



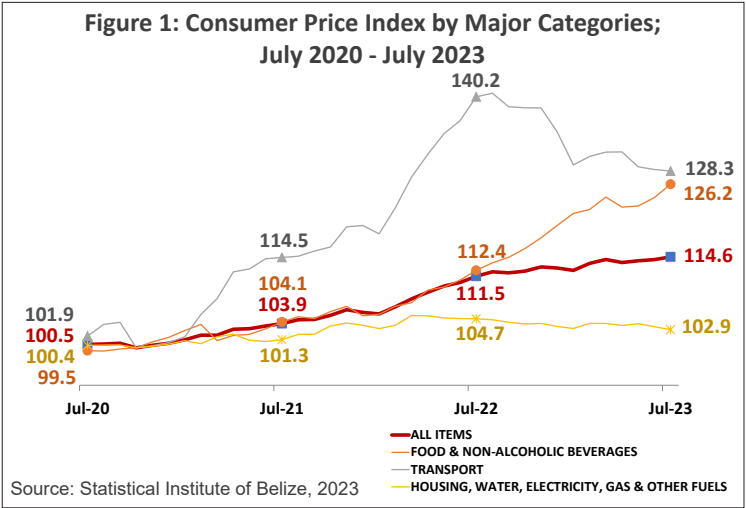
STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE

CONSUMER PRICES UP 2.8% IN JULY 2023: FOOD AND RESTAURANT SERVICES UP, FUEL AND LPG DOWN

Overall National Inflation Rate¹ (All-Items):

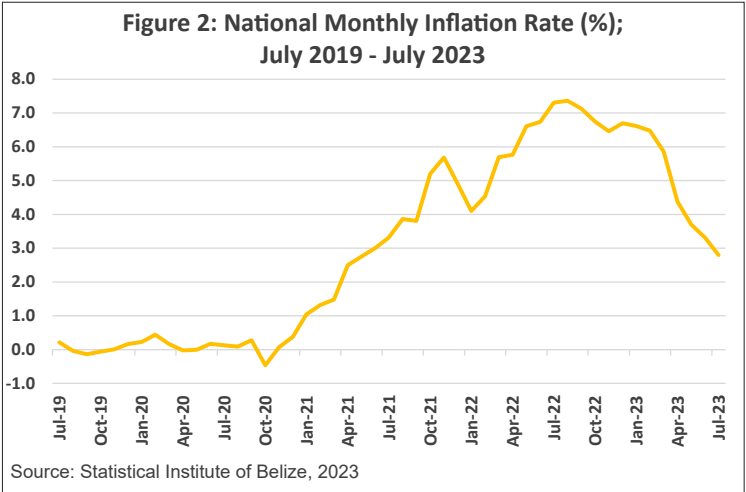
Results from the Statistical Institute of Belize’s monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) survey showed that, for the month of July 2023, the All-Items CPI, which summarizes price levels across all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 114.6, up from 111.5 in July 2022 (see Figure 1). The overall national inflation rate for the month was 2.8 percent, the lowest recorded since May of 2021. Consumer prices, which began to increase sharply in the months following the start of the pandemic, have seen a gradual slowdown in the rate at which they have been rising since the beginning of this year (see Figure 2).

Higher food costs were the main driver behind the overall inflation rate for the month of July, although the category of ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ also recorded a notable rise. The effect of these increases was somewhat offset by lower prices within the ‘Transport’ and ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ categories, as prices for petroleum products continued to decline.



Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

The category of ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ was up by 12.3 percent compared to July 2022, with prices across all types of food products still considerably higher than they were during the same month of last year (see Figure 3). Within this category, the ‘Food’ sub-category alone recorded an inflation rate of 13.8 percent for the month. Notable increases were seen in prices for cereal products, such as rice, flour, bread, and tortillas (12.5 percent); fresh vegetables, including cilantro, habaneros, tomatoes, and cabbages (20.2 percent); dairy products, including natural milks, cheeses, and eggs (19.9 percent); meat products, such as beef, poultry, and pork (8.1 percent); fresh fruits including bananas, limes, and oranges (20 percent); and cooking oils (16.6 percent).



Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

The category of ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ had an inflation rate of 12.6 percent for the month of July 2023, reflecting higher prices for restaurant and cafe services as well as increased hotel accommodation rates (see Figure 3).

