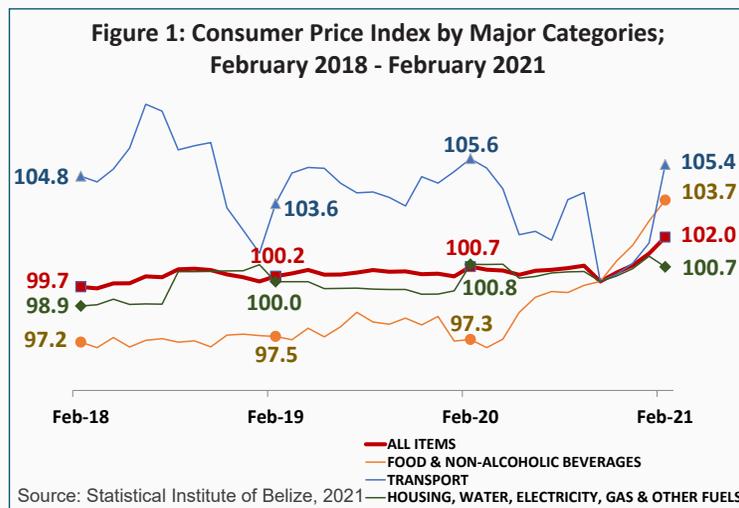




CONSUMER PRICES INCREASE 1.3% IN FEBRUARY 2021: FOOD, PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS, HOME RENTAL COSTS, AND LPG UP; HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS AND FOOTWEAR DOWN

ALL-ITEMS:

The most recent results from the Statistical Institute of Belize's monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) survey showed that, for the month of February 2021, the national inflation rate stood at 1.3 percent. The national inflation rate for the month measures the percent change in prices between a given month and the same month in the previous year. The All-Items Consumer Price Index, which summarizes all categories of goods and services, rose from 100.7 in February 2020 to 102 in February 2021 (see Figure 1). This indicates that, on average, prices for items contained in the basket of goods and services commonly purchased by Belizean households were 1.3 percent higher than they were last February. This was mainly the result of higher costs for food items, personal care products, home rentals and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), being partially offset by lower prices for hotel accommodations, footwear and motor vehicle fuels.



FOOD AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:

Continuing the upward trend of the past several months, prices within the 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' category saw a significant increase of 5.6 percent for the month of February 2021 (see Figure 2). Within this major category, the 'Food' sub-category recorded an inflation rate of more than 6 percent for the second consecutive month, as higher prices were seen across all groups of food items when compared to February 2020. Prices for fresh produce remained significantly higher than they were in February of last year, with vegetables up by 24.7 percent and fruits by 17 percent. Notable increases were recorded for tomatoes, cabbages, limes, potatoes, onions, sweet peppers, pineapples, watermelons, and red kidney beans, as well as for other types of food products such as natural milk, whole chickens, red kidney beans, and eggs (see Table 1).

HOUSING, WATER, ELECTRICITY, GAS AND OTHER FUELS:

For the month of February 2021, prices for goods and services within the 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category saw an overall increase of 0.8 percent when compared to February 2020 (see Figure 2). This was mainly the result of an 8.6 percent increase in Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) prices, as the average price of a hundred-pound cylinder of LPG rose by \$8.52, from \$99.10 in February 2020 to \$107.62 in February 2021 (See Table 1). In addition, home rental costs were up by 0.2 percent, with higher prices being recorded in San Ignacio/Santa Elena Town and the City of Belmopan.

Table 1: Average Prices of Selected Foods and Fuel (BZ \$); February 2020 and February 2021

