

HELLO TOMORROW

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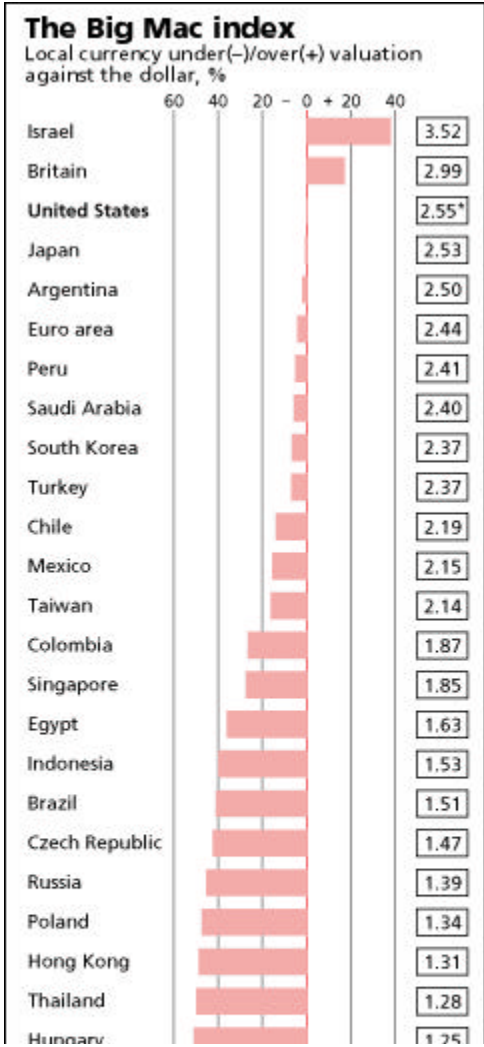
MARKETS & DATA

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The Economist's Big Mac index offers a light-hearted guide to whether currencies are at their correct levels, according to the notion of "purchasing-power parity". Under PPP, exchange rates should adjust to equalise the price of a basket of goods and services across all countries; the Big Mac PPP is the exchange rate at which hamburgers would cost the same in America as in other countries. The chart shows the under- or overvaluation of emerging-market currencies, the euro, sterling and the yen against the dollar. Dividing the price, in shekels, of a Big Mac in Israel by the price, in dollars, of an American Big Mac produces a Big Mac PPP of 5.68 shekels to the dollar. Since the market rate is 4.13, this suggests the shekel is 38% overvalued. At the other extreme, the Philippine peso is almost 60% undervalued: the market rate is 51 to the dollar, against a Big Mac PPP of 21. After its recent recovery, the euro is now only 4% undervalued. The yen is close to its Big Mac mark. But sterling is 17% overvalued.



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