

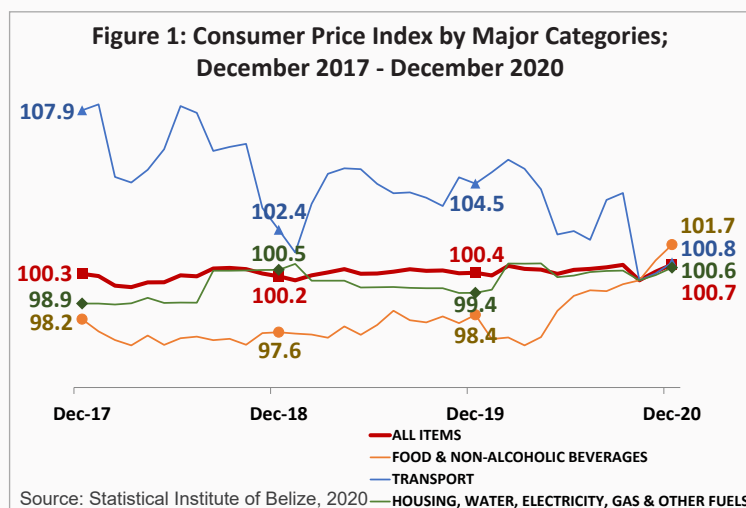
CPI CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

For the month of: November and December 2020 • Published on: January 27th, 2021

CONSUMER PRICES RISE 0.4% IN DECEMBER 2020: Costs for Food, Home Rental and Personal Care Products Up; Fuel, Hotel Accommodations and LPG Prices Down

ALL-ITEMS:

Results from the Statistical Institute of Belize's most recent monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) survey showed that, as of December 2020¹, the All-Items CPI stood at 100.7, an overall increase of 0.4 percent from 100.4 in December 2019 (see Figure 1). This indicates that, on average, prices for items comprising the basket of goods and services commonly purchased by Belizean households were 0.4 percent higher than they were last December. This was mainly the result of higher prices for food items, home rentals, and personal care products being partially offset by lower prices for fuel, hotel accommodations and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).



FOOD AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:

With food prices trending steadily upwards, 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' saw the highest rate of inflation from among the major categories, with an overall increase of 3.3 percent for the month of December 2020 (see Table 1). Within this category, the 'Food' sub-category alone was solely responsible for the increase and higher prices were seen across all groups of food items when compared to December of last year. Fresh produce, in particular, rose significantly during the month. Prices for vegetables were up by 17.2 percent on average, while fruit prices rose by 6.5 percent, as notably higher prices were seen for products such as red kidney beans, oranges, watermelons, cabbages, sweet peppers, tomatoes, and potatoes. In addition, whole chickens, eggs, and natural milk were also up in December 2020. Nonetheless, lower prices were recorded a few items, including pork chops, beef steak, and ground beef (see Table 3).

HOUSING, WATER, ELECTRICITY, GAS AND OTHER FUELS:

For the month of December 2020, prices for goods and services within the 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' category saw an overall 1.2 percent increase in comparison to December 2019 (see Table 1). This was mainly the result of a 1.8 percent increase in average home rental costs, as higher average prices were recorded in the municipalities of Punta Gorda Town, San Ignacio/Santa Elena Town, Belize City and the City of Belmopan. This was, however, partly offset by a small reduction in LPG prices (see Table 3).

PERSONAL CARE, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND MISCELLANEOUS GOODS AND SERVICES:

The 'Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services' category recorded an inflation rate of 2.2 percent for the month of December 2020 when compared to December 2019 (see Table 1). This increase was mainly driven by a 2.7 percent rise in the 'Personal Care' sub-category, as higher prices were observed for personal hygiene products for the month of December 2020.