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

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		July 2022	July 2023	
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.51	\$1.72	13.8%
Flour	1 Lb	\$1.20	\$1.35	12.3%
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.81	\$6.83	17.5%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$8.72	\$9.38	7.5%
Chicken Cuts	1 Lb	\$3.37	\$3.72	10.5%
Turkey	1 Lb	\$5.21	\$5.74	10.1%
Chicken, Legs	1 Lb	\$3.41	\$3.44	0.8%
Chicken, Wings	1 Lb	\$5.47	\$6.33	15.8%
Chicken, Breast	1 Lb	\$4.15	\$4.65	12.0%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$3.03	\$3.21	5.9%
Pigtail	1 Lb	\$7.34	\$6.18	-15.7%
Whole Fish	1 Lb	\$7.87	\$8.23	4.6%
Cheese	1 Lb	\$13.37	\$14.43	7.9%
Natural Milk	1 L	\$3.15	\$3.91	24.1%
Egg	1 Unit	\$0.36	\$0.40	13.4%
Vegetable Oil	1 L	\$5.79	\$6.39	10.5%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.91	\$0.84	-7.0%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$2.00	\$2.50	25.0%
Tomatoes	1 Lb	\$2.66	\$3.44	29.2%
Cilantro	1 Lb	\$7.49	\$21.72	189.8%
Habanero	1 Lb	\$5.04	\$8.50	68.7%
Onion	1 Lb	\$2.36	\$2.64	11.6%
Irish Potatoes	1 Lb	\$2.49	\$2.96	18.7%
Banana	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.17	4.2%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.29	\$1.25	-3.2%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.22	\$0.25	13.4%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$4.34	\$4.50	3.8%
Black Beans	1 Lb	\$2.08	\$2.18	4.7%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$1.98	\$2.08	5.3%
Soy Sauce	10 Fl Oz	\$5.59	\$6.44	15.1%
Coconut Milk	400 ml	\$4.06	\$4.88	20.1%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$17.69	\$13.76	-22.2%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$13.60	\$12.14	-10.8%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$13.53	\$11.61	-14.2%
Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$143.59	\$113.60	-20.9%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

‘Recreation, Sport, and Culture’ rose by 5.6 percent when compared to July 2022, reflecting higher pet food prices, night club entrance fees, and rental costs for chairs, tables, and event venues (see Figure 3).

Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

‘Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance’ had an inflation rate of 4.7 percent (see Figure 3), due mainly to increases in the cost of domestic services and of household cleaning and maintenance products.

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

Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services:

The category of ‘Personal Care, Social Protection, and Miscellaneous Goods and Services’ was up by 3.1 percent in July 2023, as a result of higher prices for personal hygiene products and men’s and women’s haircuts (see Figure 3).

Health:

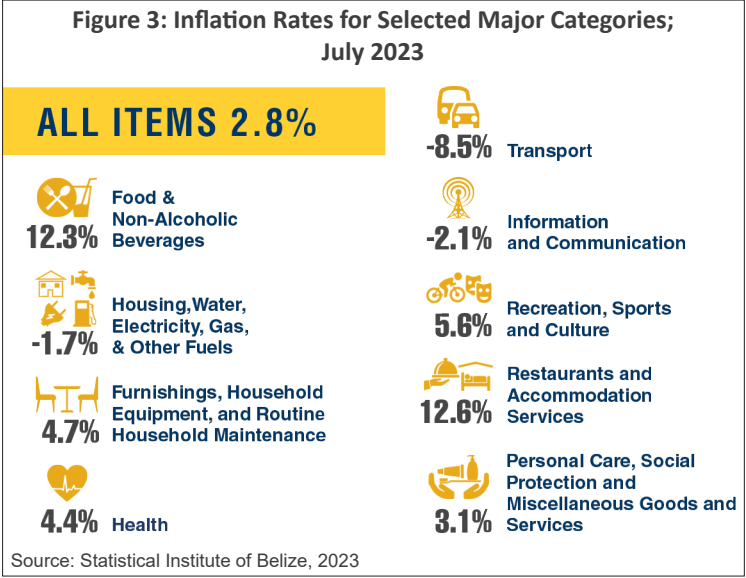
Prices within the ‘Health’ category increased by 4.4 percent for the month, primarily due to a rise in the cost of various types of medications.

