March 2026**Table D – Key growth rates in retail trade sales at current prices**

	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	4,6	5,5	4,4	6,1	3,3	4,3
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	0,7	1,1	-0,8	1,5	-0,8	0,1
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted ¹	0,5	0,8	0,8	1,6	0,9	0,8

¹ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Table E – Retail trade sales at current prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Jan – Mar 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Jan – Mar 2026 (R million)	% change between Jan – Mar 2025 and Jan – Mar 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	172 259	48,6	178 235	3,5	1,7
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	33 091	9,3	33 850	2,3	0,2
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	28 283	8,0	30 809	8,9	0,7
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	50 386	14,2	53 655	6,5	0,9
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	11 499	3,2	12 167	5,8	0,2
Hardware, paint and glass	25 591	7,2	26 091	2,0	0,1
All other retailers	33 039	9,3	35 451	7,3	0,7
Total	354 148	100,0	370 259	4,5	4,5

Table F – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at current prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Oct – Dec 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Jan – Mar 2026 (R million)	% change between Oct – Dec 2025 and Jan – Mar 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	185 704	47,8	186 635	0,5	0,2
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	36 518	9,4	35 959	-1,5	-0,1
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	30 889	7,9	31 511	2,0	0,2
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	60 042	15,4	61 541	2,5	0,4
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	12 895	3,3	13 063	1,3	0,0
Hardware, paint and glass	28 046	7,2	28 087	0,1	0,0
All other retailers	34 706	8,9	35 085	1,1	0,1
Total	388 800	100,0	391 882	0,8	0,8


Risenga Maluleke
 Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices (R million)

Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	88 360	84 894	91 575	89 196	87 319	93 239	97 326
Feb	91 047	93 226	92 448	90 366	89 587	93 708	95 209
Mar	95 558	93 010	95 303	93 550	95 426	97 009	99 506
Apr	47 167	88 199	92 258	89 579	89 987	95 554	
May	84 036	96 600	96 545	93 359	94 963	98 774	
Jun	85 667	94 722	92 610	90 673	94 174	95 753	
Jul	83 783	83 287	90 655	89 568	90 988	96 145	
Aug	91 789	90 585	92 283	90 927	93 952	96 004	
Sep	90 259	92 170	91 462	92 094	93 149	95 934	
Oct	91 867	93 589	92 181	89 542	95 283	98 115	
Nov	105 131	107 342	107 583	105 383	113 828	117 907	
Dec	126 021	129 796	127 315	130 770	135 406	138 834	
Total	1 080 685	1 147 420	1 162 218	1 145 007	1 174 062	1 216 976	

Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices

Month	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026 year-to-date
Jan	-3,9	7,9	-2,6	-2,1	6,8	4,4	4,4
Feb	2,4	-0,8	-2,3	-0,9	4,6	1,6	3,0
Mar	-2,7	2,5	-1,8	2,0	1,7	2,6	2,8
Apr	87,0	4,6	-2,9	0,5	6,2		
May	15,0	-0,1	-3,3	1,7	4,0		
Jun	10,6	-2,2	-2,1	3,9	1,7		
Jul	-0,6	8,8	-1,2	1,6	5,7		
Aug	-1,3	1,9	-1,5	3,3	2,2		
Sep	2,1	-0,8	0,7	1,1	3,0		
Oct	1,9	-1,5	-2,9	6,4	3,0		
Nov	2,1	0,2	-2,0	8,0	3,6		
Dec	3,0	-1,9	2,7	3,5	2,5		
Total	6,2	1,3	-1,5	2,5	3,7		

Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	96 106	93 683	99 784	103 252	1,5	-3,1	-0,2	0,9
Feb	96 003	94 986	100 177	102 163	-0,1	1,4	0,4	-1,1
Mar	95 912	96 661	99 980	102 218	-0,1	1,8	-0,2	0,1
Apr	95 316	96 584	101 331		-0,6	-0,1	1,4	
May	94 715	96 935	100 734		-0,6	0,4	-0,6	
Jun	94 913	98 531	100 548		0,2	1,6	-0,2	
Jul	95 569	97 399	102 895		0,7	-1,1	2,3	
Aug	95 955	98 890	101 465		0,4	1,5	-1,4	
Sep	96 495	98 289	101 373		0,6	-0,6	-0,1	
Oct	93 363	99 551	102 396		-3,2	1,3	1,0	
Nov	93 758	99 674	102 972		0,4	0,1	0,6	
Dec	96 726	99 961	102 357		3,2	0,3	-0,6	

