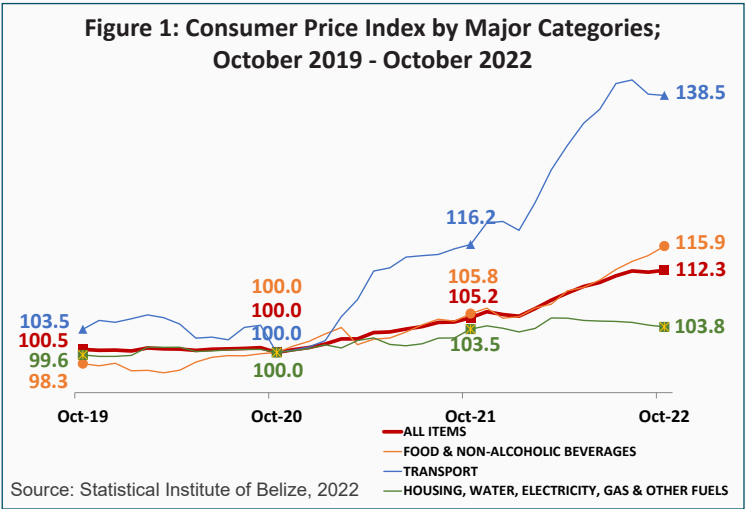




CONSUMER PRICES UP 6.7% IN OCTOBER 2022:
PRICES FOR FUELS, FOOD, AND RESTAURANT SERVICES MOST AFFECTED

Overall National Inflation Rate¹ (All-Items):

For the month of October 2022, the Statistical Institute of Belize’s monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) survey showed that the All-Items CPI, which summarizes price levels across all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 112.3, up from 105.2 in October 2021 (see Figure 1). This indicates that the country experienced an overall national inflation rate of 6.7 percent on the cost of goods and services regularly purchased by Belizean households. ‘Transport’ continued to be the category with the largest contribution to this increase in consumer prices, accounting for two-fifths of the overall national inflation for the month, followed by ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’, which accounted for one-third.



Transport:

The ‘Transport’ category saw a 19.2 percent increase for the month (see Figure 2), driven primarily by fuel prices, which were 25.6 percent higher than they were in October of last year. While prices for all types of motor vehicle fuels were up compared to a year ago, premium gasoline recorded the biggest increase, rising by 43.4 percent, while diesel and regular gasoline were up by 24.2 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively. At the pump, premium gasoline registered an increase of \$5.15, with the average price per gallon up from \$11.86 in October of last year to \$17.01 in October of this year. Diesel was up by \$2.62, from \$10.84 to \$13.46, while regular gasoline rose by \$1.81, from \$11.57 in October 2021 to \$13.38 in October 2022 (see Table 1). Also within this category, prices for new motor vehicles were 6.1 percent higher than they were in October of last year, while passenger transport services rose by 19.9 percent, due to increases in bus fares, taxi fares, sea fares and international airfares.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ had an inflation rate of 9.5 percent for the month of October 2022 when compared to October 2021, as higher prices were recorded across all food sub-categories (see Figure 2). Items that saw the most notable price changes were: cereal products, including rice, flour, and bread; meats, including poultry, beef, and pork; cooking oils; fresh produce, including watermelons, cilantro, habanero, and Irish potatoes; and dairy products, such as natural milk, powdered milk, cheese, and eggs. Nonetheless, lower prices were recorded for a few food items including, cabbages, black beans, and red kidney beans (see Table 1).

Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

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

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

| Item | Unit of Measurement | Average Prices | | % Change |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| | | October 2021 | October 2022 | |
| Rice | 1 Lb | \$1.40 | \$1.61 | 14.9% |
| Flour | 1 Lb | \$1.09 | \$1.27 | 16.3% |
| Ground Beef | 1 Lb | \$5.53 | \$6.04 | 9.1% |
| Beef Steak | 1 Lb | \$8.49 | \$9.07 | 6.8% |
| Chicken Cuts | 1 Lb | \$3.22 | \$3.39 | 5.3% |
| Turkey | 1 Lb | \$5.09 | \$5.35 | 5.1% |
| Chicken, Legs | 1 Lb | \$3.37 | \$3.46 | 2.8% |
| Chicken, Wings | 1 Lb | \$5.18 | \$5.51 | 6.4% |
| Chicken, Breast | 1 Lb | \$3.95 | \$4.22 | 6.7% |
| Whole Chicken | 1 Lb | \$2.90 | \$3.05 | 5.3% |
| Pigtail | 1 Lb | \$5.97 | \$6.85 | 14.7% |
| Whole Fish | 1 Lb | \$6.80 | \$7.83 | 15.2% |
| Cheese | 1 Lb | \$12.37 | \$13.52 | 9.3% |
| Natural Milk | 1 L | \$2.95 | \$3.10 | 4.9% |
| Egg | 1 Unit | \$0.30 | \$0.38 | 28.2% |
| Vegetable Oil | 1 L | \$4.43 | \$6.01 | 35.6% |
| Watermelon | 1 Lb | \$0.69 | \$0.85 | 24.4% |
| Cabbage | 1 Lb | \$2.31 | \$2.14 | -7.0% |
| Tomatoes | 1 Lb | \$3.27 | \$3.34 | 2.1% |
| Cilantro | 1 Lb | \$7.42 | \$8.80 | 18.6% |
| Habanero | 1 Lb | \$3.87 | \$5.60 | 44.8% |
| Onion | 1 Lb | \$2.49 | \$2.76 | 10.9% |
| Irish Potatoes | 1 Lb | \$2.12 | \$2.80 | 32.1% |
| Banana | 1 Unit | \$0.16 | \$0.16 | 0.0% |
| Pineapple | 1 Lb | \$1.30 | \$1.43 | 10.0% |
| Orange | 1 Unit | \$0.20 | \$0.21 | 1.9% |
| Sweet Pepper | 1 Lb | \$4.45 | \$4.80 | 8.0% |
| Black Beans | 1 Lb | \$2.08 | \$2.02 | -2.8% |
| Red Kidney Beans | 1 Lb | \$1.96 | \$1.89 | -3.6% |
| Soy Sauce | 10 Fl Oz | \$4.95 | \$5.79 | 16.8% |
| Coconut Milk | 400 ml | \$3.44 | \$4.04 | 17.5% |
| Premium Gasoline | 1 Gallon | \$11.86 | \$17.01 | 43.4% |
| Regular Gasoline | 1 Gallon | \$11.57 | \$13.38 | 15.7% |
| Diesel | 1 Gallon | \$10.84 | \$13.46 | 24.2% |
| Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) | 100 Lbs | \$136.89 | \$135.45 | -1.1% |

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

Items within the category of ‘Recreation, Sport and Culture’ saw prices rise by 7.6 percent in October 2022 when compared to October 2021, with higher cinema entrance fees and pet food prices being recorded for the month (see Figure 2).

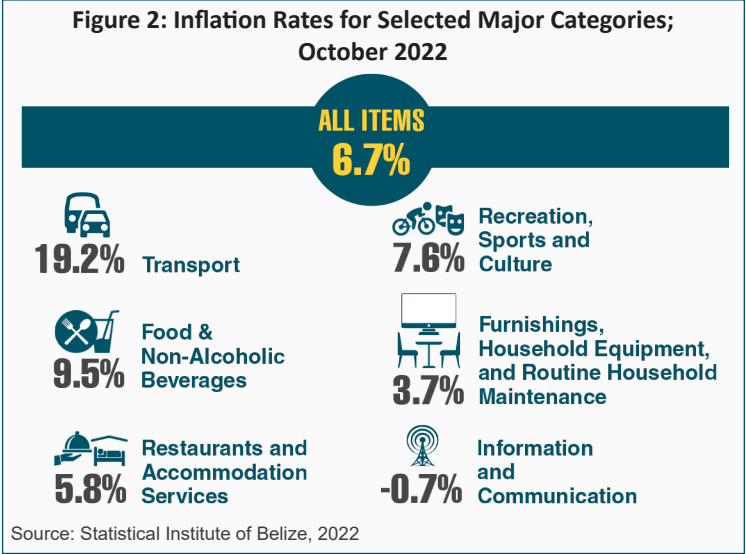
¹ The national inflation rate for the month measures the percent change in the CPI between October 2021 and October 2022.

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 of October (see Figure 2), as higher prices were seen for domestic services and household cleaning and maintenance products.

