

CPI

Consumer Price Index



CPI
RELEASE FOR THE MONTH OF:
August 2023

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STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE

CONSUMER PRICES RISE 3.4% IN AUGUST 2023: FOOD AND RESTAURANT SERVICES UP, FUEL DOWN

Overall National Inflation Rate¹ (All-Items):

For the month of August 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 116.0 (see Figure 1). This was an increase from 112.2 in August 2022, indicating that the overall national inflation rate for the month was 3.4 percent. 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).

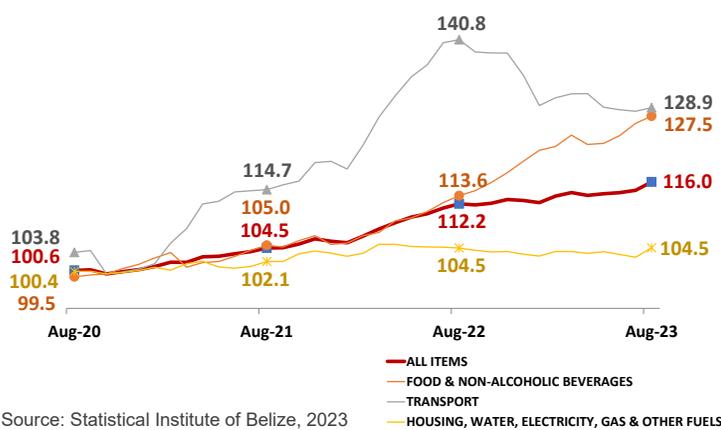
As in previous months, food prices were the main driver behind the overall increase in consumer prices for the month of August, although the categories of 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' and 'Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance' were also up notably. The effect of these increases was somewhat offset by lower prices within the 'Transport' category, as fuel prices remained lower than they were in the same month of last year.

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

| Item | Unit of Measurement | Average Prices | | % Change |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| | | August 2022 | August 2023 | |
| Rice | 1 Lb | \$1.50 | \$1.73 | 15.5% |
| Oats | 18 Oz | \$6.80 | \$8.44 | 24.2% |
| Flour | 1 Lb | \$1.21 | \$1.37 | 14.0% |
| Ground Beef | 1 Lb | \$6.02 | \$6.88 | 14.2% |
| Beef Steak | 1 Lb | \$8.79 | \$9.43 | 7.3% |
| Chicken Cuts | 1 Lb | \$3.37 | \$3.71 | 9.9% |
| Chicken, Legs | 1 Lb | \$3.43 | \$3.66 | 6.6% |
| Chicken, Wings | 1 Lb | \$5.60 | \$6.48 | 15.7% |
| Chicken, Breast | 1 Lb | \$4.20 | \$4.57 | 8.7% |
| Whole Chicken | 1 Lb | \$3.02 | \$3.26 | 8.0% |
| Pigtail | 1 Lb | \$7.24 | \$6.17 | -14.8% |
| Whole Fish | 1 Lb | \$8.00 | \$8.22 | 2.7% |
| Cheese | 1 Lb | \$13.53 | \$14.59 | 7.8% |
| Natural Milk | 1 L | \$3.15 | \$3.93 | 24.8% |
| Powdered Milk | 360 Grams | \$8.07 | \$9.16 | 13.5% |
| Evaporated Milk | 360 Grams | \$2.13 | \$3.15 | 47.8% |
| Egg | 1 Unit | \$0.37 | \$0.40 | 9.1% |
| Vegetable Oil | 1 L | \$5.90 | \$6.53 | 10.6% |
| Guavas | 1 Lb | \$3.54 | \$3.75 | 6.1% |
| Lime | 1 Unit | \$0.30 | \$0.41 | 35.4% |
| Grapes | 1 Lb | \$7.05 | \$8.44 | 19.6% |
| Watermelon | 1 Lb | \$0.86 | \$0.72 | -16.1% |
| Cabbage | 1 Lb | \$2.01 | \$2.85 | 41.6% |
| Broccoli | 1 Lb | \$4.09 | \$4.78 | 16.7% |
| Cauliflower | 1 Lb | \$4.01 | \$4.84 | 20.8% |
| Tomatoes | 1 Lb | \$3.06 | \$4.30 | 40.4% |
| Cilantro | 1 Lb | \$6.76 | \$17.12 | 153.3% |
| Carrots | 1 Lb | \$2.03 | \$2.38 | 17.5% |
| Habanero | 1 Lb | \$5.26 | \$8.70 | 65.4% |
| Onion | 1 Lb | \$2.59 | \$2.79 | 7.6% |
| Plantain | 1 Unit | \$0.33 | \$0.59 | 77.1% |
| Irish Potatoes | 1 Lb | \$2.61 | \$3.03 | 16.3% |
| Banana | 1 Unit | \$0.17 | \$0.16 | -2.9% |
| Pineapple | 1 Lb | \$1.42 | \$1.26 | -11.0% |
| Orange | 1 Unit | \$0.19 | \$0.29 | 52.9% |
| Sweet Pepper | 1 Lb | \$4.38 | \$5.12 | 17.0% |
| Black Beans | 1 Lb | \$2.05 | \$2.21 | 8.1% |
| Red Kidney Beans | 1 Lb | \$1.95 | \$2.14 | 9.4% |
| Coffee | 170 Grams | \$6.46 | \$8.11 | 25.6% |
| Premium Gasoline | 1 Gallon | \$17.65 | \$13.83 | -21.7% |
| Regular Gasoline | 1 Gallon | \$13.61 | \$12.79 | -6.0% |
| Diesel | 1 Gallon | \$13.52 | \$11.84 | -12.5% |
| Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) | 100 Lbs | \$141.87 | \$117.25 | -17.4% |