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		February 2020	February 2021	
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.79	\$5.45	-5.9%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$8.12	\$7.98	-1.7%
Pork Chops	1 Lb	\$6.90	\$7.10	2.8%
Pig Tail	1 Lb	\$4.18	\$4.42	5.9%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$2.73	\$2.79	2.4%
Sugar, White	1 Lb	\$0.79	\$0.79	0.0%
Sugar, Brown	1 Lb	\$0.54	\$0.56	4.5%
Flour (Gitana)	1 Lb	\$0.94	\$0.98	4.4%
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.23	\$1.25	1.6%
Eggs	1 Dozen	\$3.38	\$3.54	4.9%
Natural Milk	1 Liter	\$2.49	\$2.92	17.1%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$1.51	\$2.56	69.7%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.02	\$1.31	28.4%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.16	0.0%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.74	\$0.82	10.5%
Plantain	1 Unit	\$0.34	\$0.33	-0.4%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$3.18	\$3.47	9.3%
Onions	1 Lb	\$1.95	\$2.28	16.8%
Tomato	1 Lb	\$1.86	\$2.45	31.7%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$1.21	\$1.97	61.8%
Limes	1 Unit	\$0.23	\$0.34	46.8%
Potatoes	1 Lb	\$1.63	\$1.87	14.2%
Belikin Beer (w/out bottle)	284 MI	\$2.97	\$3.02	1.6%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.06	\$9.98	-9.8%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$9.90	\$9.89	-0.1%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$10.34	\$9.30	-10.1%
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$99.10	\$107.62	8.6%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2021

PERSONAL CARE, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND MISCELLANEOUS GOODS AND SERVICES:

The 'Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services' category rose by 1.8 percent on average, when compared to February 2021 (see Figure 2). This was mainly due to increases in the 'Personal Care' sub-category, as higher prices were observed for personal hygiene products for the month of February 2021.

RECREATION, SPORT AND CULTURE:

The 'Recreation, Sport and Culture' category recorded an inflation rate of 1.4 percent for the month of February 2021 when compared to February 2020 (see Figure 2). Within this category, prices for 'Pets and Products for Pets' were up by 8.3 percent as a result of higher pet food costs, while prices for items in the 'Game, Toys and Hobbies' sub-category were up by 6.2 percent compared to the same month last year.

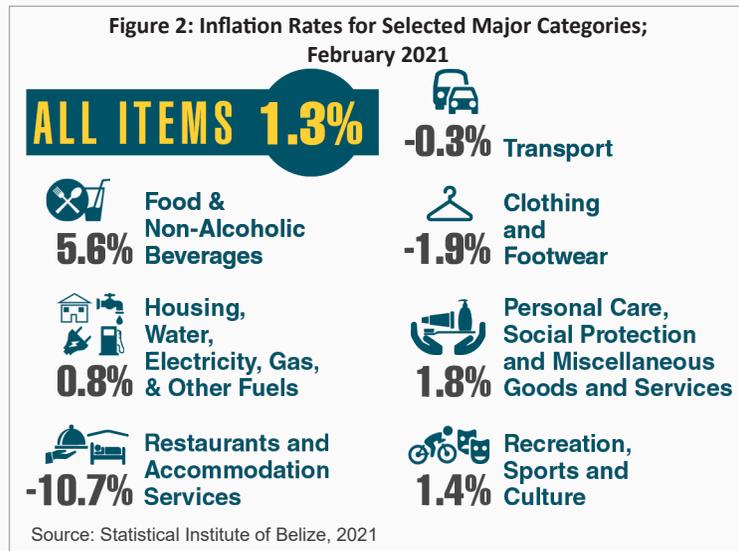
RESTAURANTS AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES:

Prices within the 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' category were down by 10.7 percent, on average, during the month of February 2021 (see Figure 2). This was primarily due to a significant 25.3 percent reduction in hotel accommodation rates compared to last February. The decrease was, however, partially offset by a 1.3

percent increase in the 'Food and Beverage Service' sub-category, the result of higher prices for restaurants services during the month.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR:

In comparison to February 2020, prices for the 'Clothing and Footwear' category saw a decrease of 1.9 percent on average, for the month of February 2021 (see Figure 2). This was mainly due to a 4.3 percent decline in the 'Footwear' sub-category, due to lower prices for both men's and women's footwear. In addition, the 'Clothing' sub-category was down by 0.8 percent, reflecting lower prices for men's and boys' shirts and guayaberas, as well as for women's and girls' pants.



