

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

MARCH 1953

Consumer Price Index Rises 0.2 Percent  
 Between February and March as Prices for  
 Most Major Groups Increase Slightly

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: This report presents the Consumer Price Index :  
 : for March 1953 for the average of U.S. cities :  
 : and for individual cities. The measurement of :  
 : price change from January 1953 forward is based :  
 : on the revised index structure. Information :  
 : about the index revision is given in the Febru- :  
 : ary 1953 Monthly Labor Review or is available :  
 : upon request. :

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Retail prices of goods and services bought by families of urban wage and clerical workers rose 0.2 percent between February and March 1953 according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The only sizeable increase between February and March was a 1.5 percent rise in the Other Goods and Services group index. This includes such items as tobacco, legal services, etc. Other major groups rose fractionally, 0.2 percent or less, with the exception of the Personal Care group which declined 0.1 percent.

The index for March was 113.6 (1947-49 = 100). This was 1.1 percent higher than a year ago. The revised index converted to the base previously used (1935-39 = 100) was 189.9.

FOOD The rise of 0.2 percent in the Food index from February to March represents the first increase in retail food prices, on the average, since last August. The March Food index was 111.7 (1947-49 = 100), 0.9 percent below that of March last year but 11.1 percent above June 1950. The rise over the month was due primarily to a rather sharp increase in prices of eggs which cancelled much of last month's decrease. Food prices averaged higher in 28 of the 46 cities surveyed.

The increase in egg prices, averaging over 6 percent, which was unusual for this time of year, accounted for most of the 1.7 percent rise in the "Other Foods at Home" index. Higher prices were also reported for coffee and shortening. The rise in eggs more than compensated for small declines in the indexes of Meats, Poultry, and Fish (0.3 percent), Dairy Products (0.4 percent), and Fruits and Vegetables (0.3 percent).

Beef and veal prices continued to fall, but at a greatly reduced rate (about 4 percent over the month); prices of pork maintained their upward movement with a rise of nearly 3 percent. Prices of lamb were down generally, while poultry and fish prices showed little change.

Decreases in fresh vegetable prices, particularly in green beans and white potatoes, offset higher prices for fresh fruits, thereby producing a net decline in the Fruits and Vegetables index.

Reductions in milk prices in New York City, Boston, and St. Louis led the decline in the Dairy Products index. Substantial decreases in dairy products also occurred in a number of medium sized and small cities.

The Cereals and Bakery Products index showed a slight increase over the month and prices of restaurant meals were slightly higher in most cities surveyed in March.

Between March 16 and March 30, 1953, preliminary estimates, based on 6 cities, indicated a further slight increase of 0.1 percent in retail prices of food at home. Chiefly responsible for this rise were increases in coffee prices, following the decontrol order of March 12, and a continued advance in egg prices.

HOUSING The Housing index for March was 116.8, 0.2 percent above last month and 2.5 percent above a year ago. Increases were reported for all components except Housefurnishings, which was unchanged from February. The largest rise over the month was for Solid Fuels and Fuel Oil which advanced 0.9 percent. This increase was due primarily to higher prices for fuel oil in Seattle and Portland. Gas and electricity bills averaged 0.4 percent higher than last month. The Household Operation index also advanced 0.4 percent over the month, with higher prices reported in a few cities for domestic service, and laundry and dry cleaning services. Residential rents continued to rise and were 0.2 percent above February with increases generally reported in large and medium-sized cities. Prices of home maintenance and repair items were also slightly higher.

APPAREL The Apparel index advanced fractionally, 0.1 percent, between February and March. This was the first advance for this group since last September. The increase reflected higher prices for women's and girls' apparel in a few cities. Prices for men's and boys' apparel and footwear were slightly lower on the average.

OTHER GROUPS The Other Goods and Services index advanced 1.5 percent between February and March as a result of increased cigarette prices following their decontrol February 25. The Transportation index rose 0.2 percent. Higher gasoline prices reported in a few cities along with increased auto repair costs, were generally responsible for the rise. Used car prices continued to decline in most cities. Prices for Medical Care and Reading and Recreation increased 0.2 percent over the month. Scattered increases were reported for a few items in these groups, such as hospital rates, group hospitalization, movie admissions and newspapers. The Personal Care index declined 0.1 percent. Lower prices were reported for cleansing tissue and toilet soap.

#### GENERAL PRICE SITUATION

The removal of Government controls had had little effect on retail prices into April. There were sizable increases in the retail prices of cigarettes, coffee, gasoline and fuel oil, but no other important cost of living items were affected at that time. The groups which are predominantly service groups have continued to edge upward but food, apparel, and housefurnishings are generally lower than a year ago.

Offsetting forces recently have caused average retail prices to rise and fall by small amounts. On the one hand, production, incomes and employment, and the volume of installment credit are near peaks; defense spending continues high; government control of prices and wages has been removed.

On the other hand, uncertainties are introduced by recent peace rumors and higher inventories in a number of important fields. An unusually high proportion of car sales is on credit and one major company has reduced new car prices. Used cars are plentiful and prices are lower. According to trade reports, the housing market, particularly for older houses, is somewhat weaker as new building catches up with the long housing shortage. Retailers and manufacturers occasionally are offering inducements to sell major home appliances.