Table 1: Inflation Rates* by Category (%); November and December 2020

	November 2020	December 2020
ALL ITEMS	0.1	0.4
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	3.0	3.3
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	-0.8	-0.3
Clothing and Footwear	-0.2	0.0
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	0.8	1.2
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	-1.1	-1.0
Health	0.1	0.1
Transport	-4.3	-3.5
Information and Communication	-3.0	-3.5
Recreation, Sport and Culture	0.5	0.5
Education Services	0.0	-0.2
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	-12.1	-12.8
Insurance and Financial Services	0.0	0.0
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	2.2	2.2

*Inflation rates are calculated as the percent change in the CPI between a given month and the same month in the previous year.

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2020

TRANSPORT:

Prices within the 'Transport' category were down by 3.5 percent on average during the month (see Table 1). The main driver behind this drop was a reduction in 'Fuels and Lubricants', which went down by 9 percent in December 2020 when compared to December 2019. At the pump, the average price per gallon of Diesel declined by 17.9 percent from \$10.01 in December 2019 to \$8.22 in December 2020. Premium gasoline fell by 14.6 percent from \$10.85 to \$9.27, while regular gasoline decreased by 9.5 percent from \$10.16 to \$9.19 (see Table 3). Moreover, prices for motor oils also declined by 10.1 percent during the month. International fares, on the other hand, were up by almost 10 percent compared to December 2019.

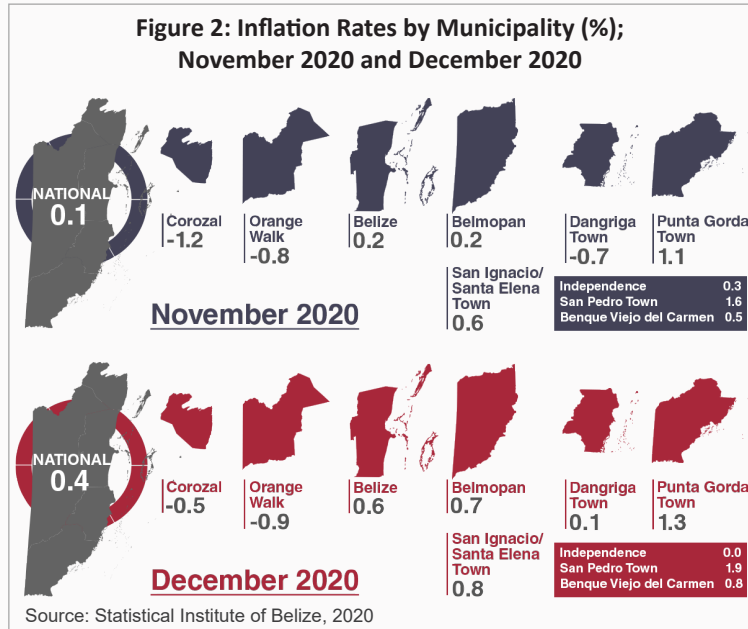
RESTAURANTS AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES:

The 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' category saw a significant decrease of 12.8 percent for the month of December 2020 (see Table 1). This reduction was mainly due to a sharp drop of 24.4 percent in hotel accommodation costs compared to December 2019. In addition, lower prices were also seen in the sub-category of 'Food and Beverage Serving Services' with a 0.5 percent decrease, as lower prices for restaurants services were observed.

¹ Inflation rates for November 2020 are included in the tables for this release. However, the written analysis focuses on the month of December 2020, as the general movements and causes for changes in November were virtually identical.

INFLATION RATES BY MUNICIPALITY:

With an inflation rate of 1.1 percent, the municipality of Punta Gorda Town experienced the highest increase in consumer prices for December 2020 when compared to December 2019. Consumers in this municipality saw above average increases in prices for food, home rental costs, and pharmaceutical products. On the other hand, Orange Walk Town recorded the lowest inflation rate, with prices going down by 0.9 percent when compared to December 2019, as consumers in this town saw greater than average price reductions in home rental costs and hotel accommodations (see Figure 2).



