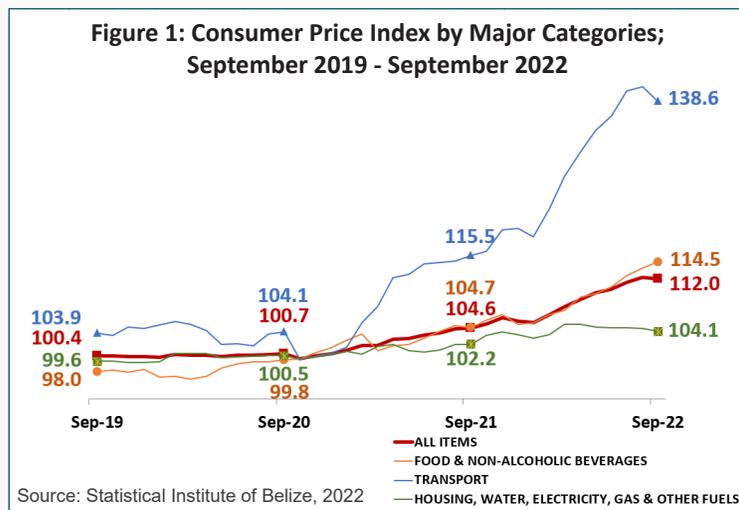




CONSUMER PRICES UP 7.1% IN SEPTEMBER 2022: FUEL, FOOD, LPG, AND RESTAURANT SERVICES PRICES MOST AFFECTED

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 September 2022, the All-Items CPI, which summarizes price levels across all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 112.0, up from 104.6 in September 2021 (see Figure 1). This indicated that the country experienced an overall national inflation rate of 7.1 percent on the cost of goods and services commonly purchased by Belizean households. As in previous months this year, inflation was primarily driven by higher prices for motor vehicle fuels, several food items, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), restaurant services, and household cleaning products.



Transport:

Prices for goods and services related to 'Transport' were up by 20 percent when compared to September of last year and this category was the single largest driver of inflation for the month. Prices for motor vehicle fuels were more than 27 percent higher, on average, than they were in September of 2021. At the pump, premium gasoline registered the largest increase of \$5.04, with the average price per gallon up from \$11.85 in September of last year to \$16.89 in September of this year. Diesel was up by \$2.82, from \$10.70 to \$13.52, while regular gasoline rose by \$2.08, from \$11.46 in September 2021 to \$13.54 in September 2022 (see Table 1). Additionally, passenger transport services rose by 19.9 percent, as increases in bus fares, taxi fares, and sea fares were seen across the country, while prices for new motor vehicles were 6.1 percent higher than they were in September of last year.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' saw an overall increase of 9.4 percent, the highest recorded for this category so far in 2022, with higher prices being recorded across all food sub-categories during the month (see Figure 2). The most notable increases continued to be seen among various basic food items, such as: 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 and eggs. Nonetheless, there were some decreases recorded for a few food items, including black beans, and red kidney beans (see Table 1).

Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels:

For the month of September 2022, the 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category had an overall inflation rate of 1.9 percent (see Figure 2). Within this category, LPG prices were up by 11.1 percent compared to September of 2021, as the average cost of a hundred-pound cylinder rose by \$13.81, from \$124.07 in September 2021 to \$137.88 in September 2022 (see Table 1). Additionally, prices for construction materials for household use were up by 17.2 percent, while home rental costs were 0.5 percent higher than they were in the same month last year.

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

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices		% Change
		September 2021	September 2022	
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.37	\$1.57	14.1%
Flour	1 Lb	\$1.08	\$1.26	17.4%
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.54	\$6.06	9.4%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$8.30	\$8.93	7.7%
Chicken Cuts	1 Lb	\$3.22	\$3.39	5.5%
Turkey	1 Lb	\$5.21	\$5.36	2.9%
Chicken, Legs	1 Lb	\$3.35	\$3.43	2.4%
Chicken, Wings	1 Lb	\$5.19	\$5.42	4.4%
Chicken, Breast	1 Lb	\$3.97	\$4.21	6.0%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$2.92	\$3.04	4.1%
Pigtail	1 Lb	\$5.80	\$7.08	22.0%
Whole Fish	1 Lb	\$6.94	\$7.86	13.3%
Cheese	1 Lb	\$12.30	\$13.50	9.7%
Natural Milk	1 L	\$2.93	\$3.09	5.5%
Egg	1 Unit	\$0.29	\$0.39	33.6%
Vegetable Oil	1 L	\$4.35	\$5.91	35.7%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.59	\$0.82	38.3%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$2.20	\$2.07	-5.9%
Tomatoes	1 Lb	\$2.86	\$3.31	15.6%
Cilantro	1 Lb	\$6.28	\$8.18	30.3%
Habanero	1 Lb	\$3.78	\$5.45	44.1%
Onion	1 Lb	\$2.27	\$2.72	19.6%
Irish Potatoes	1 Lb	\$2.04	\$2.76	35.6%
Banana	1 Unit	\$0.15	\$0.16	3.9%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.23	\$1.45	17.6%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.21	\$0.21	0.0%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$4.27	\$4.70	10.1%
Black Beans	1 Lb	\$2.11	\$2.04	-3.2%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$1.97	\$1.93	-1.9%
Soy Sauce	10 Fl Oz	\$4.94	\$5.70	15.4%
Coconut Milk	400 MI	\$3.50	\$4.01	14.7%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.85	\$16.89	42.5%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.46	\$13.54	18.1%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$10.70	\$13.52	26.4%
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$124.07	\$137.88	11.1%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022

Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

The category of 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' recorded an overall inflation rate of 5.8 percent for the month of September 2022, reflecting for the most part higher prices for restaurant services (see Figure 2).

