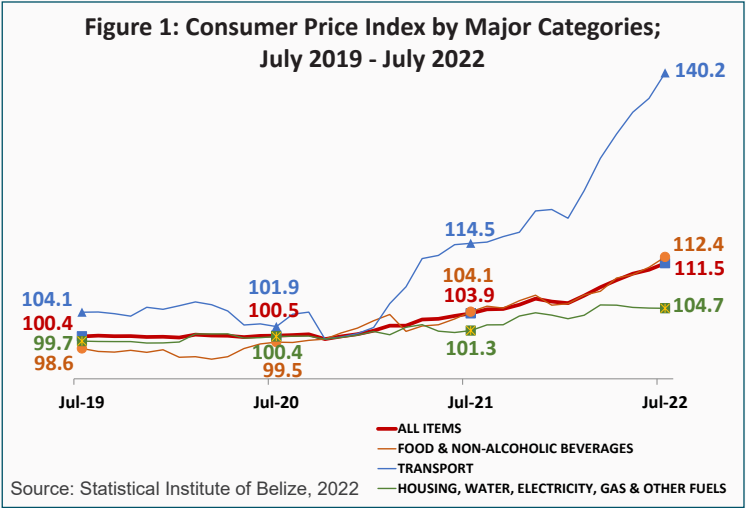


CONSUMER PRICES UP 7.3% IN JULY 2022:
MOTOR VEHICLE FUELS, FOOD, AND LPG PRICES MOST AFFECTED

Overall National Inflation Rate¹ (All-Items):

For the month of July 2022, the All-Items Consumer Price Index (CPI), which summarizes price levels for all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 111.5, up from a CPI of 103.9 recorded for July 2021 (see Figure 1). This indicates that the country experienced an overall national inflation rate of 7.3 percent on the cost of goods and services regularly purchased by Belizean households. This considerable overall increase in consumer prices was driven by rising prices across almost all CPI categories, most notably ‘Mineral Fuels and Lubricants’ and ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’. Significantly higher prices were seen for items such as motor vehicle fuels, various food products, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), restaurant services, cinema entrance fees, and house cleaning and maintenance products.



Transport:

As has been the case in recent months, ‘Transport’ accounted for almost a half of the increase in consumer prices for the month of July. The category recorded an inflation rate of 22.5 percent, driven mainly by fuel prices, which were up by 33.2 percent on average compared to last July. This was, for the most part, a reflection of rapidly rising prices for premium gasoline, which were more than 50 percent higher than in July of last year (see Figure 2). At the pump, premium gasoline registered an increase of \$5.95, with the average price per gallon up from \$11.74 in July of last year to \$17.69 in July of this year. Diesel was up by \$2.81 from \$10.72 to \$13.53, while regular gasoline rose by \$2.50 from \$11.11 in July of 2021 to \$13.60 in July of 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 July of last year.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ had an inflation rate of 8 percent, the highest recorded so far for this category in 2022, as all food sub-categories saw rising prices during the month (see Figure 2). The most striking increases were recorded for meats, cooking oils, dairy products, and cereal products. Specific items that saw the most notable price changes for the month included, pigtails, vegetable oils, coconut milk, various chicken parts, rice, eggs, natural milks, Irish potatoes, watermelons, and cabbages. Nonetheless, lower prices were recorded for a few food items, including some fresh produce such as tomatoes, oranges, onions, black beans, and red kidney beans (see Table 1).

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

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		July 2021	July 2022	
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.38	\$1.58	14.1%
Flour	1 Lb	\$1.07	\$1.22	14.1%
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.49	\$5.78	5.3%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$8.24	\$8.84	7.4%
Chicken Cuts	1 Lb	\$3.23	\$3.37	4.5%
Chicken, Legs	1 Lb	\$3.25	\$3.39	4.5%
Chicken, Wings	1 Lb	\$4.67	\$4.88	4.6%
Chicken, Breast	1 Lb	\$3.99	\$4.13	3.7%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$2.88	\$3.05	6.1%
Pigtail	1 Lb	\$5.59	\$7.32	31.1%
Whole Fish	1 Lb	\$6.54	\$7.86	20.2%
Natural Milk	1 L	\$2.80	\$3.09	10.5%
Egg	1 Unit	\$0.29	\$0.36	25.6%
Vegetable Oil	1 L	\$3.97	\$5.76	45.0%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.66	\$0.89	36.1%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$1.79	\$1.95	8.9%
Tomatoes	1 Lb	\$3.10	\$2.62	-15.5%
Onion	1 Lb	\$2.47	\$2.35	-4.6%
Irish Potatoes	1 Lb	\$2.12	\$2.47	16.7%
Banana	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.16	0.0%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.22	\$1.30	6.3%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.24	\$0.22	-8.2%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$4.15	\$4.31	3.8%
Black Beans	1 Lb	\$2.08	\$2.06	-0.9%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$2.02	\$1.96	-2.8%
Soy Sauce	10 Oz	\$4.97	\$5.60	12.7%
Coconut Milk	400 MI	\$3.30	\$3.89	17.7%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.74	\$17.69	50.7%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.11	\$13.60	22.5%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$10.72	\$13.53	26.2%
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$116.52	\$143.26	22.9%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels:

In comparison to July 2021, prices for ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ saw an overall increase of 3.3 percent for the month. Within this category, LPG prices were up by a significant 22.9 percent, as the average cost of a hundred-pound cylinder of this product rose by \$26.73, from \$116.52 in July 2021 to \$143.26 in July 2022 (see Table 1). In addition, prices for construction materials for household use were up by 14.3 percent, while home rental costs were up by 0.6 percent compared to the same month last year.

