

## Home Court Disadvantage: The Rising Costs of Being a New York Sports Fan

*For New York sports fans, streaming services to watch the game at home  
and tailgating staples come with steep price tags*

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Following your favorite team used to take two simple tasks: turning on your TV and firing up the grill. After a historic Knicks NBA championship title earlier this year, New York sports fans have more reason to do both. But as football and hockey seasons kick off, watching any of the games from home costs more than ever. Leagues have carved game rights into a costly patchwork of paywalled apps, regional broadcasters – like YES, the main streamer for the Yankees and Brooklyn Nets, and MSG Network, streaming home to the Rangers, Islanders, the New Jersey Devils, and the Buffalo Sabres – are collapsing under their own business models, and the tailgate spread fans look forward to all week now costs 10% more than it did a year ago – and 13.3% more since Trump took office.

Fans are being squeezed from every direction, and the leagues and retailers profiting from it don't seem to notice – or care. Streaming platforms treat live sports as a subscriber-acquisition tool, leagues treat media rights as an auction to the highest bidder, and grocery prices keep climbing – leaving fans to absorb whatever costs come out of the other end, whether they're paying for an app or a pack of hot dogs. Or worse, sit out the season altogether: **Nearly six in ten sports fans said they've [skipped watching a game in the past year because it was too expensive](#)**, with 32% saying this happened “many times.”

### Gameday Grocery Run: A Tailgate Just Got Pricier

Whether fans are throwing hotdogs and burgers on the grill, frozen apps in the oven, or beer in the cooler, they're in for higher prices on gameday. **Nationwide, a basket of classic tailgating staples costs 10% more than it did a year ago – and 13.3% more than before Trump took office.<sup>1</sup> Many items have posted double-digit price hikes, including ketchup (up 17%), ground beef (15%), and hot dogs (12%).**

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Authors' own analysis and calculations based in part on data reported by NIQ for the listed categories for the one-week periods ending August 8, 2026 and August 9, 2025 and the four-week period ending December 28, 2024 for the total U.S. market and total FMCG retailer channel. The conclusions drawn from the NIQ data are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of NIQ.

| Item                      | Price in August 2026 | Price in August 2025 | % Change Since Last Year |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Kraft-Heinz Ketchup       | \$4.04               | \$3.46               | 16.7%                    |
| Kraft-Keinz Mustard       | \$2.55               | \$2.48               | 3.0%                     |
| Ground Beef (1lb)         | \$5.81               | \$5.06               | 14.8%                    |
| Ball Park Hot Dogs        | \$5.91               | \$5.27               | 12.0%                    |
| Johnsonville Bratwursts   | \$5.95               | \$5.35               | 11.1%                    |
| Hamburger Buns            | \$1.89               | \$1.73               | 8.8%                     |
| Hot Dog Buns              | \$1.89               | \$1.74               | 8.5%                     |
| Prepared Potato Salad     | \$3.84               | \$3.48               | 10.4%                    |
| Frito-Lay Tortilla Chips  | \$6.01               | \$5.54               | 8.6%                     |
| Frito-Lay Cheese Dip      | \$4.59               | \$4.28               | 7.4%                     |
| Frozen Jalapeño Poppers   | \$5.74               | \$5.25               | 9.3%                     |
| Anheuser-Busch Light Beer | \$8.79               | \$8.60               | 2.3%                     |
| Plastic Cups              | \$4.97               | \$4.52               | 9.8%                     |
| Reynolds Aluminum Foil    | \$6.34               | \$5.17               | 22.6%                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>\$68.31</b>       | <b>\$61.92</b>       | <b>10.3%</b>             |

Grocery prices have been increasing as Trump's tariffs jack up prices for imported ingredients. Ketchup prices, for example, have increased as a result of Trump's withdrawal from the Mexico-US trade agreement on tomatoes, resulting in a 17% [tariff](#). Rising oil prices stemming from Trump's war in Iran have also hit the grocery aisle as transportation costs for refrigerated foods and packaging costs for processed foods soar.

### The Fractured Sports Streaming Network Is Costing New Yorkers More Than Ever

New York is home to teams in every major league, and following any one of them now means piecing together access from whichever platform outbid the rest for the rights. Because leagues split media rights for regular season and playoff games across platforms to the highest bidder, fans pay more each year to watch fewer complete broadcasts.

There's no starker example than football. Last season, a fan who wanted access to every NFL game had to subscribe to as many as 10 different services and [pay upwards](#) of

\$1,000. Giants, Jets, and Bills fans hoping to catch their team's out-of-market Sunday games now need to subscribe to NFL Sunday Ticket, which can run [as much as](#) \$480 per year. Add basketball, baseball, and hockey to the mix, and accessing coverage of all four major U.S. sports costs over \$2,600, [according](#) to the *New York Times*.

Even rooting for just one New York team doesn't come cheap. For example, to watch every Yankees game this season, a fan would [need](#) access to 10 different networks and at least five paid subscriptions. The team's official direct-to-consumer option costs \$120 per season, but includes only 125 of the 162 games – meaning fans still need an Amazon Prime subscription, Netflix, Apple TV, and others to watch the rest. Mets fans face their own version of this squeeze: SNY broadcasts are only free to fans who already pay for cable or satellite services within the network's home region; anyone who has cut the cable cord [needs](#) to piece together season access across national networks like FOX, ESPN, and the MLB App.

### **When MSG Went Dark: New York's Blackout Problem, Revisited**

Fans have been getting shut out of games they'd already paid for long before streaming existed, and the same structural gap that failed them before – cable providers and networks fighting over carriage fees – is still failing them today.

From 2010 to 2024, New Yorkers [experienced](#) 100 blackouts totaling 3,350 days in which they were blocked from content they were still being charged for. Knicks and Rangers fans got a fresh case study just last year. On January 1, 2025, an unresolved fee dispute between Optimum and MSG Network knocked Knicks and Rangers broadcasts off the air – in the middle of both seasons. The standoff dragged on for nearly two months: the Knicks [were](#) riding an eight-game winning streak when it started and the Rangers [were](#) in a tight playoff race by the time it ended. Subscribers were never refunded for the games they missed.

### **From Highmark Stadium to Arthur Ashe, New York Fans Are Being Priced Out of Their Seats**

The squeeze doesn't stop at the screen. Across New York, from Buffalo to Queens, enjoying a game in person costs more than ever. A family of four going to a Buffalo Bills game this season could [spend](#) nearly \$2,200 for a single game day – the most expensive in the league – in the brand-new Highmark Stadium. While resale tickets alone would run roughly \$2,000 – a 124% increase over eight years and a 21% jump from last season – food and drinks would tack on roughly another \$80. Downstate isn't much cheaper. A family outing to a Jets or a Giants game at MetLife Stadium this season runs [roughly](#) \$1,200.

Tennis fans walking into Arthur Ashe Stadium last month for the 146th U.S. Open – the largest, primetime venue at the tournament – got the message before the first serve: an

\$800 million [renovation](#) left fewer seats within a price range of what most fans can actually afford. The USTA and New York City Mayor's Office [provided](#) 1,000 steeply discounted tickets to New Yorkers. But 3,500 seats in the middle of Arthur Ashe that once averaged under \$300 have been replaced with courtside seats running close to double. Even inside the gates, fans are [spending more](#) as food offerings increasingly cater to celebrities, influencers, and wealthy attendees: French dip sandwiches for \$38, \$100 chicken nuggets topped with caviar, and an iconic Honey Deuce for \$23.

Add it all up – the streaming apps, the tickets, the beer and hot dogs, whether at the game or in your backyard – and being a New York sports fan has never cost more.