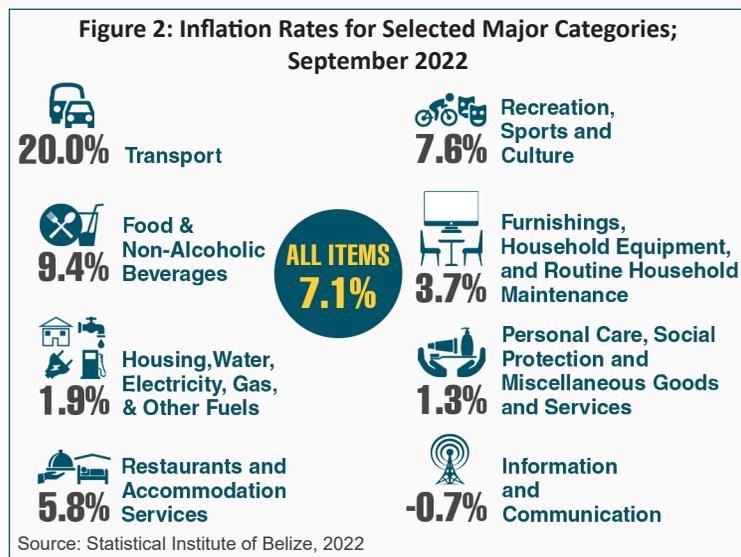
Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

Prices for 'Recreation, Sport and Culture' rose by 7.6 percent overall when compared to September 2021, as a result of higher cinema entrance fees and pet food costs (see Figure 2).

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

Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

Prices for goods and services in the 'Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance' category went up by 3.7 percent (see Figure 2). This was attributed to a 7.8 percent increase in prices for 'Non-durable Household Goods' and a 3.8 percent rise in the cost of domestic services.



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

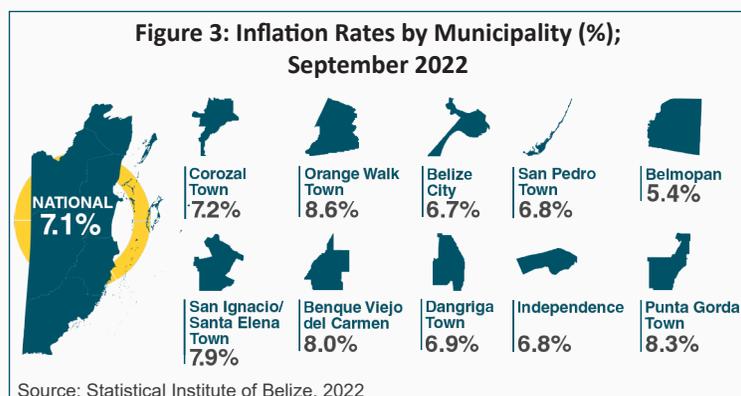
Prices for 'Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services' went up by 1.3 percent compared to September of last year (see Figure 2), owing to increases in the cost of personal hygiene products, and men's and women's haircuts.

Information and Communication:

'Information and Communication' was the only category to have recorded a decrease for the month of September 2022, with prices down by 0.7 percent when compared to September 2021 (see Figure 2), due to lower prices for internet provision services.

Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 8.6 percent, Orange Walk Town recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for September 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. On the other hand, the City of Belmopan recorded the lowest inflation at 5.4 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.

Over the one-month period between August 2022 and September 2022, consumer prices decreased by a marginal 0.2 percent on average. Prices within the 'Transport' category, which has been steadily increasing for the past months, went down by 1.5 percent over this period, as a result of a reduction in prices for premium gasoline between August and September. The 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas

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

	September 2022
ALL ITEMS	-0.2%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	0.8%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.0%
Clothing and Footwear	0.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	-0.4%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	0.0%
Health	0.0%
Transport	-1.5%
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, 2022

and Other Fuels' category decreased by 0.4 percent on average, due to a small reduction in prices for LPG over the one-month period. These decreases were partially offset by a 0.8 percent increase in 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages', with prices for fresh produce, cereal products, and dairy products rising between August and September of 2022.

Year-to-Date Inflation Rate³:

The year-to-date inflation rate for the first nine months of 2022, when compared to the same period in 2021, stood at 6.2 percent. The 'Transport' category, with a year-to-date inflation rate of 19.1 percent, was directly responsible for more than a half of the overall increase in consumer prices for the nine-month period, as considerably higher costs were seen across all types of motor vehicle fuels, as well as new motor vehicles, and passenger transport services. The 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' category had a year-to-date inflation rate of 6.7 percent, due mostly to higher prices for cereal products, dairy products, meats, cooking oils, fresh produce, fish, and other seafood. 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' recorded a 2.8 percent year-to-date inflation rate, due to a 24.4 percent rise in LPG prices and 14.4 percent increase in construction materials for household use over the first nine months of the year. Higher prices for restaurant services resulted in a 5.2 percent year-to-date inflation rate for the category of 'Restaurant and Accommodation Services'. Among the other categories, prices were notably higher for laundry products, soaps, detergents, and cinema entrance fees. The only category to record an overall decrease in prices for the period was 'Information and Communication', which 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 (%); September 2022

	September 2022
ALL ITEMS	6.2%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	6.7%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.7%
Clothing and Footwear	0.9%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	2.8%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	3.2%
Health	0.9%
Transport	19.1%
Information and Communication	-0.8%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	3.9%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation 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

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