Transport:

‘Transport’ recorded an overall reduction for the third consecutive month. Prices within this category were down by a notable 8.5 percent, mainly attributable to reductions across all types of motor vehicle fuels as well as a decrease in some bus fares (see Figure 3). At the pump, the average price per gallon of premium gasoline declined by \$3.93 from \$17.69 in July of last year to \$13.76 in July of this year, while diesel was down by \$1.92 from \$13.53 to \$11.61, and regular gasoline declined by \$1.47 from \$13.60 to \$12.14 (see Table 1). International airfares, on the other hand, were 17.1 percent higher than they were in the same month of last year and taxi fares were up by 7.1 percent. Additionally, prices for new motor vehicles increased by 6.3 percent, when compared to July of 2022.

Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels:

The ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ category recorded an overall decrease of 1.7 percent for the month (see Figure 3), as prices for liquified petroleum gas (LPG) continued to decline. The average cost of a 100-pound cylinder of LPG decreased by \$29.99, going from \$143.59 in July 2022 to \$113.60 in July 2023 (see Table 1).



Information and Communication:

The ‘Information and Communication’ category was down by 2.1 percent, reflecting lower costs for internet provision services and cable/internet provision services (see Figure 3).

Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 5.2 percent, almost double the national average, Punta Gorda Town recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for July 2023. Consumers in this municipality saw above average increases in the cost of various food items, restaurant services, clothing, laundry products, soaps, home rental costs, rental costs for chairs, tables, and event venues, and personal hygiene products. On the other hand, Corozal Town recorded the lowest inflation rate at 1.1 percent, as consumers in this municipality saw lower than average increases in prices for food items, restaurant services, medicine products, laundry products, soaps, detergents, domestic services, and personal hygiene products (see Figure 4).

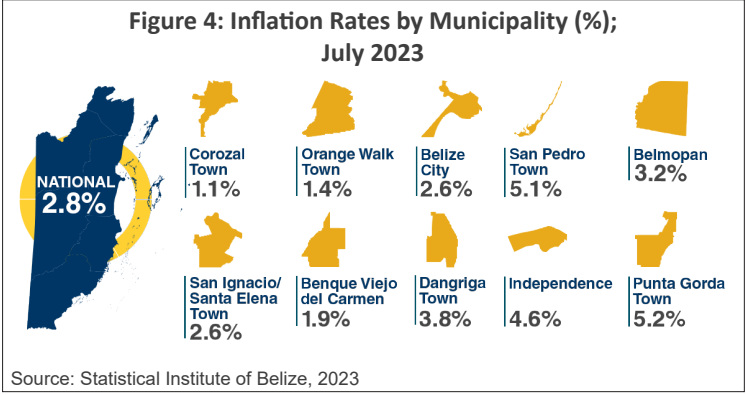


Table 2: Month to Month Inflation Rates by Category (%); July 2023

	July 2023
ALL ITEMS	0.4%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	1.7%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.0%
Clothing and Footwear	0.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	-0.5%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	0.0%
Health	0.0%
Transport	-0.2%
Information and Communication	0.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	0.0%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation 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, 2023

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 June 2023 and July 2023, consumer prices increased by 0.4 percent on average (see Table 2), the net effect of higher food costs and lower LPG and fuel prices. The category of ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’ rose by 1.7 percent, as a result of a 2 percent rise in the ‘Food’ sub-category between June and July. Decreasing LPG prices, on the other hand, led to a 0.5 percent reduction in the ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’ category, while lower motor vehicle fuel prices resulted in a 0.2 percent decline in the ‘Transport’ category over the one-month period.

Year-to-Date Inflation Rates³:

The year-to-date inflation rate for the first seven months of 2023, compared to the same period in 2022, was 4.7 percent. ‘Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages’, with a year-to-date inflation rate of 13.4 percent, continued to be the main category driving inflation during the first seven months of the year. Additionally, the ‘Restaurants and Accommodation Services’ category was up by a notable 11 percent, largely due to higher prices for restaurant services. ‘Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels’, on the other hand, saw a 0.9 percent decline for the first seven months of the year, as a result of reduced LPG prices, while the category of ‘Information and Communication’ recorded a 2 percent decrease for the period (see Table 3).

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

	July 2023
ALL ITEMS	4.7%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	13.4%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	1.2%
Clothing and Footwear	-0.2%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	-0.9%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	4.6%
Health	3.1%
Transport	-0.1%
Information and Communication	-2.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	7.6%
Education Services	0.3%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	11.0%
Insurance and Financial Services	2.2%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	2.8%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023

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