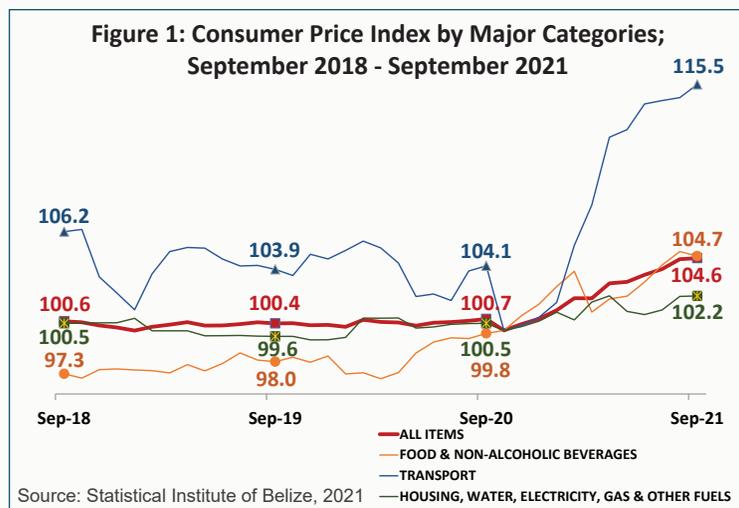




CONSUMER PRICES UP 3.8% IN SEPTEMBER 2021: MOTOR VEHICLE FUELS, FOOD, LPG, AND PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS UP

ALL-ITEMS:

For the month of September 2021, the All-Items Consumer Price Index (CPI), which summarizes price levels for all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 104.6, an increase of 3.8 percent from the 100.7 recorded for September 2020 (see Figure 1). This indicates that the country experienced an overall national inflation rate¹ of 3.8 percent on the cost of goods and services regularly purchased by Belizean households for that month and was mainly the result of higher prices for motor vehicle fuels, food items, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and personal care products.



TRANSPORT:

The 'Transport' category rose by a notable 11 percent for the month of September 2021 when compared to September 2020 (see Figure 2). This was primarily due to a significant 25.4 percent increase in the 'Fuels and Lubricants' sub-category, as substantial price increases were seen across all types of motor vehicle fuels. At the pump, regular gasoline recorded the highest increase, with the average price per gallon rising by \$2.45 or 27.3 percent from \$8.99 in September 2020 to \$11.45 in September 2021. Premium gasoline increased by \$2.42 or 25.6 percent, from \$9.43 to \$11.85, while diesel gasoline increased by \$2.10 or 24.6 percent from \$8.54 in September of last year to \$10.64 in September of this year (see Table 1). Additionally, prices for new motor vehicles were up by 2.7 percent for the month. These increases were, however, partially offset by lower international airfares.

FOOD AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:

Continuing the trend observed during the past several months, prices within the 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' category, went up by 4.9 percent for the month of September 2021 (see Figure 2). This change reflected higher prices across most groups within the 'Food' sub-category, which saw prices rise by 5.7 percent on average for the month. The most striking increases were seen among meat products, seafoods, vegetable oils, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Items that saw markedly higher prices for the month included pork chops, whole chickens, pigtails, natural milks, red kidney beans, pineapples, oranges, watermelons, onions, cabbages, limes, and potatoes (see Table 1).

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

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		September 2020	September 2021	
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.91	\$5.78	-2.2%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$7.87	\$8.10	2.9%
Pork Chops	1 Lb	\$6.90	\$7.32	6.1%
Pig Tail	1 Lb	\$4.24	\$5.79	36.8%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$2.80	\$2.92	4.2%
Sugar, White	1 Lb	\$0.79	\$0.80	1.5%
Sugar, Brown	1 Lb	\$0.54	\$0.58	6.6%
Flour (Gitana)	1 Lb	\$0.94	\$1.00	6.0%
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.21	\$1.37	13.1%
Eggs	1 Dozen	\$3.39	\$3.50	3.3%
Natural Milk	1 Liter	\$2.68	\$2.95	10.1%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$1.76	\$1.98	12.8%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.06	\$1.26	19.4%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.21	25.9%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.54	\$0.59	10.5%
Plantain	1 Unit	\$0.33	\$0.33	0.0%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$4.12	\$4.36	5.9%
Onions	1 Lb	\$1.97	\$2.26	14.8%
Tomato	1 Lb	\$3.25	\$2.81	-13.6%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$1.90	\$2.21	16.2%
Limes	1 Unit	\$0.23	\$0.25	11.0%
Potatoes	1 Lb	\$1.76	\$2.05	16.3%
Belikin Beer (w/out bottle)	284 MI	\$3.02	\$3.00	-0.6%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$9.43	\$11.85	25.6%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$8.99	\$11.45	27.3%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$8.54	\$10.64	24.6%
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$92.52	\$123.58	33.6%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2021

HOUSING, WATER, ELECTRICITY, GAS AND OTHER FUELS:

In comparison to September 2020, prices within the 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category saw an overall increase of 1.7 percent during the month (see Figure 2). As has been the case for the past several months, this was attributable to LPG prices, which was up considerably by 33.6 percent for the month of September 2021. The average cost of a hundred-pound cylinder of LPG rose by \$31.06, from \$92.52 in September 2020 to \$123.58 in September 2021 (see Table 1). The effects of this increase were only partially offset by lower electricity tariffs and home rental costs, which were down by 3.5 percent and 0.4 percent, respectively, compared to September 2020.