Information and Communication:

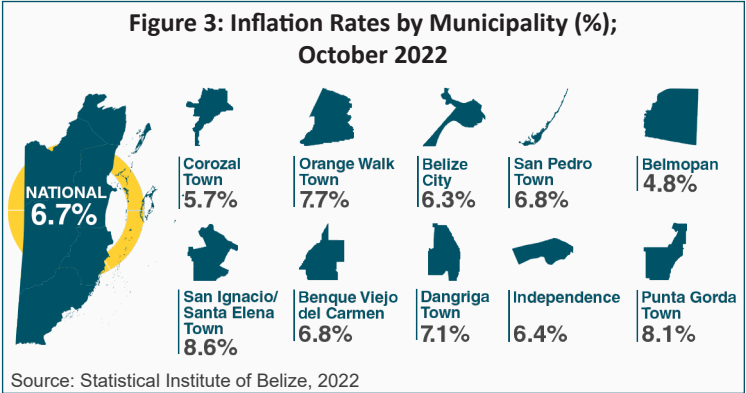
‘Information and Communication’ continued to be the only category recording a decrease, with prices within this category down by 0.7 percent, due to lower prices for internet provision services (see Figure 2).



Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 8.6 percent, the Twin Towns San Ignacio/Santa Elena recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for October 2022. Consumers in these municipalities saw above-average increases in prices for various food items, taxi fares, restaurant services, laundry products, soaps, detergents, and home rental costs. On the other hand, Belmopan recorded the lowest inflation rate with 4.8 percent, as consumers in this city saw lower than average increases in prices for food items, taxi fares, and restaurant services (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.

Over the one-month period between October 2022 and September 2022, consumer prices increased by 0.3 percent on average (see Table 2), the effect of higher food prices offsetting lower fuel and liquified petroleum gas prices. Prices for ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ rose by 1.2 percent, due to higher costs for fresh vegetables, cereal products, and dairy products. Nonetheless, this increase was partially offset by a 0.1 percent decrease in the ‘Transport’ category, the result of a reduction in prices for regular gasoline and diesel between September and October, and a 0.3 percent decrease in the ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ category.

Year-to-Date (Cumulative) Inflation Rate³:

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 October 2022 measures the percent change in the average CPI for the first ten months of 2021 compared to the average CPI for the first ten months of 2022..

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

| | October 2022 |
|---|--------------|
| ALL ITEMS | 0.3% |
| Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages | 1.2% |
| Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics | 0.0% |
| Clothing and Footwear | 0.0% |
| Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels | -0.3% |
| Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance | 0.0% |
| Health | 0.0% |
| Transport | -0.1% |
| 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

The cumulative inflation rate for the first ten months of 2022, when compared to the same period in 2021, stood at 6.2 percent. The ‘Transport’ category, accounting for almost half of the year-to-date inflation, was up by 19.1 percent. This reflected higher prices for motor vehicle fuels, which were 27.8 percent higher than they were in the first ten months of last year, as well as new motor vehicles and passenger transport services, which were up by 6.6 percent and 12.1 percent, respectively. ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ had a year-to-date inflation rate of 7 percent, due mostly to higher prices for cereal products, meats, cooking oils, dairy products, fish, and other seafood, and fresh produce. The ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ category had a cumulative inflation rate of 2.5 percent, mainly due to a 21.3 percent increase in LPG prices and higher costs for construction materials for household use. Among the other categories, notable increases were seen in prices for restaurant services, cinema entrance fees, laundry products, soaps, and detergents. ‘Information and Communication’, on the other hand, declined by 0.8 percent, as a result of lower prices for internet provision services (see Table 3).

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

| | October 2022 |
|---|--------------|
| ALL ITEMS | 6.2% |
| Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages | 7.0% |
| Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics | 0.6% |
| Clothing and Footwear | 0.8% |
| Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels | 2.5% |
| Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance | 3.2% |
| Health | 0.9% |
| Transport | 19.1% |
| Information and Communication | -0.8% |
| Recreation, Sport and Culture | 4.3% |
| Education Services | 0.0% |
| Restaurants and Accomodation Services | 5.2% |
| Insurance and Financial Services | -0.2% |
| Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services | 0.9% |

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022