

CONSUMER PRICES UP 6.6% IN MAY 2022: PRICES FOR FUELS, TRANSPORT SERVICES, FOOD, LPG, AND RESTAURANT SERVICES MOST AFFECTED

All-Items:

For the month of May 2022, the All-Items Consumer Price Index (CPI), which summarizes price levels for all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 109.9, compared to a CPI of 103.1 recorded for May 2021 (see Figure 1). This indicates that the country experienced an overall national inflation rate<sup>1</sup> of 6.6 percent on the cost of goods and services regularly purchased by Belizean households. This overall change was driven mainly by higher costs for fuel, transportation services, food, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), restaurant services, entrance fees to cinemas, and household cleaning products.

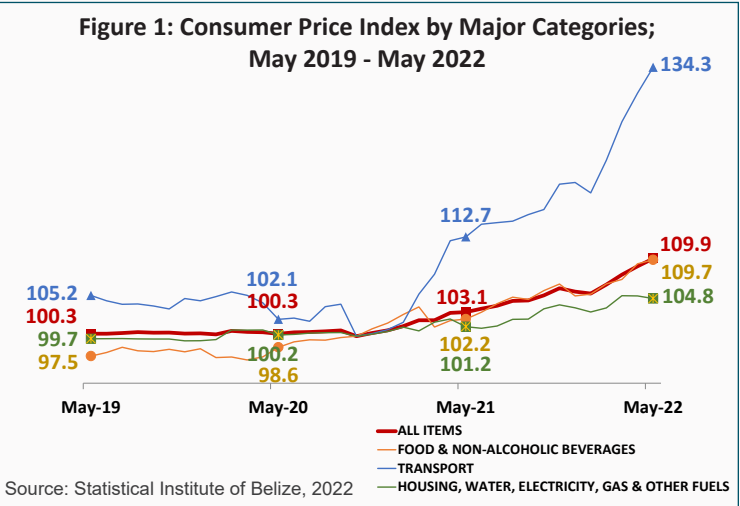


Table 1: Average Prices of Selected Foods and Fuel (BZ \$); May 2021 and May 2022

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		May 2021	May 2022	
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.38	\$1.56	12.6%
Chicken Cuts	1 Lb	\$3.18	\$3.33	4.8%
Chicken, Legs	1 Lb	\$3.25	\$3.39	4.2%
Chicken, Wings	1 Lb	\$5.05	\$5.28	4.7%
Chicken, Breast	1 Lb	\$3.92	\$4.10	4.6%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$2.89	\$3.04	5.4%
Pigtail	1 Lb	\$5.05	\$7.59	50.3%
Coconut Oil	1 L	\$12.88	\$14.99	16.4%
Vegetable Oil	1 L	\$3.66	\$5.15	40.9%
Flour	1 Lb	\$1.06	\$1.14	7.2%
Cake Baking Mix	15.25 Oz	\$5.04	\$4.89	-3.0%
Cake	1 Slice	\$4.23	\$4.39	3.8%
Banana	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.16	1.4%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.25	\$1.34	7.1%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.19	18.8%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.60	\$0.82	36.3%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$1.23	\$2.16	75.6%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$3.29	\$3.58	8.9%
Onion	1 Lb	\$2.14	\$2.18	1.8%
Irish Potatoes	1 Lb	\$1.91	\$2.37	24.0%
Tomatoes	1 Lb	\$1.82	\$2.33	28.4%
Black Beans	1 Lb	\$2.11	\$2.01	-4.9%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$2.08	\$1.91	-8.1%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.45	\$14.90	30.2%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$10.81	\$13.60	25.8%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$10.21	\$13.52	32.4%
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$114.08	\$144.14	26.3%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

was mainly the result of a significant 26.3 percent increase in LPG prices, as the average cost of a hundred-pound cylinder was up by more than \$30, from \$114.08 in May 2021 to \$144.14 in May 2022 (see Table 1). Additionally, prices for construction materials for household use were up by 14.3 percent, while home rental costs were up by 0.6 percent. The effect of these increases was only partially offset by electricity tariffs, which were down by 1.1 percent when compared to May of 2021.

Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

The category of ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ recorded an overall inflation rate of 5 percent for the month of May 2022 when compared to May 2021, driven mainly by a 4.6 percent increase in prices for restaurant services.

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

Prices for ‘Recreation, Sport and Culture’ rose by 6.4 percent overall in May 2022 when compared to May 2021, the result of a 30.8 percent increase in prices for cultural services, as higher cinema entrance fees were recorded for the month (see Figure 2).

Transport:

‘Transport’ remained the single greatest contributor to the overall national inflation rate, as prices within this category saw a significant increase of 19.2 percent in May 2022 when compared to May 2021. This was driven primarily by rapidly rising fuel costs, with prices for motor vehicle fuels more than 27 percent higher on average than they were in May of last year. At the pump, diesel registered the greatest increase, with the average price per gallon rising by 32.4 percent from \$10.21 in May 2021 to \$13.52 in May 2022. Premium gasoline was up by 30.2 percent from \$11.45 to \$14.90, while regular gasoline rose by 25.8 percent from \$10.81 in May 2021 to \$13.60 in May 2022 (see Table 1). Additionally, passenger transport services rose by 13.8 percent, as increases in bus fares, taxi fares, and sea fares were seen across the country, while prices for new motor vehicles were up by 6.1 percent compared to May of last year.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

In comparison to May 2021, the ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ category saw an overall increase of 7.4 percent for the month of May 2022 (see Figure 2). As has been the case for the past several months, the overall rise in this category was mainly the result of higher prices for basic food items. Products that saw the most notable price changes for the month included pigtails, chicken cuts, chicken wings, coconut oil, vegetable oil, rice, watermelons, cabbages, Irish potatoes, and tomatoes. Nonetheless, there were some price decreases noted among a few food items, including cake baking mix, black beans, and red kidney beans (see Table 1).

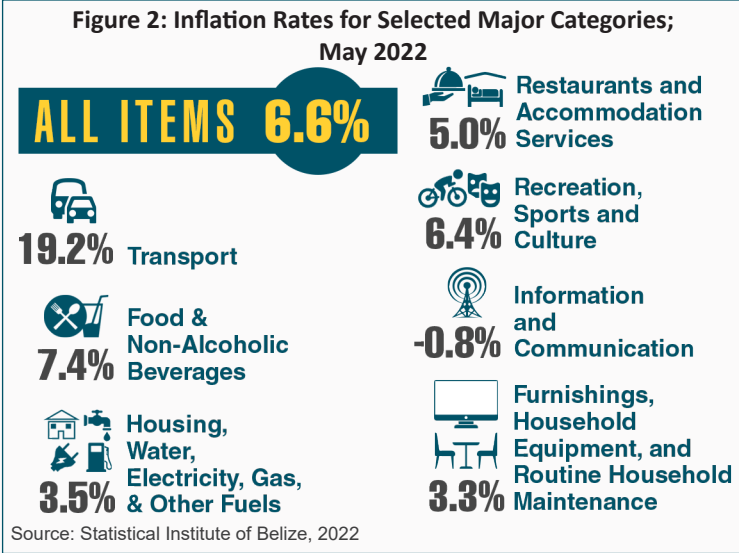
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels:

Prices within the ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ category rose by 3.5 percent on average for the month of May 2022 when compared to the same month of last year (see Figure 2). This

<sup>1</sup> The national inflation rate for the month measures the percent change in the CPI between May 2021 and May 2022.

## Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

The ‘Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance’ category recorded an inflation rate of 3.3 percent for May 2022 (see Figure 2). This was attributed to an 8 percent increase in prices for ‘Non-durable Household Goods’, including various laundry products, soaps, and detergents.