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OLD SERIES: The Bureau has resumed compilation of the Old Series index, as directed by the President on January 30. It is expected that the March 1953 Old Series Indexes will be available about the end of April.

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TABLE 1. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX <sup>1/</sup> -- U.S. AVERAGE ALL ITEMS AND COMMODITY GROUPS  
Indexes and Percent Changes for Selected Dates

GROUP	March 1953	February 1953	January 1953	March 1952	June 1950	Year 1939
	This Month	Last Month	2 Months Ago	Last Year	Pre-Korea	Pre-World War II
<u>INDEXES (1947-49 = 100)</u>						
ALL ITEMS	113.6	113.4	113.9	112.4	101.8	59.4
FOOD <sup>2/</sup>	111.7	111.5	113.1	112.7	100.5	47.1
Food at home	111.3	111.1	112.9	112.7	100.5	47.1
Cereals and bakery products	117.7	117.6	117.7	115.7	102.7	57.2
Meats, poultry and fish	107.4	107.7	110.9	115.2	106.1	41.6
Dairy products	110.3	110.7	111.6	112.0	92.3	49.8
Fruits and vegetables	115.5	115.9	116.7	113.7	102.5	46.3
Other foods at home	109.1	107.3	109.7	104.4	94.1	6/
HOUSING <sup>3/</sup>	116.8	116.6	116.4	114.0	104.9	6/
Rent	121.7	121.5	121.1	116.7	108.7	86.6
Gas and electricity	106.5	106.1	105.9	103.8	102.7	104.9
Solid fuels and fuel oil	124.4	123.3	123.3	117.7	107.6	56.4
Housefurnishings	108.0	108.0	107.7	109.4	97.4	53.4
Household operation	114.0	113.5	113.4	111.0	99.6	6/
APPAREL <sup>4/</sup>	104.7	104.6	104.6	106.4	96.5	52.5
TRANSPORTATION	129.3	129.1	129.3	124.4	109.9	6/
MEDICAL CARE	119.5	119.3	119.4	115.7	105.4	6/
PERSONAL CARE	112.4	112.5	112.4	111.0	99.2	6/
READING AND RECREATION	107.7	107.5	107.8	106.3	102.5	6/
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES <sup>5/</sup>	117.5	115.8	115.9	114.8	103.7	6/

PERCENT CHANGE TO MARCH 1953 FROM:

	February 1953	January 1953	March 1952	June 1950	Year 1939
ALL ITEMS	0.2	- 0.3	1.1	11.6	91.2
FOOD <sup>2/</sup>	0.2	- 1.2	- 0.9	11.1	137.2
Food at home	0.2	- 1.4	- 1.2	10.7	136.3
Cereals and bakery products	0.1	0	1.7	14.6	105.8
Meats, poultry and fish	- 0.3	- 3.2	- 6.8	1.2	158.2
Dairy products	- 0.4	- 1.2	- 1.5	19.5	121.5
Fruits and vegetables	- 0.3	- 1.0	1.6	12.7	149.5
Other foods at home	1.7	- 0.5	4.5	15.9	125.4 <sup>7/</sup>
HOUSING <sup>3/</sup>	0.2	0.3	2.5	11.3	53.5 <sup>7/</sup>
Rent	0.2	0.5	4.3	12.0	40.5
Gas and electricity	0.4	0.6	2.6	3.7	1.5
Solid fuels and fuel oil	0.9	0.9	5.7	15.6	120.6
Housefurnishings	0	0.3	- 1.3	10.9	102.2
Household operation	0.4	0.5	2.7	14.5	66.7 <sup>7/</sup>
APPAREL <sup>4/</sup>	0.1	0.1	- 1.6	8.5	99.4
TRANSPORTATION	0.2	0	3.9	17.7	87.7 <sup>7/</sup>
MEDICAL CARE	0.2	0.1	3.3	13.4	64.6 <sup>7/</sup>
PERSONAL CARE	- 0.1	0	1.3	13.3	88.6 <sup>7/</sup>
READING AND RECREATION	0.2	- 0.1	1.3	5.1	71.0 <sup>7/</sup>
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES <sup>5/</sup>	1.5	1.4	2.4	13.3	66.4 <sup>7/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> See General Explanation at end of tables.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes "Food away from home" for which indexes will be available later in 1953.

<sup>3/</sup> Includes "Other shelter" for which indexes will be available later in 1953.

<sup>4/</sup> Indexes for subgroups of apparel will be available later in 1953.

<sup>5/</sup> Includes tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and "miscellaneous services" (such as legal services, banking fees, burial services, etc.).

<sup>6/</sup> Not available. Indexes for 1939 will be published when calculations are completed.

<sup>7/</sup> Approximate.

