



CONSUMER PRICES UP 0.9% IN JANUARY 2018

ALL-ITEMS: The Statistical Institute of Belize's latest statistics on consumer prices show that the All-Items Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at 105 for the month of January 2018, an increase from 104.1 in January of 2017 (see Figure 1). This means that, for the first month of the year, the average Belizean household experienced a 0.9 percent rise in the cost of regularly purchased good and services compared to the same month of last year.

TRANSPORT: During the month, consumer prices within the 'Transport' category recorded an overall increase of 5.6 percent. This was mainly attributed to higher prices in the 'Fuel and Lubricants' sub-category coupled with increases in the cost of various 'Transport Services'. Within 'Fuel and Lubricants' the price per gallon of Premium gasoline rose 13.1 percent from \$10.12 in January 2017 to \$11.45 in January 2018, Regular gasoline rose 3.4 percent from \$9.96 to \$10.29, while the price per gallon of Diesel was up 9.7 percent from \$9.12 to \$10.00 (see Table 1). Among 'Transport Services', both international airfare prices as well as domestic bus fares were higher during January 2018, when compared to January of 2017.

FOOD AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES: A marginal decline in 'Food' prices was the main cause of a 0.2 percent decrease in the 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' category. Several meat products, including ground beef, pork chops, whole chicken and pigtail, together with eggs and milk reported lower prices for the month of January 2018 in comparison to January 2017 (see Table1). A noticeable increase in the prices of some vegetables was also reported (See Table1); however, this was insufficient to offset the decreases seen among other food items.

HOUSING, WATER, ELECTRICITY, GAS & OTHER FUELS: The 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category reported a 0.9 percent increase during the first month of 2018. This was due primarily to higher home rental costs along with a rise in the average price of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for the month. The average cost of a 100-pound cylinder of LPG rose by 15.8 percent from \$85.71 in January 2017 to \$99.22 in January of 2018 (see Table 1).

ALL OTHER CATEGORIES OF GOODS AND SERVICES: 'All Other Categories of Goods and Services' together experienced a marginal overall decline of 0.1 percent for January 2018, reflecting the net effect of lower prices within 'Recreation and Culture' combined with higher prices for 'Alcoholic Beverages, and Tobacco'. Lower night club admission fees for the month when compared to January of last year accounted for the decline in the former category, while higher beer prices were the main reason for the increase recorded in the latter.

INFLATION BY MUNICIPALITY:

With a reported 1.8 percent inflation rate, Punta Gorda Town experienced the highest increase in consumer prices for January 2018, mainly attributed to a higher than average increase in food prices within this municipality during the month. Meanwhile, the City of Belmopan, where home rental costs remained unchanged compared to last January, reported the country's lowest inflation rate at 0.1 percent (see Figure 3).