Table 4 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
General dealers	42 046	52 627	58 655	41 333	42 684	45 468
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	8 664	8 806	11 732	7 868	7 486	7 994
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	7 784	7 552	7 916	7 911	7 106	7 545
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	16 510	22 348	32 378	16 911	15 995	15 724
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 470	5 690	6 350	4 220	4 180	4 523
Hardware, paint and glass	8 081	8 562	8 059	6 916	6 725	7 333
All other retailers	10 560	12 322	13 744	12 167	11 033	10 919
Total	98 115	117 907	138 834	97 326	95 209	99 506

Table 5 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
General dealers	0,7	2,0	4,0	2,4	-1,1	1,7
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	-2,3	0,2	-5,8	-6,1	-5,3	-5,6
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	2,4	9,8	1,5	4,8	6,4	5,4
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	5,8	3,0	0,0	9,7	4,2	4,0
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	11,3	8,1	11,3	10,7	8,8	11,3
Hardware, paint and glass	5,7	3,7	2,1	1,9	-0,1	0,3
All other retailers	7,6	8,7	7,6	11,1	9,9	7,1
Total	3,0	3,6	2,5	4,4	1,6	2,6

Table 6 – Contribution of each type of retailer to the year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices (percentage points)

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
General dealers	0,3	0,9	1,7	1,0	-0,5	0,8
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	-0,2	0,0	-0,5	-0,5	-0,4	-0,5
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	0,2	0,6	0,1	0,4	0,5	0,4
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	1,0	0,6	0,0	1,6	0,7	0,6
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	0,5	0,4	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,5
Hardware, paint and glass	0,5	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0
All other retailers	0,8	0,9	0,7	1,3	1,1	0,7
Total	3,0	3,6	2,5	4,4	1,6	2,6

Table 7 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Month-on-month % change
General dealers	44 913	45 146	45 143	45 291	44 579	44 742	0,4
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	8 448	8 613	8 308	8 490	8 172	8 195	0,3
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	7 501	7 801	7 358	7 672	7 680	7 640	-0,5
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	18 247	18 234	18 313	18 246	18 460	18 216	-1,3
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 549	4 506	4 604	4 644	4 600	4 665	1,4
Hardware, paint and glass	7 640	7 532	7 547	7 637	7 410	7 599	2,6
All other retailers	11 098	11 140	11 084	11 271	11 262	11 162	-0,9
Total	102 396	102 972	102 357	103 252	102 163	102 218	0,1

Table 8 – Retail trade sales at current prices (R million)

Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	89 551	87 977	98 447	103 447	106 642	115 801	122 834
Feb	92 581	97 002	100 002	106 060	110 127	116 843	120 692
Mar	97 483	97 544	103 903	111 032	117 751	121 504	126 733
Apr	48 322	92 700	100 932	106 636	110 969	119 606	
May	85 414	101 656	106 862	111 413	117 176	124 232	
Jun	87 231	100 192	103 476	108 710	116 706	121 322	
Jul	85 454	88 239	101 783	107 303	112 498	121 450	
Aug	93 964	96 434	104 807	109 425	116 517	121 981	
Sep	92 609	98 142	104 517	111 357	116 244	122 318	
Oct	94 727	100 030	105 715	108 766	118 648	124 151	
Nov	108 658	114 622	123 342	128 100	140 718	148 405	
Dec	130 311	138 583	146 011	158 246	166 343	173 595	
Total	1 106 305	1 213 121	1 299 797	1 370 495	1 450 339	1 531 208	

Table 9 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at current prices

Month	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026 year-to-date
Jan	-1,8	11,9	5,1	3,1	8,6	6,1	6,1
Feb	4,8	3,1	6,1	3,8	6,1	3,3	4,7
Mar	0,1	6,5	6,9	6,1	3,2	4,3	4,5
Apr	91,8	8,9	5,7	4,1	7,8		
May	19,0	5,1	4,3	5,2	6,0		
Jun	14,9	3,3	5,1	7,4	4,0		
Jul	3,3	15,3	5,4	4,8	8,0		
Aug	2,6	8,7	4,4	6,5	4,7		
Sep	6,0	6,5	6,5	4,4	5,2		
Oct	5,6	5,7	2,9	9,1	4,6		
Nov	5,5	7,6	3,9	9,9	5,5		
Dec	6,3	5,4	8,4	5,1	4,4		
Total	9,7	7,1	5,4	5,8	5,6		