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023

Figure 1: Consumer Price Index by Major Categories; August 2020 - August 2023

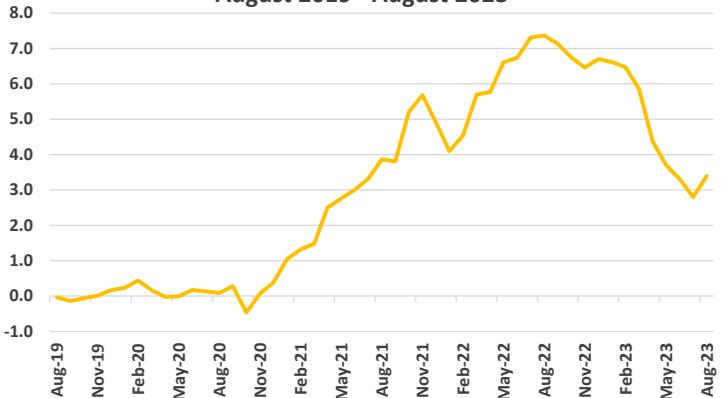


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

Prices within the 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' category rose by 12.2 percent when compared to August of last year (see Figure 3). Across all groups of food products, prices remained significantly higher than they were in the same month last year, and the 'Food' sub-category alone recorded an inflation rate of 13.5 percent for the month. Notable increases were observed in the cost of cereal products, such as rice, flour, bread, and tortillas (12.9 percent); fresh vegetables, including cilantro, habaneros, tomatoes, and cabbages (19.4 percent); dairy products, including natural milks, cheeses, and eggs (20.1 percent); meat products, such as beef, poultry, and pork (8 percent); fresh fruits including grapes, limes, and oranges (13.9 percent); and cooking oils (16 percent).

Figure 2: National Monthly Inflation Rate (%); August 2019 - August 2023



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023

Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

The 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' category recorded an inflation rate of 13.7 percent for the month of August 2023, driven by higher prices for restaurant and cafe services, as well as increased hotel accommodation rates (see Figure 2).

Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

The category of 'Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance' had an inflation rate of 6 percent for the month (see Figure 2), attributed primarily to rising prices for household cleaning and maintenance products, as well as increased costs for domestic services.

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

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

'Recreation, Sport, and Culture' saw a 5.2 percent increase compared to August of last year, the result of higher nightclub entrance fees, pet food prices, and rental costs for chairs, tables, and event venues (see Figure 2).

Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services:

The category of 'Personal Care, Social Protection, and Miscellaneous Goods and Services' was up by 4.3 percent (see Figure 2), reflecting higher prices for personal hygiene products and men's and women's haircuts.

Health:

Prices within the 'Health' category recorded a 7.5 percent increase for the month, primarily driven by a rise in the cost of various types of medications (see Figure 2).

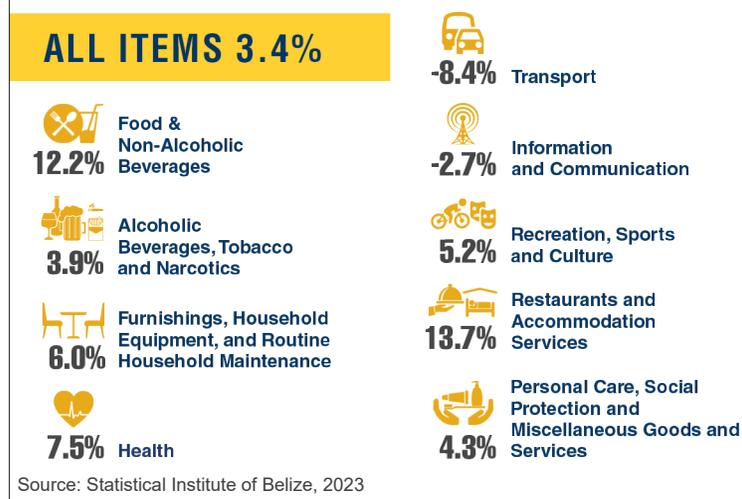
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco, and Narcotics:

'Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco, and Narcotics' had an inflation rate of 3.9 percent (see Figure 2), due mainly to increases in the cost of cigarette products.

