

# CPI

MAY 2017



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### CONSUMER PRICES UP 0.7% IN MAY 2017

Latest statistics released by the Statistical Institute of Belize show that the All-Items Consumer Price Index for the month of May 2017 stood at 104.4, an increase from 103.7 in May of 2016. The prices of goods and services regularly purchased by Belizean Households were, on average, 0.7 percent higher in May 2017 than they were in the same month of 2016 (see Figure 1), as higher prices for 'Transport'-related goods and services overshadowed decreases in various other categories, including 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' and 'Recreation and Culture'. For the first five months of 2017, a year-to-date inflation rate of 1.7 percent was recorded.

Prices within the 'Transport' category rose by 8.3 percent from May 2016 to May 2017 (see Figure 1), continuing their upward trend, albeit at a slower rate than in previous months. International airfares were significantly higher than they were in May of last year, although it should be noted that some reduction in fares was recorded following the spike experienced in late 2016 to early 2017. Bus fares were almost 8 percent higher than they were in the same month last year, reflecting the increase that took effect in October of 2016. Fuel and lubricant prices for the month of May 2017 were up by 6.5 percent from the same month in 2016, with the highest increase being seen in the price per gallon of Premium gasoline, which rose by 18 percent from \$9.06 in May of last year to \$10.72 in May 2017 (see Table 1). Diesel prices increased by 16 percent from \$8.19 to \$9.47, while Regular gasoline rose by 14 percent from \$9.08 to \$10.35.

'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' recorded an overall decrease of 1.3 percent (see Figure 1) for the month. This was the cumulative effect of relatively small decreases in prices for items such as eggs, milk, breakfast cereals, beef products, chicken, onions, cabbages, limes and potatoes (see Table 1)

The 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category saw an overall rise of 0.3 percent when compared to May of last year. This was as a result of higher prices for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), which overshadowed a slight decline in home rental prices. The average cost of a 100-pound cylinder of LPG rose by 18 percent from \$83.90 in May 2016 to \$98.83 in May 2017 (see Table 1).

On average, there was a 0.6 percent decline across 'All Other Categories of Goods and Services'. 'Recreation and Culture' was down by 2.8 percent due to decreases in entrance fees to sporting activities and night clubs, while smaller price reductions were seen in women's and children's clothing, health insurance premiums, and 'Furnishing, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance'.

Across the various municipalities, Dangriga recorded the highest increase in consumer prices for the month with an inflation rate of 2.9 percent, as consumers in that municipality actually saw home rental prices rise in comparison to May of 2016. Orange Walk Town, where home rental costs fell by even more than the national average, was the only municipality which saw prices decrease for the month, with an inflation rate of negative 0.9 percent. (see Figure 3).