Table 10 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	112 473	115 359	124 787	131 297	3,0	-2,2	0,7	1,5
Feb	113 182	117 686	125 630	130 240	0,6	2,0	0,7	-0,8
Mar	113 719	119 057	124 615	130 345	0,5	1,2	-0,8	0,1
Apr	113 331	118 891	126 801		-0,3	-0,1	1,8	
May	112 804	119 317	126 534		-0,5	0,4	-0,2	
Jun	113 584	121 805	126 964		0,7	2,1	0,3	
Jul	114 094	120 086	129 656		0,4	-1,4	2,1	
Aug	114 624	121 838	127 975		0,5	1,5	-1,3	
Sep	115 870	121 549	128 066		1,1	-0,2	0,1	
Oct	113 008	123 486	128 967		-2,5	1,6	0,7	
Nov	114 476	123 914	130 450		1,3	0,3	1,1	
Dec	117 924	123 953	129 383		3,0	0,0	-0,8	

Table 11 – Retail trade sales at current prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
General dealers	57 725	72 200	80 359	56 822	58 724	62 689
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	12 416	12 646	16 898	11 467	10 834	11 549
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	10 582	10 255	10 745	10 782	9 701	10 326
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	18 202	24 604	35 587	18 651	17 641	17 363
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 243	5 355	5 896	3 981	3 940	4 246
Hardware, paint and glass	9 916	10 550	9 907	8 539	8 387	9 165
All other retailers	11 066	12 796	14 202	12 592	11 464	11 395
Total	124 151	148 405	173 595	122 834	120 692	126 733

Table 12 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at current prices by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
General dealers	3,2	4,7	6,7	5,0	1,3	4,2
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	5,8	9,0	2,5	2,7	2,8	1,4
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	6,1	13,7	5,3	8,7	10,1	8,1
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	6,2	3,5	0,3	10,3	4,7	4,4
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	6,4	3,4	5,5	5,7	4,9	6,8
Hardware, paint and glass	5,5	4,2	2,1	2,3	1,5	2,0
All other retailers	5,6	6,3	4,7	8,5	7,7	5,6
Total	4,6	5,5	4,4	6,1	3,3	4,3

Table 13 – Contribution of each type of retailer to the year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at current prices (percentage points)

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
General dealers	1,5	2,3	3,0	2,4	0,6	2,1
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	0,6	0,7	0,2	0,3	0,3	0,1
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	0,5	0,9	0,3	0,7	0,8	0,6
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	0,9	0,6	0,1	1,5	0,7	0,6
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2
Hardware, paint and glass	0,4	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1
All other retailers	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,8	0,7	0,5
Total	4,6	5,5	4,4	6,1	3,3	4,3

Table 14 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at current prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Month-on-month % change
General dealers	61 468	62 032	62 204	62 509	61 872	62 254	0,6
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	12 102	12 409	12 007	12 183	11 937	11 839	-0,8
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	10 157	10 657	10 075	10 490	10 530	10 491	-0,4
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	19 924	20 178	19 940	20 598	20 643	20 300	-1,7
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 319	4 259	4 317	4 367	4 326	4 370	1,0
Hardware, paint and glass	9 406	9 314	9 326	9 426	9 213	9 448	2,6
All other retailers	11 591	11 601	11 514	11 723	11 719	11 643	-0,6
Total	128 967	130 450	129 383	131 297	130 240	130 345	0,1