Transport:

'Transport' was down by a notable 8.4 percent overall when compared to August of 2022 (see Figure 3), as prices across all types of motor vehicle fuels remained lower than they were in August of last year. At the pump, the average price per gallon of premium gasoline declined by \$3.82, from \$17.65 in August of last year to \$13.83 in August of this year, while diesel was down by \$1.68, from \$13.52 to \$11.84, and regular gasoline declined by \$0.82 from \$13.61 to \$12.79 (see Table 1). Additionally, reductions were seen in prices for some short bus runs as well as international airfares. In contrast, prices for new motor vehicles were 6.3 percent higher than they were in August of last year.

Figure 3: Inflation Rates for Selected Major Categories; August 2023



Information and Communication:

Prices for goods and services within the category of 'Information and Communication' recorded an overall decline of 2.7 percent for the month (see Figure 2), mainly due to lower prices for internet provision services.

Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 6.8 percent, well above the national average, the city of Belmopan recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for August 2023. Consumers in this city saw above average increases in prices for various food items, restaurant services, home rental costs, pet food, laundry products, soaps, detergents, domestic services, personal hygiene products, medicine products, and doctor consultation fees. On the other hand, the twin towns of San Ignacio/Santa Elena recorded the lowest inflation rate at 1.9 percent, as consumers in these towns saw lower than average increases in prices for food items, restaurant services, cigarettes, medicine products, personal hygiene products, laundry products, soaps, detergents, and domestic services (see Figure 3).

Figure 4: Inflation Rates by Municipality (%); August 2023

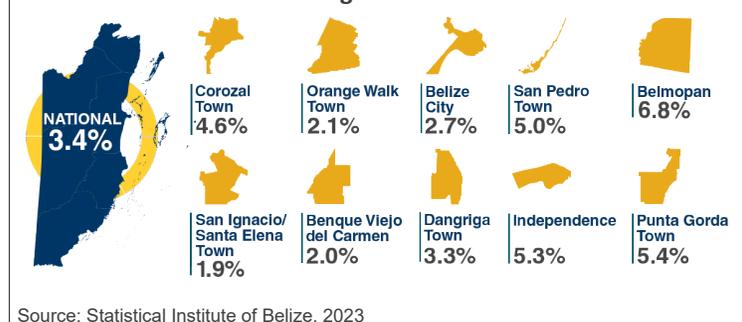


Table 2: Month to Month Inflation Rates by Category (%); August 2023

| Category | August 2023 (%) |
|---|-----------------|
| ALL ITEMS | 1.3% |
| Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages | 1.0% |
| Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics | 1.7% |
| Clothing and Footwear | 0.0% |
| Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels | 1.6% |
| Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance | 2.6% |
| Health | 3.6% |
| Transport | 0.5% |
| Information and Communication | -0.3% |
| Recreation, Sport and Culture | 0.9% |
| Education Services | 0.3% |
| Restaurants and Accommodation Services | 3.3% |
| Insurance and Financial Services | 1.3% |
| Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services | 1.5% |

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 July 2023 and August 2023, consumer prices rose by 1.3 percent on average (see Table 2). The category of 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' saw an increase of 1.6 percent, driven by higher prices for liquified petroleum gas (LPG) and home rental costs. 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' had a month-over-month inflation rate of 1 percent, while the 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' category rose by 3.3 percent. Prices for 'Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance' recorded a 2.6 percent increase over the one-month period, due to higher prices for laundry products, soaps, and detergents.

Year-to-Date Inflation Rates³:

The year-to-date inflation rate for the first eight months of 2023 was 4.5 percent (see Table 3). The category of 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' was up by a substantial 13.2 percent compared to the first eight months of 2022, driven by higher prices across all types of food products. Similarly, 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' recorded an 11.3 percent increase, due largely to higher prices for restaurant services. The 'Recreation, Sport and Culture' category rose by 7.3 percent, reflecting higher pet food prices compared to the first eight months of last year. 'Transport', on the other hand, saw an overall decline of 1.3 percent for the first eight months of the year, as a result of reduced fuel prices, while reductions in LPG prices during the period led to a 0.8 percent decrease in the category of 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels'.

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

| Category | August 2023 (%) |
|---|-----------------|
| ALL ITEMS | 4.5% |
| Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages | 13.2% |
| Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics | 1.6% |
| Clothing and Footwear | -0.3% |
| Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels | -0.8% |
| Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance | 4.8% |
| Health | 3.7% |
| Transport | -1.3% |
| Information and Communication | -2.1% |
| Recreation, Sport and Culture | 7.3% |
| Education Services | 0.3% |
| Restaurants and Accommodation Services | 11.3% |
| Insurance and Financial Services | 2.6% |
| Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services | 3.0% |

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