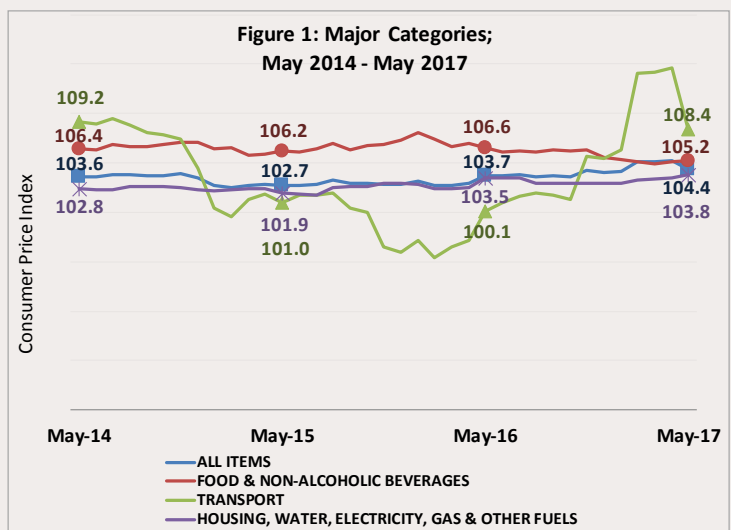


Figure 2: Inflation Rates by Category; May 2017

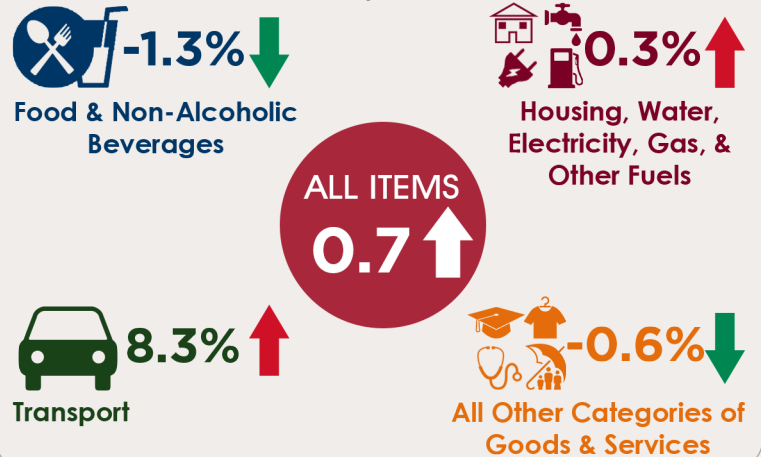


Figure 3: Inflation Rates by Municipality (Percent); May 2017

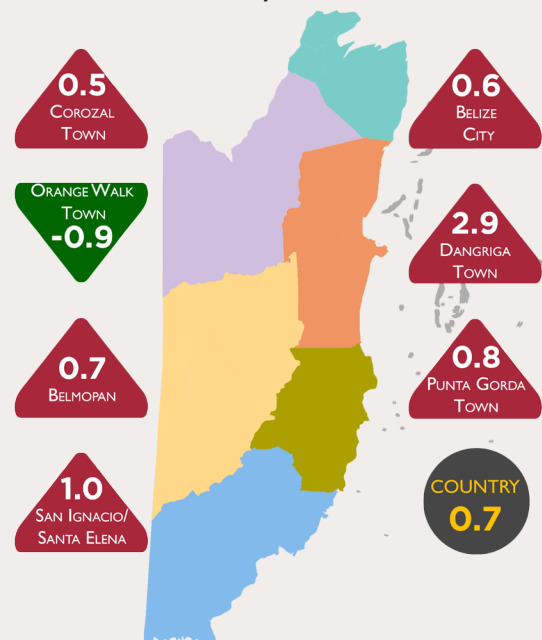


Table 1: Average Prices of Selected Foods and Fuel, May 2016 and May 2017

Item	Unit	May 2016	May 2017	% Change
Ground Beef	1 Lb	6.16	5.76	↓ -6.5
Beef Steak	1 Lb	8.23	7.87	↓ -4.4
Pork Chops	1 Lb	7.03	6.89	↓ -1.9
Pig Tail	1 Lb	4.34	4.40	↑ 1.5
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	2.73	2.70	↓ -1.1
Sugar, White	1 Lb	0.77	0.80	↑ 4.5
Flour (Gitana)	1 Lb	0.95	0.94	↓ -1.4
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	1.46	1.49	↑ 2.2
Eggs	1 Dozen	3.21	3.04	↓ -5.0
Condensed Milk (Dutch Lady)	397 G	2.48	2.43	↓ -1.9
Milk (La La Light)	1 Litre	2.84	2.44	↓ -14.1
Mixed Vegetables (Del Monte)	411 G	2.54	2.41	↓ -5.1
Yellow Onions	1 Lb	1.87	1.66	↓ -11.3
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	2.59	3.41	↑ 32.0
Cabbage	1 Lb	1.31	1.10	↓ -16.3
Limes	1 unit	0.46	0.37	↓ -20.1
Potatoes	1 Lb	1.61	1.46	↓ -8.9
Watermelon	1 Lb	0.64	0.72	↑ 12.7
Premium Gasoline	1 Gal	9.06	10.72	↑ 18.4
Regular Gasoline	1 Gal	9.08	10.35	↑ 14.1
Diesel	1 Gal	8.19	9.47	↑ 15.7
Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	83.90	98.83	↑ 17.8