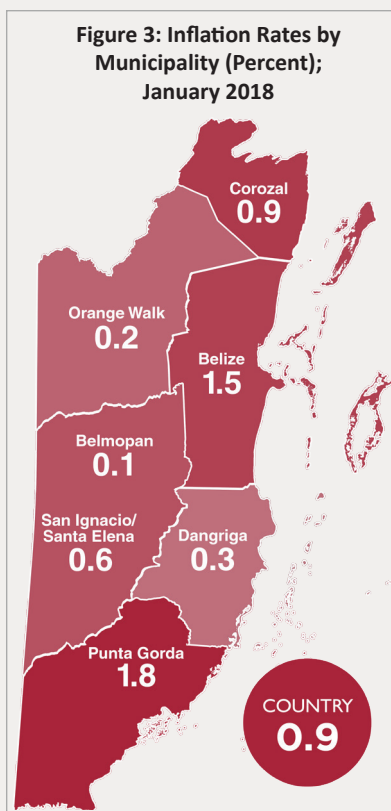
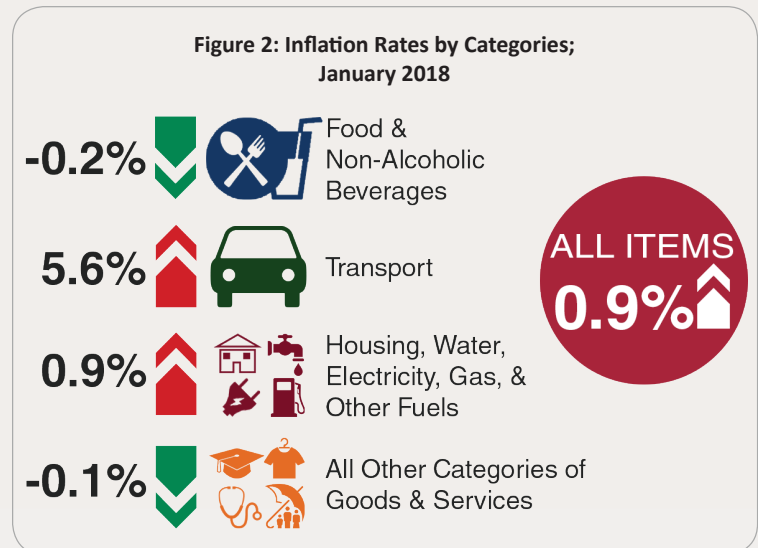
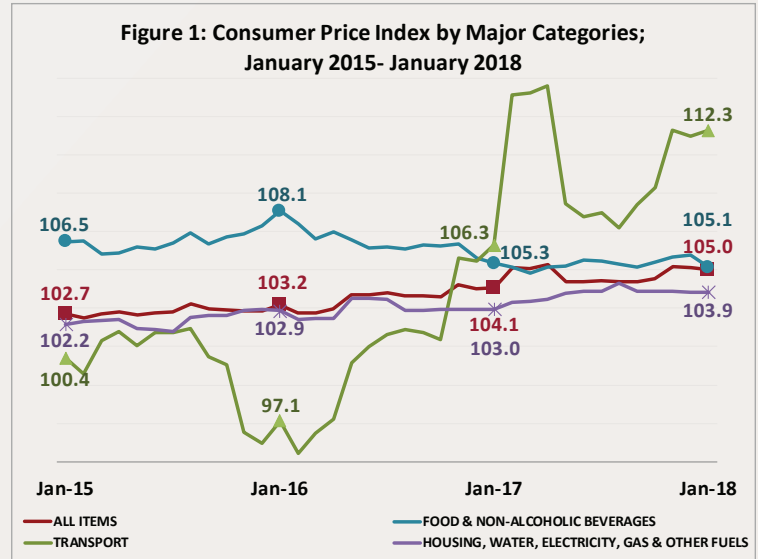


Table 1: Average Prices of Selected Foods and Fuel, January 2017 and January 2018

| Item | Quantity | January 2017 | January 2018 | % Change |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Ground Beef | 1 Lb | 6.08 | 5.57 | -8.4 |
| Beef Steak | 1 Lb | 7.86 | 7.87 | 0.2 |
| Pork Chops | 1 Lb | 6.93 | 6.50 | -6.3 |
| Pig Tail | 1 Lb | 4.38 | 4.26 | -2.7 |
| Whole Chicken | 1 Lb | 2.67 | 2.64 | -0.9 |
| Sugar, White | 1 Lb | 0.79 | 0.80 | 1.5 |
| Flour (Gitana) | 1 Lb | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.2 |
| Red Kidney Beans | 1 Lb | 1.42 | 1.82 | 28.2 |
| Eggs | 1 Dozen | 3.22 | 3.21 | -0.3 |
| Belikin Beer (w/out bottle) | 284 ml | 2.73 | 2.98 | 9.2 |
| Milk (La La Light) | 1 Litre | 2.65 | 2.47 | -6.7 |
| Red Kidney Beans | 1 Lb | 1.42 | 1.82 | 28.2 |
| Yellow Onions | 1 Lb | 1.97 | 1.99 | 1.3 |
| Sweet Pepper | 1 Lb | 3.99 | 3.56 | -10.7 |
| Cabbage | 1 Lb | 1.23 | 1.36 | 10.1 |
| Limes | 1 unit | 0.27 | 0.31 | 13.3 |
| Potatoes | 1 Lb | 1.37 | 1.60 | 16.2 |
| Watermelon | 1 Lb | 0.67 | 0.59 | -11.5 |
| Premium Gasoline | 1 Gal | 10.12 | 11.45 | 13.1 |
| Regular Gasoline | 1 Gal | 9.96 | 10.29 | 3.4 |
| Diesel | 1 Gal | 9.12 | 10.00 | 9.7 |
| Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) | 100 Lbs | 85.71 | 99.22 | 15.8 |