TRANSPORT:

Although fuel prices have trended steadily upward since May of 2020, as of February 2021 they had not yet returned to the levels observed in early 2020. As a result, the 'Transport' category recorded an overall deflation of 0.3 percent for the month of February 2021 when compared to February 2020 (see Figure 2). This was mainly due to a 1.3 percent decrease in the 'Fuels and Lubricants' sub-category. At the pump, the average price per gallon of diesel was down by \$1.04 from \$10.34 in February 2020 to \$9.30 in February 2021, while premium gasoline was down by \$1.08 from \$11.06 to \$9.98 and regular gasoline was down by a negligible \$0.01 from \$9.90 to \$9.89 (see Table 1). In addition, lower motor oil prices and airfares were recorded for the month of February 2021.

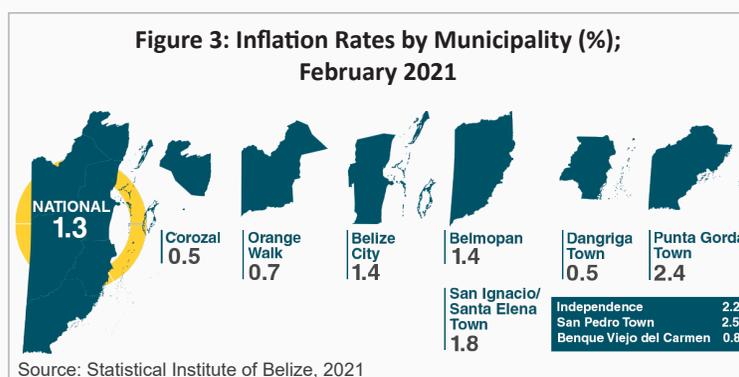
INFLATION RATES BY MUNICIPALITY:

Among the country's municipalities, Punta Gorda Town experienced the highest increase in consumer prices for February 2021, with an inflation rate of 2.4 percent. Consumers in this municipality saw above average increases in prices for food, pharmaceutical products, and LPG. In contrast, Corozal Town recorded the lowest inflation rate, with prices going up by 0.5 percent when compared to February 2020 (see Figure 3).

MONTH TO MONTH INFLATION RATES:

While inflation rates are generally calculated as the percent change in prices for specific items between the current time period and the same period of the previous year, another useful measure for tracking short-term changes in consumer prices is the month-over-month or inter-monthly inflation rate, which measures the percent change in prices between the previous month and the current month.

Over the one-month period between January 2021 and February 2021, consumer prices rose by 0.7 percent on average (see Table 2). Across the various categories, the most significant change was



seen in 'Transport', which had a month-over-month inflation rate of 3.5 percent, as prices for motor vehicle fuels rose by more than 6 percent within the span of one month. A rise in LPG prices resulted in a 0.4 percent increase in the 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category over the one-month period, and 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' saw a 0.9 percent increase between January 2021 and February 2021, with prices for restaurant services rising over the one-month period.

Table 2: Month to Month Inflation Rates by Category (%); February 2021

Category	February 2021 (%)
ALL ITEMS	0.7%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	0.0%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.6%
Clothing and Footwear	-0.8%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	0.4%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	-0.2%
Health	1.3%
Transport	3.5%
Information and Communication	0.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	0.5%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	0.9%
Insurance and Financial Services	0.0%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.0%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2021

YEAR-TO-DATE INFLATION RATE:

The year-to-date or cumulative inflation rate for the first two months of 2021, when compared to the first two months in 2020, stood at 1.2 percent (see Table 3). Among all the categories, the most significant change was seen in 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages', which had a year-to-date inflation rate of 5.6 percent, mainly due to the continued rise in prices for fresh fruits and vegetables. The 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category saw a 1.2 percent increase, as a result of higher LPG prices, while increased prices for personal hygiene products resulted in a 2 percent year-to-date inflation rate for 'Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services'. Conversely, the 'Restaurant and Accommodation Services' category fell by 11.8 percent, due to lower prices for hotel accommodations in comparison to the first two months of last year, while 'Transport' was down 1.7 percent due to lower prices for motor vehicle fuels and airfare compared to the first two months of 2020.

Table 3: Year to Date Inflation Rates by Category (%); February 2021

Category	February 2021 (%)
ALL ITEMS	1.2%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	5.6%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	-0.4%
Clothing and Footwear	-1.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	1.2%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	-0.8%
Health	0.6%
Transport	-1.7%
Information and Communication	-3.4%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	1.0%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	-11.8%
Insurance and Financial Services	0.1%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	2.0%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2021