YEAR TO DATE INFLATION RATES:

The cumulative inflation rate for the year 2020, when compared to 2019, stood at 0.1 percent (see Table 2). Across the various categories, the most significant change was seen in 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages', which rose by 1.1 percent compared

Table 2: Year to Date Inflation Rates by Category (%); January to December 2020

	November 2020	December 2020
ALL ITEMS	0.1	0.1
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	0.9	1.1
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	-0.4	-0.4
Clothing and Footwear	-0.4	-0.4
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	0.5	0.6
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	-0.5	-0.5
Health	0.6	0.5
Transport	-0.9	-1.1
Information and Communication	0.2	-0.1
Recreation, Sport and Culture	0.2	0.2
Education Services	2.2	2.0
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	-6.3	-6.9
Insurance and Financial Services	0.6	0.6
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	-0.2	0.0

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2020

to the year 2019 mainly as a result of higher prices for fresh vegetables, such as cabbages, lettuce, tomatoes and onions. In addition, 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels', saw a small increase of 0.6 percent for the year 2020. This was due to a rise of 1.1 percent in home rental costs, which was partially offset by a fall in LPG prices for the year when compared to 2019 (see Table 2).

In contrast, the 'Transport' category declined by 1.1 percent for the year, as a result of lower fuel prices at the pump which were only slightly offset by higher prices for international airfares and new motor vehicles. 'Restaurant and Accommodation Services' also fell, by 6.1 percent, with lower prices for hotel accommodations being recorded.

Table 3: Average Prices of Selected Foods and Fuel (BZ \$); November and December 2020 vs 2019

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices			% Change	Average Prices		
		November 2019	November 2020	December 2019		December 2020	% Change	
Ground Beef	1 Lb	5.51	5.68	3.1	5.74	5.71	-0.5	
Beef Steak	1 Lb	8.22	7.90	-3.9	7.97	7.77	-2.5	
Pork Chops	1 Lb	7.08	7.03	-0.7	7.13	6.96	-2.4	
Pig Tail	1 Lb	4.29	4.30	0.3	4.27	4.42	3.5	
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	2.66	2.80	5.5	2.64	2.80	5.9	
Sugar, White	1 Lb	0.79	0.81	3.1	0.79	0.81	3.1	
Sugar, Brown	1 Lb	0.53	0.56	5.1	0.53	0.56	4.3	
Flour (Gitana)	1 Lb	0.96	0.95	-0.8	0.96	0.95	-0.4	
Rice	1 Lb	1.19	1.28	7.4	1.18	1.27	7.5	
Eggs	1 Dozen	3.37	3.45	2.4	3.22	3.53	9.8	
Natural Milk	1 Litre	2.55	2.65	3.9	2.53	2.89	14.3	
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	1.53	2.25	47.4	1.46	2.54	74.2	
Pineapple	1 Lb	1.00	1.28	28.0	1.19	1.20	1.1	
Orange	1 unit	0.15	0.17	15.5	0.14	0.17	21.1	
Watermelon	1 Lb	0.63	0.69	9.9	0.59	0.70	20.2	
Plantain	1 unit	0.39	0.34	-10.5	0.33	0.35	7.1	
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	4.33	3.55	-17.9	4.27	4.57	7.2	
Onions	1 Lb	1.94	2.30	18.8	2.22	2.26	1.9	
Tomato	1 Lb	2.52	3.09	22.4	2.80	3.05	9.1	
Cabbage	1 Lb	1.61	1.91	18.3	1.47	2.23	51.6	
Limes	1 unit	0.21	0.25	15.8	0.22	0.24	9.1	
Potatoes	1 Lb	1.68	1.76	5.3	1.62	1.74	7.3	
Belikin Beer (w/out bottle)	284 ml	2.96	3.05	2.9	2.98	3.05	2.4	
Premium Gasoline	1 Gal	10.89	9.56	-12.2	10.85	9.27	-14.6	
Regular Gasoline	1 Gal	10.18	8.76	-14.0	10.16	9.19	-9.5	
Diesel	1 Gal	10.19	8.22	-19.3	10.01	8.22	-17.9	
Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	101.03	95.81	-5.2	100.55	99.81	-0.7	

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2020