Consumer Price Index (2002=100)

Highlights

British Columbia's consumer price index (CPI) in October 2020 was 0.5% higher (unadjusted) than in October 2019. On a monthly basis, the CPI was up 0.3% from September 2020. The overall annual inflation rate rose to 1.0% when food and energy were excluded from the index.

The cost of food climbed 2.0% from October of 2019. Prices for groceries purchased from stores (+2.0%) and meals purchased from restaurants (+1.9%) were both up from the previous year. Within the food category, the highest rise in prices was for fresh vegetables (+5.4%), followed by non-alcoholic beverages (+4.6%) and fresh fruit (+4.1%). The price of coffee and tea (-2.1%) and bakery and other cereal products (-0.5%) decreased from the previous year.

The cost of shelter went up in October (+2.2%), as the price for renters (+1.8%) and homeowners (+2.4%) increased. Within the shelter category, the cost of piped gas (+10.6%) increased, while fuel oil and other fuel (-18.9%) and electricity (-0.6%) decreased.

The overall cost of clothing and footwear was down (-3.8%) compared to October 2019, with decreases in the price of clothing (-4.4%) and footwear (-1.2%).

The transportation index decreased 1.7% in October, as the low price of gasoline (-18.0%) resulted in the cost of private transportation (-1.4%) decreasing. Public transportation (-3.5%) also saw a decrease over October of last year. Public transportation passengers paid more to travel within (+0.9%), but less to travel between (-4.8%) cities.

Compared to a year ago, consumers paid more for health and personal care (+3.1%), household operations and furnishings (+0.9%), and alcoholic beverages and tobacco products (+0.7%), but less for recreation, education and reading (-1.9%). Items with significant price increases included cigarettes (+8.2%), personal care (+5.6%), and reading material and other printed matter (+4.0%). In October, there was a price decrease for recreation (-3.8%) and beer purchased from stores (-1.4%).

Consumer prices increased in Vancouver (+0.3%) and Victoria (+1.6%) in October compared to the same month of 2019.

Canada's CPI was up 0.7% (unadjusted) in October, with Alberta (+1.1%) having the largest increase in the rate of inflation, followed by Ontario (+0.7%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (+0.6).

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a visible impact on consumer prices in October. Increased demand for food, household cleaning supplies, and personal care items were reflected in higher prices. Travel limitations and temporary business closures resulted in lower prices for gasoline and transportation, and clothing.

Note: Statistics Canada will release the November Consumer Price Index on December 16, 2020.
### 2002=100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All-Items Index October 2020</th>
<th>% Change from September 2020</th>
<th>October 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>137.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>132.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>135.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>131.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada-X¹</td>
<td>136.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC (excluding energy)</td>
<td>130.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Defined by the Bank of Canada as the All-Items index excluding the eight most volatile components (fruit, vegetables, gasoline, fuel oil, natural gas, mortgage interest, inter-city transportation and tobacco products). Also excluded is the effect of changes in indirect taxes on the remaining components.

### Did You Know?

Beginning in March measures were implemented to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on public health which also affected the collection of October prices for the CPI. This included replacing in-person interviews with the telephone or via internet, as well as special imputations for products unavailable at the time of collection. For more information on these methods, see the Statistic Canada document "Technical Supplement for the September 2020 Consumer Price Index," [Catalogue number 62F0014M](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/products/62F0014M.htm).

### Terms and definitions

#### Base effect

The 12-month variation in the CPI is calculated by comparing the current month’s index with the index for the same month of the previous year. The 12-month change is represented by the difference in the indexes of the reference months. Thus, the 12-month variation can decrease from one month to the next merely because the base serving as the point of comparison increased.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

#### Twelve-Month Percent Changes

Also referred to as "year-over-year", twelve-month percent changes compare indexes for a given month to indexes for the same month of the previous year. As they compare two points in time, they are influenced by unusual or temporary events that can affect either of the two months. Their calculation does not include any of the intervening monthly indexes.

*Source: Statistics Canada*
Annual Average Index

Annual average indexes are calculated by averaging index levels over the 12 months of the calendar year. These data should not be confused with the 12-month change in the CPI. By the nature of the calculation, averaging indexes over the calendar year gives a better representation of price behaviour over the whole year and is closer to the concept of an average price. The use of annual averages is considered the preferred option for indexation purposes.

Source: Statistics Canada

Latest Twelve-Month Average Index

The latest twelve-month average index (ending in the current month) is a 12-month moving average of the indexes of the most recent 12 months. It is calculated like the annual average index. Hence, in theory, the December twelve-month average index would be equal to the annual average index for the calendar year. However, in practice, when BC Stats makes these calculations from published data, the December 12-month average index may differ from Statistics Canada's published annual average index due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada

Harmonized Sales Tax

On July 1, 2010, the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) came into effect in British Columbia and Ontario. As well, Nova Scotia increased its HST by two percentage points.

On April 1, 2013, the Harmonized Sales Tax came into effect in Prince Edward Island, while British Columbia returned to the Provincial Sales Tax and the Goods and Services Tax.

Source: Statistics Canada

Additional information


With the release of the January 2019 CPI, Statistics Canada updated the basket of goods & services used in the calculation of the Index. Learn more.