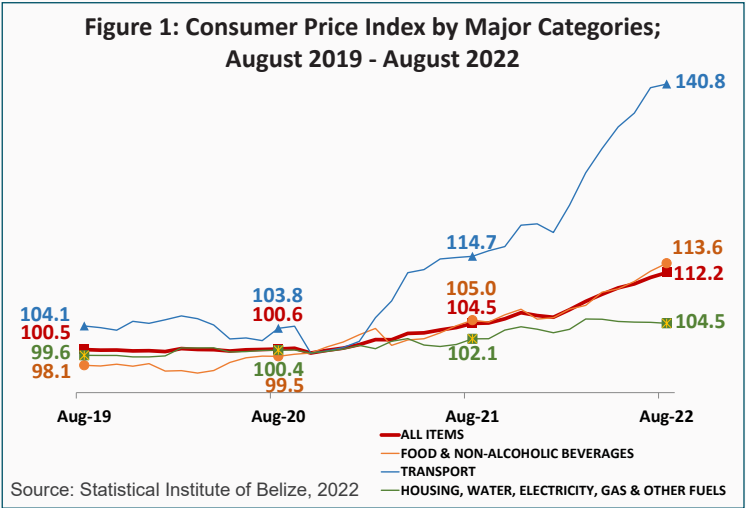




CONSUMER PRICES UP 7.4% IN AUGUST 2022:
PRICES FOR FUELS, FOOD, LPG, AND RESTAURANT SERVICES MOST AFFECTED

Overall National Inflation Rate¹ (All-Items):

The most recent data from the Statistical Institute of Belize’s monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) survey indicated that, for the month of August 2022, the All-items CPI, which summarizes price levels for all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 112.2, an increase from the 104.5 recorded for August 2021 (see Figure 1). This indicates that the country experienced an overall national inflation rate of 7.4 percent on the cost of goods and services regularly purchased by Belizean households. The overall change in consumer prices was driven mainly by notable increases in prices for motor vehicle fuels, transportation services, food, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), restaurant services, cinema entrance fees, and household cleaning products.



Transport:

As has been the case in recent months, ‘Transport’ remained the single greatest contributor to the overall national inflation rate, accounting for almost half of the increase in consumer prices for the month of August 2022 (see Figure 2). The category recorded an inflation rate of 22.8 percent, driven mainly by fuel prices, which were up by 31.9 percent on average compared to August 2021. This was primarily a reflection of rising prices for premium gasoline, which were more than 50 percent higher than they were in August of last year. At the pump, premium gasoline registered the highest increase of \$5.91, with the average price per gallon up from \$11.75 in August of last year to \$17.65 in August of this year. Diesel was up by \$2.76 from \$10.76 to \$13.52, while regular gasoline rose by \$2.32 from \$11.29 in August 2021 to \$13.61 in August 2022 (see Table 1). Also within this category, prices for new motor vehicles were 6.1 percent higher than they were in August of last year, while passenger transport services rose by 19.9 percent, as increases in bus fares, taxi fares, and international airfares were seen across the country.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

Prices within the ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ category, which have been steadily rising since January 2022, saw their highest recorded rate of increase since the start of the year, with an inflation rate of 8.2 percent when compared to August of 2021. The ‘Food’ sub-category alone had an inflation rate of 9.6 percent for the month, as considerably higher prices continued to be seen for various basic food items, such as cereal products, dairy products, meats, fish, other seafood, and fresh produce. Items that saw the most notable price increases for the month included vegetable oils, watermelons, eggs, pigtails, Irish potatoes, pineapples, coconut milk, soy sauce, whole fish, rice, flour, natural milk, and various chicken parts. Nonetheless, lower prices were recorded for a few food items, including some fresh produce such as cabbages, tomatoes, sweet peppers, oranges, black beans, and red kidney beans (see Table 1).

