

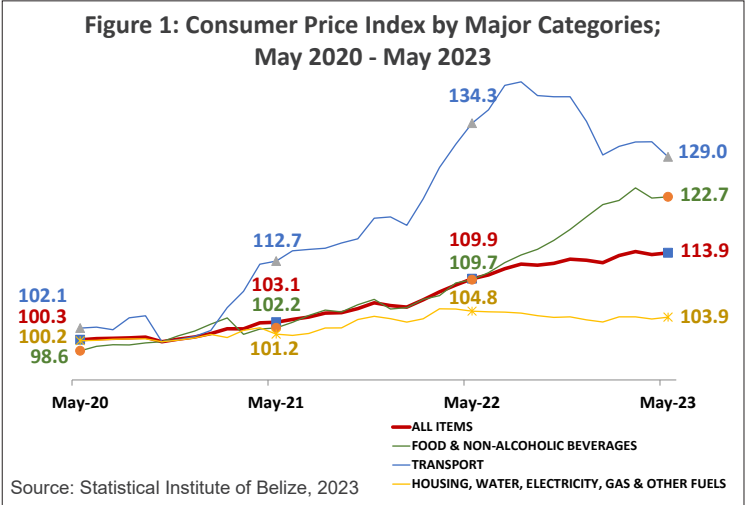


STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE

CONSUMER PRICES UP 3.7% IN MAY 2023:
FOOD AND RESTAURANT SERVICES UP, TRANSPORT DOWN

Overall National Inflation Rate¹ (All-Items):

For the month of May 2023, 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 113.9 (see Figure 1). This was an increase from 109.9 in May 2022, indicating that the overall national inflation rate for the month was 3.7 percent, the lowest monthly inflation rate recorded since July 2021. While consumer prices remained considerably higher than they were prior to the start of the pandemic, the rate at which they continue to rise has been steadily decelerating since the start of this year. The increase in consumer prices for May 2023 was driven almost entirely by higher food costs. The category of ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ was responsible for four-fifths of the national inflation rate, followed by ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’, which accounted for the remainder of inflation for the month.



Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

Prices for ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ were 11.8 percent higher than they were in May of 2022 (see Figure 2), with the ‘Food’ sub-category alone recording an inflation rate of 13.3 percent for the month. Increases were seen across all types of food products, including cereal products such as rice, flour, bread, and tortillas (15.2 percent); dairy products including milk, cheese, and eggs (22.7 percent); fresh vegetables (12 percent); meat products such as beef, poultry, and pork (7.5 percent); fresh fruits (15.2 percent); and oils and fats, including cooking oils, butter, and margarine (19.9 percent) (see Table 1).

Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

For the month of May 2023, prices for ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ were up by 12.6 percent compared to the same month of last year, the result of higher prices for restaurant and cafe services, and hotel rates (see Figure 2).

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

The category of ‘Recreation, Sport and Culture’ rose by 5.6 percent for the month of May 2023, due primarily to increases in night club entrance fees, pet food prices, and rental costs for chairs, tables, and event venues (see Figure 2).

Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

‘Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance’ recorded a 4.7 percent inflation rate for the month. This was the result of higher prices for domestic services and for household cleaning and maintenance products (see Figure 2).

Table 1: Average Prices of Selected Foods and Fuel (BZ \$);
May 2022 and May 2023