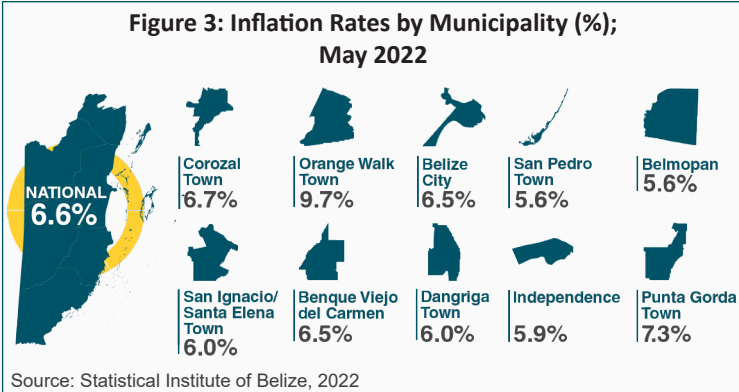


## Information and Communication:

Prices for goods and services captured within the category of ‘Information and Communication’, on the other hand, saw an overall decline of 0.8 percent for the month of May 2022 (see Figure 2), due mainly to lower prices for internet provision services.

## Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 9.7 percent, well above the national average, Orange Walk Town recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for May 2022. Consumers in this municipality saw above-average increases in prices for various food items, home rental costs, restaurant services, laundry products, soaps, detergents, women’s clothing, and men’s and women’s haircuts. In contrast, the City of Belmopan and San Pedro Town recorded the lowest inflation rates of 5.6 percent, as consumers in these communities saw lower than average increases in prices for food items, restaurant services, and laundry products, soaps, and detergents (see Figure 3).



## Month-Over-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<sup>2</sup>, which measures the percent change in prices between the previous month and the current month.

Over the one-month period between April 2022 and May 2022, consumer prices increased by 0.9 percent on average (see Table 2). Although prices for diesel and regular gasoline were virtually unchanged, the ‘Transport’ category went up by 2.5 percent, as premium gasoline prices increased by 3.3 percent over the one-month period. The ‘Recreation, Sport and Culture’ category rose by

**Table 2: Month to Month Inflation Rates by Category (%); May 2022**

	May 2022
ALL ITEMS	0.9%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	0.5%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.2%
Clothing and Footwear	-0.4%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	-0.3%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	0.7%
Health	0.3%
Transport	2.5%
Information and Communication	0.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	6.0%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accomodation Services	1.2%
Insurance and Financial Services	0.0%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.6%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

6 percent, as a result of an increase in cinema entrance fees. ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ recorded a 0.5 percent month-over-month inflation rate, as prices for cereal products, various meats, dairy products, and cooking oils all saw increases between April and May of this year. Finally, prices within the ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ category rose by 1.2 percent over the one-month period.

## Year-to-Date Inflation Rate:

The year-to-date inflation rate<sup>3</sup> for the first five months in 2022, when compared to the same period in 2021, stood at 5.3 percent. About one-half of this increase was directly attributable to the ‘Transport’ category, which had a year-to-date inflation rate of 17.3 percent, as significantly higher prices were seen across all types of motor vehicle fuels for the five-month period. The ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ category went up by 5.4 percent, due mostly to higher prices for cereal products, meats, cooking oils, and fish and other seafood. The ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ category had a year-to-date inflation rate of 2.7 percent, due to higher prices for LPG as well as construction material for household use. ‘Restaurant and Accommodation Services’ were up by 5 percent compared to the first five months of last year, due to higher prices for restaurant services. Nonetheless, these increases were offset in part by a 0.8 percent decrease in the ‘Information and Communication’ category, as lower prices for internet provision services were recorded for the period (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Year to Date Inflation Rates by Category (%); May 2022**

	May 2022
ALL ITEMS	5.3%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	5.4%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.8%
Clothing and Footwear	1.4%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	2.7%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	2.9%
Health	1.0%
Transport	17.3%
Information and Communication	-0.8%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	1.4%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accomodation Services	5.0%
Insurance and Financial Services	-0.2%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.6%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

<sup>2</sup> The month-over-month inflation rate measures the percentage 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.

<sup>3</sup> The year-to-date inflation rate as of May 2022 measures the percent change in the average CPI for the first five months of 2021 compared to the average CPI for the first five months of 2022.