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

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		August 2021	August 2022	
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.37	\$1.57	14.1%
Flour	1 Lb	\$1.07	\$1.22	13.7%
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.55	\$6.04	8.8%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$8.33	\$9.02	8.3%
Chicken Cuts	1 Lb	\$3.23	\$3.38	4.6%
Chicken, Legs	1 Lb	\$3.28	\$3.41	4.0%
Chicken, Wings	1 Lb	\$5.16	\$5.49	6.5%
Chicken, Breast	1 Lb	\$3.95	\$4.18	5.9%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$2.88	\$3.03	5.2%
Pigtail	1 Lb	\$5.72	\$7.23	26.4%
Whole Fish	1 Lb	\$6.85	\$8.01	17.1%
Natural Milk	1 L	\$2.80	\$3.08	10.1%
Egg	1 Unit	\$0.29	\$0.38	27.6%
Vegetable Oil	1 L	\$4.13	\$5.87	42.4%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.60	\$0.85	40.2%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$2.79	\$1.97	-29.3%
Tomatoes	1 Lb	\$3.33	\$3.01	-9.8%
Onion	1 Lb	\$2.35	\$2.58	9.7%
Irish Potatoes	1 Lb	\$2.09	\$2.59	24.1%
Banana	1 Unit	\$0.15	\$0.17	8.2%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.21	\$1.47	21.7%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.21	\$0.19	-7.5%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$4.81	\$4.35	-9.5%
Black Beans	1 Lb	\$2.15	\$2.03	-5.3%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$2.03	\$1.94	-4.2%
Soy Sauce	10 Oz	\$4.97	\$5.83	17.3%
Coconut Milk	400 MI	\$3.40	\$4.03	18.5%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.75	\$17.65	50.3%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.29	\$13.61	20.6%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$10.76	\$13.52	25.7%
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$123.37	\$141.54	14.7%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels:

The category of ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’, saw an overall increase of 2.3 percent for the month of August 2022 when compared to August 2021 (see Figure 2). This was largely attributable to higher LPG prices, which were up by 14.7 percent compared to August of last year. The average cost of a hundred-pound cylinder of this product rose by \$18.17, from \$123.37 in August 2021 to \$141.54 in August 2022 (see Table 1). Additionally, prices for construction materials for household use were up by 17.2 percent, and home rental costs were up by 0.5 percent compared to the same month of last year.

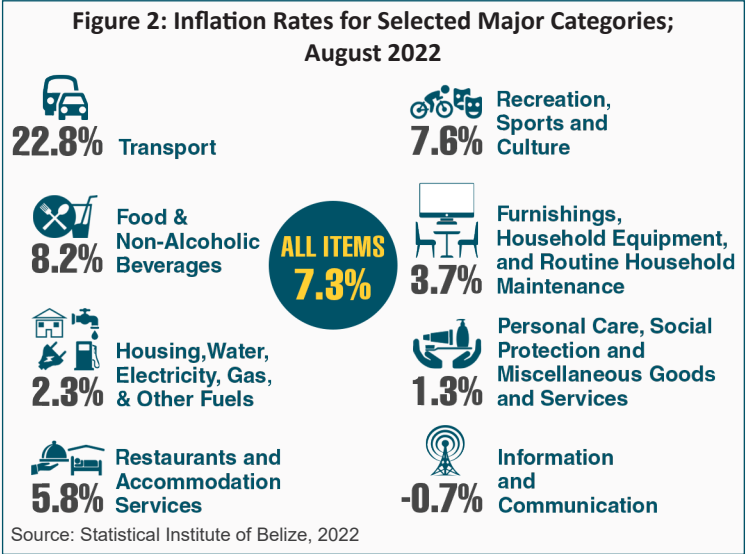
Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

Prices for ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ saw an overall increase of 5.8 percent for the month of August 2022 when compared to August 2021 (see Figure 2), due for the most part to higher prices for restaurant and cafe services.

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

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

The category of ‘Recreation, Sport and Culture’ recorded an overall inflation rate of 7.6 percent for the month of August 2022, driven mainly by higher cinema entrance fees and pet food prices (see Figure 2).



Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

‘Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance’ had an inflation rate of 3.7 percent for the month (see Figure 2), as higher prices were seen for domestic services and household cleaning and maintenance products.

Personal Care, Social Protection, and Miscellaneous Goods and Services:

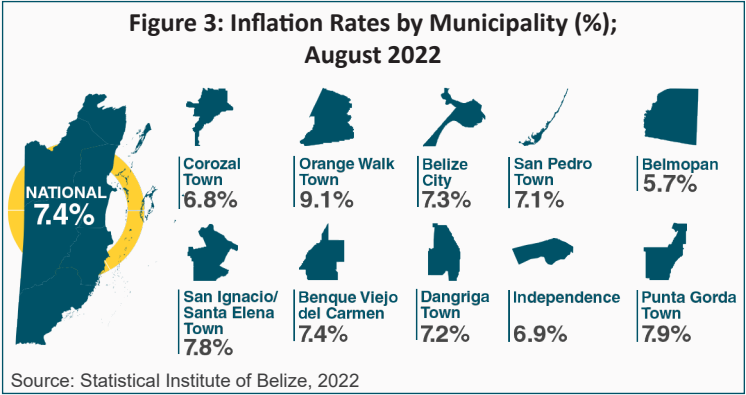
Prices for goods and services in the ‘Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services’ category went up by 1.3 percent compared to August of last year (see Figure 2). This was attributed to increased costs for personal hygiene products, and men’s and women’s haircuts.

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 0.7 percent for the month of August 2022 (see Figure 2), due mainly to lower prices for internet provision services.

Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 9.1 percent, well above the national average, Orange Walk Town recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for August 2022. Consumers in this municipality saw above-average increases in prices for various food items, taxi fares, construction materials for household use, restaurant services, nightclub entrance fees, laundry products, soaps, detergents, women’s clothing, and personal hygiene products. In contrast, Belmopan recorded the lowest inflation rate at 5.7 percent, as consumers in this city saw lower than average increases in prices for food items, taxi fares, restaurant services, 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 or inter-monthly inflation rate, which measures the percent change in prices between the previous month and the current month.

Table 2: Month to Month Inflation Rates by Category (%); August 2022	
	August 2022
ALL ITEMS	0.7%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	1.1%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.0%
Clothing and Footwear	0.4%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	-0.1%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	1.4%
Health	0.5%
Transport	0.4%
Information and Communication	0.3%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	1.3%
Education Services	0.1%
Restaurants and Accomodation Services	2.4%
Insurance and Financial Services	0.0%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.4%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

Over the one-month period between July 2022 and August 2022, consumer prices rose by 0.7 percent on average (see Table 2). This was primarily driven by the ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ category, which increased by 1.1 percent over the one-month period, as a result of higher prices for fresh vegetables, seafood items, cereal products, and dairy products. ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ had a month-over-month inflation rate of 2.4 percent, as higher prices were recorded for restaurant and cafe services.

Year-to-Date Inflation Rate³:

The year-to-date inflation rate for the first eight months of 2022, when compared to the same period in 2021, stood at 6 percent. About one-half of this increase was directly attributable to the ‘Transport’ category, which had a year-to-date inflation rate of 19 percent, as significantly higher prices were seen across all types of motor vehicle fuels, as well as new motor vehicles, and passenger transport services. ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ rose by 6.3 percent, due mostly to higher prices for cereal products, dairy products, eggs, meats, cooking oils, fish, and other seafood. Prices for ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ were up by 2.9 percent for the year to date, due to higher costs for LPG and construction materials for household use. Among the other categories, prices were also notably higher for restaurant and cafe services, laundry products, soaps, detergents, and cinema entrance fees. 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 (%); August 2022	
	August 2022
ALL ITEMS	6.0%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	6.3%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.7%
Clothing and Footwear	0.9%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	2.9%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	3.1%
Health	0.9%
Transport	19.0%
Information and Communication	-0.8%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	3.4%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accomodation Services	5.1%
Insurance and Financial Services	-0.2%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.8%

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 eight months of 2021 compared to the average CPI for the first eight months of 2022.