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		May 2022	May 2023	
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.46	\$1.69	15.5%
Flour	1 Lb	\$1.13	\$1.36	20.5%
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.72	\$6.76	18.2%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$8.50	\$9.18	7.9%
Chicken Cuts	1 Lb	\$3.33	\$3.67	10.3%
Turkey	1 Lb	\$5.21	\$5.63	8.2%
Chicken, Legs	1 Lb	\$3.40	\$3.49	2.6%
Chicken, Wings	1 Lb	\$5.46	\$6.10	11.8%
Chicken, Breast	1 Lb	\$4.10	\$4.46	9.0%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$3.03	\$3.15	4.1%
Pigtail	1 Lb	\$7.60	\$6.18	-18.7%
Whole Fish	1 Lb	\$7.60	\$8.01	5.3%
Cheese	1 Lb	\$12.81	\$14.31	11.7%
Natural Milk	1 L	\$3.11	\$3.79	21.9%
Egg	1 Unit	\$0.33	\$0.38	15.2%
Vegetable Oil	1 L	\$5.19	\$6.40	23.1%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.83	\$0.82	-1.4%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$2.21	\$1.57	-29.0%
Tomatoes	1 Lb	\$2.36	\$2.66	12.7%
Cilantro	1 Lb	\$5.88	\$7.45	26.7%
Habanero	1 Lb	\$4.45	\$4.21	-5.4%
Onion	1 Lb	\$2.19	\$2.50	14.4%
Irish Potatoes	1 Lb	\$2.39	\$2.62	9.9%
Banana	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.16	0.0%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.32	\$1.29	-2.7%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.19	\$0.23	17.8%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$3.61	\$3.54	-2.0%
Black Beans	1 Lb	\$2.02	\$2.05	1.5%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$1.92	\$1.96	1.9%
Soy Sauce	10 Fl Oz	\$5.55	\$6.32	14.0%
Coconut Milk	400 MI	\$3.49	\$4.82	37.9%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$14.90	\$13.95	-6.4%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$13.60	\$12.21	-10.2%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$13.52	\$11.78	-12.9%
Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$144.47	\$124.23	-14.0%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023

Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services:

Prices for ‘Personal Care, Social Protection, and Miscellaneous Goods and Services’ were 3.1 percent higher than they were in May of last year, mainly due to an increase in the cost of personal care products and men’s and women’s haircuts (see Figure 2).

Health:

The category of ‘Health’ was up by 4.4 percent when compared to May 2022, primarily as a result of higher prices for various types of over-the-counter medications.

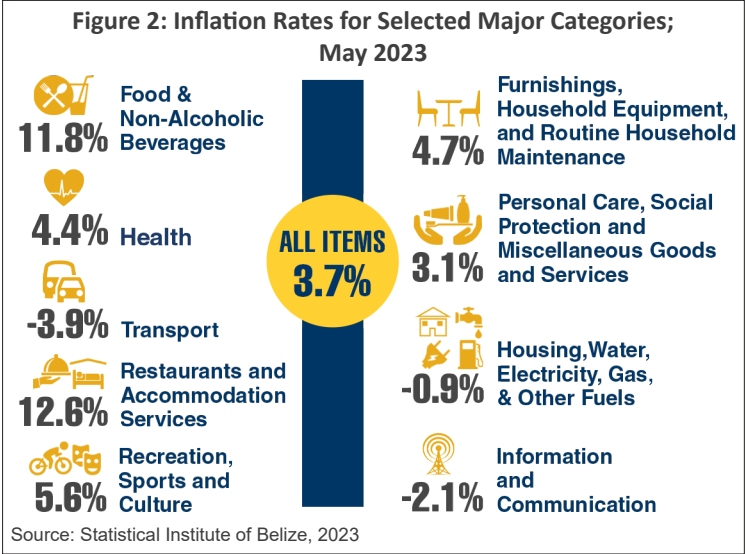
¹ The national inflation rate for the month measures the percent change in the CPI between May 2022 and May 2023.

Transport:

‘Transport’ was down by 3.9 percent, the first overall reduction recorded for this category since early 2021. This was mainly attributable to lower prices across all types of motor vehicle fuels, when compared to May of 2022 (see Figure 2). At the pump, the average price per gallon of diesel fuel declined by \$1.75 from \$13.52 in May of last year to \$11.78 in May of this year, while regular gasoline was down by \$1.39 from \$13.60 to \$12.21, and premium gasoline declined by \$0.95 from \$14.90 to \$13.95 (see Table 1). These decreases were partially offset by international airfares, which were 17.1 percent higher than they were in May of last year, and taxi fares, which were up by 7.1 percent. Additionally, prices for new motor vehicles increased by 6.3 percent compared to May of the previous year.

Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels:

‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ saw a decrease of 0.9 percent for the month, reflecting a considerable reduction in prices for liquified petroleum gas (LPG). The average cost of a 100-pound cylinder of LPG decreased by \$20.25, from \$144.47 in May 2022 to \$124.23 in May 2023 (see Table 1).