Explanatory notes

- Introduction** 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey of the retail trade industry, covering retail enterprises (see point 3 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2025 statistical business register (SBR) that contains businesses registered for value-added tax (VAT). Published retail trade sales estimates include VAT.
- Purpose of the survey** 2 The results of the monthly retail trade sales survey are used to compile estimates of the gross domestic product (GDP) and its components, which are used in monitoring the state of the economy and formulation of economic policy. These statistics are also used in the analysis of comparative business and industry performance.
- Scope of the survey** 3 This survey covers retail enterprises according to the following types of retailers:
- general dealers:
 - retail trade in non-specialised stores with food, beverages and tobacco predominating; and
 - 'other' retail trade in non-specialised stores.
 - retailers in food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores:
 - retailers in fresh fruit and vegetables;
 - retailers in meat and meat products;
 - retailers in bakery products;
 - retailers in beverages;
 - retailers in tobacco; and
 - retailers in 'other' food in specialised stores.
 - retailers in pharmaceutical and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries;
 - retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods:
 - retailers in men's and boys' clothing;
 - retailers in ladies', girls' and infants' clothing;
 - general outfitters; and
 - retailers in footwear.
 - retailers in household furniture, appliances and equipment;
 - retailers in hardware, paint and glass; and
 - all 'other' retailers:
 - retailers in reading matter and stationery;
 - retailers in jewellery, watches and clocks;
 - retailers in sport goods and entertainment requisites;
 - retailers in 'other' specialised stores;
 - repair of personal and household goods;
 - retail trade in second-hand goods in stores; and
 - retail trade not in stores.
- Classification** 4 The 1993 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities* (SIC), Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02, was used to classify the statistical units in the survey. The SIC is based on the 1990 *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities* (ISIC) with suitable adaptations for local conditions. Each enterprise is classified to the industry which reflects its predominant activity. Statistics in this publication are presented at SIC group (four digit) level.
- Collection rate** 5 The preliminary collection rate for the survey on retail trade sales for March 2026 was 71,0%. The revised collection rate for February 2026 was 76,4%.

Statistical unit 6 The statistical unit for which information is compiled and published is the enterprise, defined as a legal unit or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data.

Revised figures 7 Revised figures are mainly due to late submission of data to Stats SA, or respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures. The reasons for routine revisions are outlined in the following schedule. Any unscheduled revisions will be promptly indicated in relevant tables to maintain transparency and accuracy. It is important to note that seasonally adjusted figures are revised monthly.

Statistical release	Reason for revision	Period subject to revision
Mar-26	Additional information from respondents	Feb-26
Apr-26	Additional information from respondents	Mar-26
May-26	Additional information from respondents	Apr-26
Jun-26	Additional information from respondents	May-26
Jul-26	Additional information from respondents	Jun-26
Aug-26	Additional information from respondents	Jul-26
Sep-26	Additional information from respondents	Aug-26
Oct-26	Additional information from respondents	Sep-26
Nov-26	Additional information from respondents	Oct-26
Dec-26	Additional information from respondents	Nov-26
Jan-27	Additional information from respondents New base year for constant prices	Jan-02 - Dec-26
Feb-27	Additional information from respondents	Jan-27
New base year in 2026/27 - periodic, approximately four- to five-year intervals		

Related publications 8 Users may also refer to *Stats in Brief* available from Stats SA.

Rounding-off of figures 9 Where figures have been rounded off, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.

Historical data 10 Historical retail trade sales data are available on the Stats SA website. To access the data electronically, use the following link:
[Click to download historical data.](#)

Past publications 11 Past retail trade sales releases are available on the Stats SA website. To access the releases electronically, use the following link:
[Click to download past releases.](#)

Technical notes

Survey methodology and design

- 1 The survey is conducted on a monthly basis. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of 1 671 enterprises from a population of 19 052 enterprises. Completed questionnaires are required to be returned to Stats SA within ten days after the end of the reference month. Email and telephone reminders are used to follow up on non-respondents.
- 2 A stratified random sample was drawn at the SIC four-digit level in April 2025 from Stats SA’s statistical business register (SBR). Strata were formed using a combination of the Standard Industrial Classification and the measure of size classes for enterprises (see point three below).

The Neyman optimal allocation formula given below was used to allocate samples to each stratum:

$$n_h = n * (N_h * S_h) / [\sum (N_i * S_i)]$$

Neyman allocation formula not only allocates sample sizes to each stratum, but also calculates the relative precision for each stratum as well as the relative precision for all strata. The relative precision for these strata did not exceed 6,0%.

