

SA vs Botswana: The Woolworths price difference



By [Gwen Watkins](#)

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As the rand weakens and the pula strengthens, so consumers in Botswana find the gap in the cost of goods between South Africa and Botswana in Woolworths grows and not in their favour.



Unlike its competitors, many of who are content to work on a rand to pula basis ie. if the goods are marked R10, they are sold for P10, Woolworths marks up on the rand value, usually removing the evidence in the process.

Here is a recent example: A packet of spring onions fresh until 8 February 2014 - rand price R9.99; pula price P10.85. Let's unpack this price:

Price before 14% South African VAT	R8.76
At the exchange rate on date of purchase	P7.13
Plus 12% Botswanan VAT	P0.86
Correct price	P7.99
Actual price is almost 36% higher	

Compare this to flowers sold in Pick n Pay: Rand price R80 (just unpacked off the truck) = Pula price P70; almost exactly what it should be. So it is not, as is often suggested, the cost of trucking it to Gaborone or the border duty and clearance, because all its competitors manage to keep prices down.

When I first moved to Botswana in 2011, I did the bulk of my food shopping at Woolworths; now, with an excellent Spar, Checkers, Pick n Pay and Food Lovers Market in the same precinct, my spend has dropped considerably.

ABOUT GWEN WATKINS

Gwen Watkins is a freelance writer, editor, subeditor and author. Almost 40 years of experience across industrial and commercial writing, as a reporter and PR consultant, has given her expert grounding in brand communication and native advertising. A Master NLP Practitioner, she uses these skills within the creation of copywriting, annual reports, brochures and website copy.

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