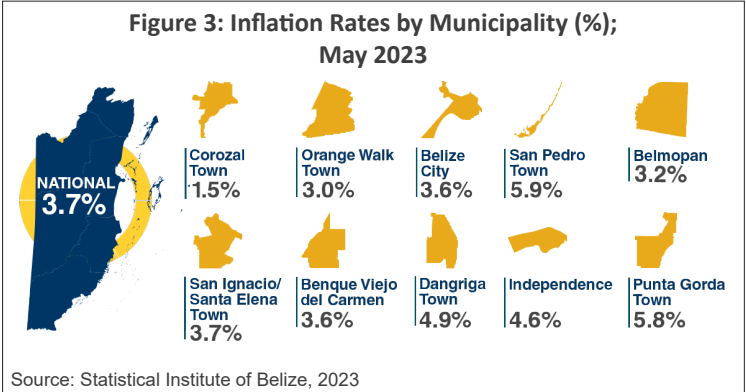


Information and Communication:

The ‘Information and Communication’ category was down by 2.1 percent compared to May of 2022, due to lower prices for internet provision services and cable/internet provision services (see Figure 2).

Inflation Rates by Municipality:

Among the municipalities, San Pedro Town recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for the month of May 2023, with an inflation rate of 5.9 percent. Residents of this town experienced higher than average price increases for various food items, pet food, restaurant services, personal care products, home rental costs, laundry products, soaps, detergents, cigarettes, and medications. On the other hand, Corozal Town had the lowest inflation rate of 1.5 percent for the month, with consumers in this town experiencing lower than average increases in prices for food items, restaurant services, medications, laundry products, soaps, detergents, domestic services, and personal hygiene products (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.

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 May 2023 measures the percent change in the average CPI for the first five months of 2023 compared to the average CPI for the first five months of 2022.

Table 2: Month to Month Inflation Rates by Category (%); May 2023

	May 2023
ALL ITEMS	0.2%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	0.1%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	2.1%
Clothing and Footwear	-1.3%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	0.3%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	0.7%
Health	2.2%
Transport	-1.8%
Information and Communication	-0.5%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	2.5%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	3.2%
Insurance and Financial Services	4.3%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.7%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023

Over the one-month period between April 2023 and May 2023, consumer prices rose by a marginal 0.2 percent on average (see Table 2). Prices for ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ were up by a notable 3.2 percent, reflecting higher prices for restaurant services, while the category of ‘Recreation, Sport and Culture’ category increased by 2.5 percent during the period, as a result of higher costs for pet food and night club entrance fees. ‘Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics’ went up by 2.1 percent, mainly due to higher prices for cigarettes and an increase in the cost of various medications led to a 2.2 percent rise in prices within the ‘Health’ category. Food prices were virtually unchanged over the one-month period, with a month-over-month inflation rate of 0.1 percent. These increases were partially offset by a 1.8 percent decline in the ‘Transport’ category, due to a fall in prices for all types of motor vehicle fuels between April and May of this year.

Year-to-Date Inflation Rates³:

The year-to-date or cumulative inflation rate for the first five months of 2023, when compared to the same period in 2022, stood at 5.4 percent. ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ was the main contributor to the year-to-date inflation rate, with prices within this category up by 13.9 percent compared to the first five months of last year. ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ had a cumulative inflation rate of 10.3 percent, while the ‘Transport’ category was up by 2.9 percent for the first five months of the year. On the other hand, ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ declined by 0.7 percent, as a result of lower LPG prices, while prices for ‘Information and Communication’ were down by 2 percent for the first five months of the year (see Table 3).

Table 3: Year to Date Inflation Rates by Category (%); May 2023

	May 2023
ALL ITEMS	5.4%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	13.9%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.8%
Clothing and Footwear	0.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	-0.7%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	4.6%
Health	2.6%
Transport	2.9%
Information and Communication	-2.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	8.4%
Education Services	0.3%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	10.3%
Insurance and Financial Services	1.2%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	2.7%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023