Class limits

- 3 The retail sampling frame is divided into four size groups. All large enterprises (size group one) are completely enumerated. Simple random sampling is applied to size groups two, three and four (medium, small and very small) enterprises. The total value of sales of the large enterprises (size group one) is added to the weighted totals of size groups two, three and four to reflect the total value of sales.

Measure of size classes (Rand)

Enterprise size	Size group	Lower limit	Upper limit
Very small	4	2 692 651	12 000 000
Small	3	12 000 001	57 000 000
Medium	2	57 000 001	117 000 000
Large	1	117 000 001	

Sample weighting

- 4 For those strata not completely enumerated, the weights to produce estimates are the inverse ratio of the sampling fraction, modified to take account of non-response in the survey. Stratum estimates are calculated and then aggregated with the completely enumerated stratum to form group estimates. These procedures are consistent with international best practice.

Seasonal adjustment

- 5 Seasonally adjusted estimates are generated each month using the X-12 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the United States Census Bureau. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be recognised more clearly. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series, even after adjustment for seasonal variations. Therefore, the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. The X-12-ARIMA procedure for retail trade sales is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: [Click to download seasonal adjustment retail trade sales February 2022.](#)

Trend cycle

- 6 The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-12 Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimate the underlying trend cycle.

- Constant prices**
- 7 For January 2002 to December 2007 retail trade sales at constant prices were calculated using the consumer price index (CPI) for goods, excluding petrol and purchases of vehicles, for all urban areas to deflate total sales at current prices. From January 2008 onwards total retail trade sales at constant prices are obtained by adding up the deflated sales by type of retailer.
 - 8 Retail trade sales at constant prices by type of retailer are obtained by deflating estimated sales at current prices by the relevant weighted price index. To obtain total retail trade sales at constant prices, estimates of the deflated sales for each type of retailer are aggregated.

- Reliability of estimates**
- 9 Data presented in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample and are, therefore, subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the data had been obtained from all enterprises in the retail industry in South Africa. Estimates are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors.
 - 10 Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in reporting by enterprises and errors made in the collection and processing of the data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors. Every effort is made to minimise non-sampling errors by careful design of questionnaires, testing them in pilot studies, editing reported data and implementing efficient operating procedures. Fluctuations may occur in consecutive months as a result of seasonal and economic factors.

- Relative standard error**
- 11 One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of enterprises was used. The relative standard error (RSE) provides an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling, and thus avoids the need to refer to the size of the estimate.

Estimates of total retail trade sales within 95% confidence limits – March 2026

	Lower limit (R million)	Sales (R million)	Upper limit (R million)	Relative standard error (RSE) (%)
Retail trade sales	123 853	126 733	129 613	1,1

- Month-on-month percentage change**
- 12 The month-on-month percentage change in a variable for any given month is the change between that month and the previous month, expressed as a percentage of the latter.

- Year-on-year percentage change**
- 13 The year-on-year percentage change in a variable for any given period is the change between that period and the corresponding period of the previous year, expressed as a percentage of the latter.

- Contribution (percentage points)**
- 14 The contribution (percentage points) to the year-on-year percentage change for any given period is calculated by multiplying the percentage change of each type of retailer by its corresponding weight, divided by 100. The weight is the percentage contribution of each type of retailer to total retail trade sales in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Glossary

Enterprise	An enterprise is a legal entity or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities.	
Industry	An industry is made up of enterprises engaged in the same or similar kinds of economic activity. Industries are defined in the <i>System of National Accounts</i> (SNA) in the same way as in the <i>Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities</i> (SIC), Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02 of January 1993.	
Retail trade	Retail trade includes the resale (sale without transformation) of new and used goods and products to the general public for household use.	
Retailer	A retailer is an enterprise deriving more than 50% of its turnover from sales of goods to the general public for household use.	
Symbols and abbreviations	CPI	Consumer price index
	GDP	Gross domestic product
	ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
	SARS	South African Revenue Service
	SBR	Statistical Business Register
	SIC	Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
	SNA	System of National Accounts
	Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
	VAT	Value-added tax
	*	Revised figures

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General information

Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South Africa's 12 official languages. Since the releases are used extensively locally and by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are published in English only.

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Central Reference Library, Mmabatho

Stats SA also provides a subscription service.

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You can also visit us on the internet at: www.statssa.gov.za.

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