RESTAURANTS AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES:

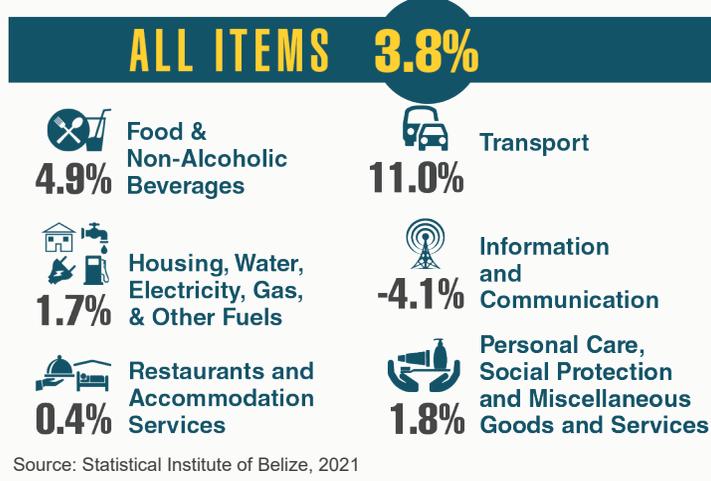
The category of 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' recorded an inflation rate of 0.4 percent overall for the month of September 2021 when compared to September 2020 (see Figure 2), with higher prices being recorded for both hotel accommodations and restaurant services.

¹ The national inflation rate for the month measures the percent change in the CPI between September 2020 and September 2021. Unless otherwise indicated, inflation rates in this document refer to the percent change in prices between the current month and the same month in the previous year.

PERSONAL CARE, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND MISCELLANEOUS GOODS AND SERVICES:

For the month of September 2021, prices in the 'Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services' category rose by 1.8 percent on average when compared to September of last year (see Figure 2). This was attributed to a 1.2 percent increase in the 'Personal Care' sub-category, as higher prices were recorded for personal hygiene products, men's and women's haircuts, and personal grooming treatments.

Figure 2: Inflation Rates for Selected Major Categories; September 2021



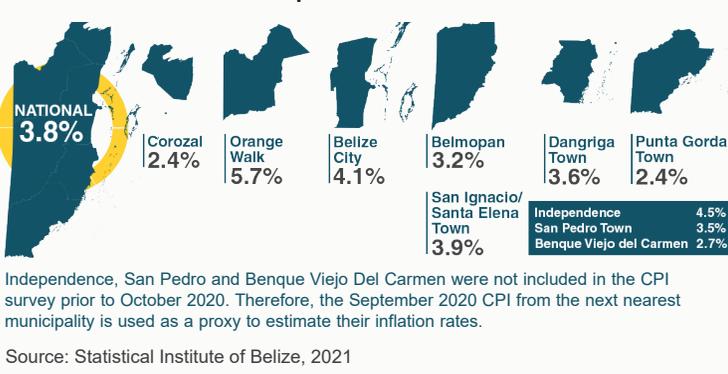
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION:

Within the 'Information and Communication' category, prices were down by 4.1 percent on average for the month of September 2021 when compared to September 2020 (see Figure 2), due to lower prices for items such as tablets, external storage devices, and television sets.

INFLATION RATES BY MUNICIPALITY:

Among the country's municipalities, Orange Walk Town experienced the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for September 2021, with an inflation rate of 5.7 percent. Consumers in this town saw above average increases in prices for various food items and restaurant and accommodation services. Punta Gorda Town, on the other hand, recorded the lowest inflation rate, with prices going up by 2.4 percent, as consumers in this town saw lower than average increases in prices for food items, household cleaning products, and pharmaceutical products (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Inflation Rates by Municipality (%); September 2021



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 month².

Over the one-month period between August 2021 and September 2021, consumer prices went up by 0.1 percent on average (see Table 2). The most notable change was seen in the 'Transport' category,

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

	September 2021
ALL ITEMS	0.1%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	-0.3%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.0%
Clothing and Footwear	0.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	0.0%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	0.0%
Health	0.0%
Transport	0.7%
Information and Communication	0.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	0.0%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	0.0%
Insurance and Financial Services	0.0%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.0%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2021

which had a month-over-month inflation rate of 0.7 percent, with prices for both regular and premium gasoline rising from one month to the next. In contrast, the 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' category saw prices going down by a marginal 0.3 percent, as a result of lower prices for fresh vegetables such as tomatoes, cabbages, and sweet peppers.

YEAR-TO-DATE INFLATION RATE:

The cumulative or year-to-date inflation rate³ for the first nine months of 2021, when compared to the same period in 2020, stood at 2.6 percent. 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages', which saw a 4.8 percent increase, was the biggest contributor to the overall cumulative inflation rate, as prices for fresh fruits and vegetables, meat products, seafood, and vegetable oils continued to rise. The 'Transport' category had a year-to-date inflation rate of 6.9 percent, due to higher prices for all motor vehicle fuels, while prices in the 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category went up by 1.2 percent, as a result of higher LPG prices and home rental costs. 'Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services' rose by 1.8 percent, mainly due to increases in prices for personal hygiene items and men's and women's haircuts. In contrast, the 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' category went down by 5.9 percent, as lower hotel accommodation rates were recorded for the first nine months of 2021 when compared to the same period of 2020 (see Table 3).

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

	September 2021
ALL ITEMS	2.6%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	4.8%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.1%
Clothing and Footwear	-0.6%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	1.2%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	-0.3%
Health	1.5%
Transport	6.9%
Information and Communication	-3.9%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	1.3%
Education Services	0.4%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	-5.9%
Insurance and Financial Services	0.1%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	1.8%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2021

² The month-over-month inflation rate measures the percent change in prices between the previous month and the current month. It is useful for capturing short-term price changes but is also affected by seasonal price movements.

³ The year-to-date inflation rate as of September 2021 measures the percent change in the average CPI for the first nine months of 2020 compared to the average CPI for the first nine months of 2021.