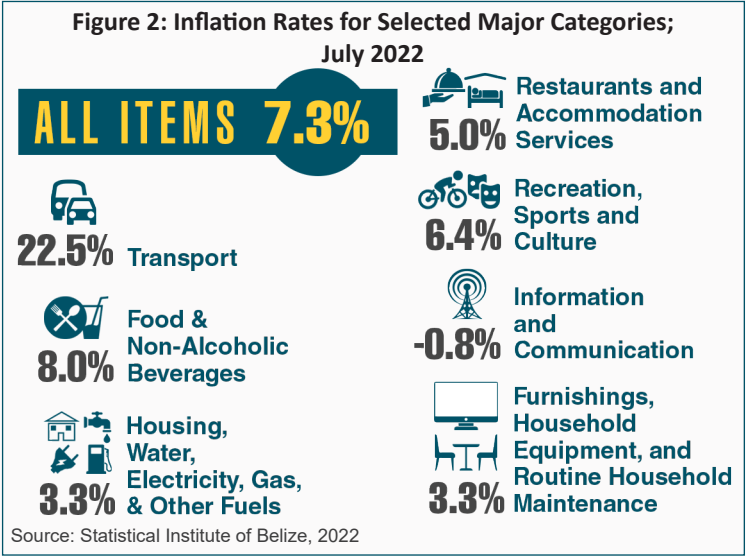
Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

The category of ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ recorded an overall inflation rate of 5 percent for the month of July 2022 (see Figure 2), driven mainly by higher prices for restaurant and cafe services.

¹ The overall national inflation rate for the month measures the percent change in the CPI between July 2021 and July 2022.

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

Prices for ‘Recreation, Sport and Culture’ were 6.4 percent higher than they were in July of 2021, reflecting mainly higher cinema entrance fees (see Figure 2).



Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

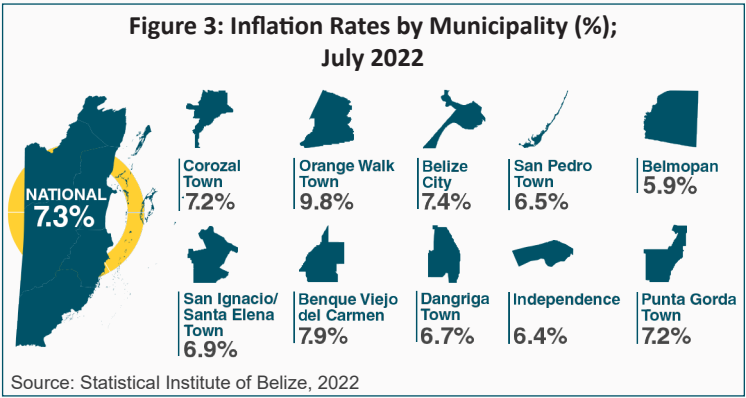
The ‘Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance’ category recorded an inflation rate of 3.3 percent for July 2022. This was mainly the result of a 9 percent increase in prices for laundry products, soaps, and detergents (see Figure 2).

Information and Communication:

Due to lower prices for internet provision services, ‘Information and Communication’ continued to be the only major category recording a decrease, with prices within this category were down by 0.8 percent for the month (see Figure 2).

Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 9.8 percent, well above the national average, Orange Walk Town recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for July 2022. Consumers in this municipality saw above-average increases in prices for various food items, home rental costs, restaurant services, laundry products, soaps, detergents, and women’s clothing. On the other hand, the City of Belmopan recorded the lowest inflation rate at 5.9 percent, as consumers in this city 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 Rates²:

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 inflation rate, which measures the percent change in prices between the previous month and the current month.

Over the one-month period between June 2022 and July 2022, consumer prices increased by 0.9 percent on average. The categories of ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ and ‘Transport’ were solely responsible for this increase, recording inflation rates of

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

	July 2022
ALL ITEMS	0.9%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	1.4%
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	2.8%
Information and Communication	0.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	0.0%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accomodation 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, 2022

1.4 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively (see Table 2). Within ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’, fresh vegetables, dairy products, and cereal products saw the most significant increases, while an 11.5 percent rise in premium gasoline prices between June and July of this year accounted for the inflation within the ‘Transport’ category over the one-month period.

Year-to-Date Inflation Rate³:

The year-to-date inflation rate for the first seven months of 2022, when compared to the same period in 2021, stood at 5.8 percent. The ‘Transport’ category, with a year-to-date inflation rate of 18.4 percent, was directly responsible for more than a half of the overall increase in consumer prices for the seven-month period, as considerably higher costs were recorded for all motor vehicle fuels, new motor vehicles, and various passenger transport services. The ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ category was up by 6 percent, due mostly to higher prices for cereal products, meats, cooking oils, seafood, dairy products, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Prices within the category of ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ were up by 2.9 percent, due to higher prices for LPG and construction materials for household use. Among the other categories, prices were also notably higher for restaurant services, laundry products, soaps, and detergents. Nonetheless, these increases were partially offset by a 0.8 percent reduction in the ‘Information and Communication’ category, as a result of lower prices for internet provision services (see Table 3).

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

	July 2022
ALL ITEMS	5.8%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	6.0%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.7%
Clothing and Footwear	1.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	2.9%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	3.0%
Health	0.9%
Transport	18.4%
Information and Communication	-0.8%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	2.8%
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	0.7%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

² 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.

³ The year-to-date inflation rate as of July 2022 measures the percent change in the average CPI for the first seven months of 2021 compared to the average CPI for the first seven months of 2022.