TABLE 2. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX <sup>1/</sup> -- ALL ITEMS INDEXES FOR SELECTED DATES  
U.S. Average and 20 Large Cities

City	( 1 9 4 7 - 4 9 = 1 0 0 )					(1935-39 = 100)
	March 1953	February 1953	January 1953	March 1952	June 1950	March 1953 <sup>2/</sup>
U.S. AVERAGE <sup>3/</sup>	113.6	113.4	113.9	112.4	101.8	189.9
CITIES PRICED MONTHLY:						
Chicago	113.8	113.9	114.2	113.2	102.8	193.8
Detroit	115.2	115.1	115.7	113.0	102.8	194.5
Los Angeles	115.4	114.9	115.4	114.2	101.3	192.8
New York	111.2	111.1	111.7	110.2	100.9	184.0
Philadelphia	114.1	113.7	114.3	112.9	101.6	189.9
CITIES PRICED IN JAN., APR., JULY, OCT. <sup>4/</sup>						
				January 1952	April 1950	January 1953
Boston			112.1	111.8	101.2	180.5
Kansas City			114.3	113.2	101.4	184.0
Minneapolis			114.4	113.3 <sup>5/</sup>	102.1 <sup>5/</sup>	189.4
Pittsburgh			112.6	113.1	99.9	191.6
Portland, Ore.			114.6	114.9	101.5	198.5
CITIES PRICED IN MAR., JUNE, SEPT., DEC. <sup>4/</sup>						
				March 1952	June 1950	March 1953
Atlanta	116.7			115.1 <sup>6/</sup>	101.3 <sup>6/</sup>	197.9
Baltimore	114.2			112.3	101.6	196.3
Cincinnati	112.6			111.3	101.2	189.6
St. Louis	114.7			114.0	101.1	191.4
San Francisco	115.5			113.0	100.9	197.4
CITIES PRICED IN FEB., MAY, AUG., NOV. <sup>4/</sup>						
				February 1952	May 1950	February 1953
Cleveland		112.5		112.6	100.4	191.7
Houston		116.1		114.8	103.5	196.6
Scranton		112.2		110.8	100.2	186.5
Seattle		114.6		114.3	102.0	195.9
Washington		113.0		112.0	101.6	185.5

<sup>1/</sup> See General Explanation at end of tables.

<sup>2/</sup> These are the same indexes shown in columns 1, 2 or 3, converted to a base of 1935-39 = 100.

<sup>3/</sup> The U.S. Average is based on prices collected in 46 cities. In addition to the 20 cities listed individually, 26 cities are included in the national average. Indexes are not calculated for these 26 cities.

<sup>4/</sup> Foods, fuels, rents and a few other items priced monthly; other commodities and services priced quarterly.

<sup>5/</sup> December 1951 and June 1950; formerly priced March, June, September, December.

<sup>6/</sup> February 1952, and May 1950; formerly priced February, May, August, November.

TABLE 3. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX <sup>1/</sup> -- PERCENT CHANGES FROM FEBRUARY 1953 TO MARCH 1953  
U.S. Average and Five Cities Priced Monthly  
All Items and Commodity Groups

City	All Items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Trans- portation	Medical Care	Personal Care	Reading & Recreation	Other Goods & Services
U.S. AVERAGE	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	1.5
Chicago	- 0.1	0.1	- 0.2	0.2	- 0.3	- 0.3	- 0.2	0	0.7
Detroit	0.1	0.1	- 0.1	0.1	- 0.3	0	- 0.1	0.4	1.8
Los Angeles	0.4	0.7	0.2	- 0.4	1.4	- 0.2	0.2	0	1.8
New York	0.1	- 0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0	- 0.1	0	1.3
Philadelphia	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.5	0	0.3	0.2	1.9	1.3

See footnotes on table 1 and General Explanation at end of tables.

TABLE 4. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX 1/ -- ALL ITEMS AND COMMODITY GROUPS  
 March 1953 Indexes and Percent Changes, December 1952 to March 1953  
 U.S. Average and 10 Cities Priced in March

City	All Items	Total Food	Housing						Apparel	Transportation	Medical Care	Personal Care	Reading & Recreation	Other Goods & Services
			Total	Rent	Gas & Electricity	Solid Fuels & Fuel Oils	House-furnishings	Household Operation						
	2/	3/						4/					5/	
March 1953 Indexes (1947-49 = 100)														
U.S. AVERAGE	113.6	111.7	116.8	121.7	106.5	124.4	108.0	114.0	104.7	129.3	119.5	112.4	107.7	117.5
Atlanta	116.7	112.3	123.3	128.0	109.2	119.5	112.0	125.9	111.1	130.5	117.9	115.4	110.4	116.8
Baltimore	114.2	111.7	113.8	120.2	97.8	126.7	103.2	109.1	102.8	138.0	132.1	105.7	119.0	118.2
Chicago	113.8	109.7	119.3	123.5	100.0	122.0	108.0	117.6	106.3	134.0	116.8	114.5	109.2	111.2
Cincinnati	112.6	112.7	112.9		112.5	122.6	103.9	111.8	104.7	130.7	121.2	108.8	99.4	113.6
Detroit	115.2	113.8	118.6		109.8	117.4	110.6	106.2	102.9	125.6	116.8	119.1	110.9	122.8
Los Angeles	115.4	113.2	122.5		108.7	108.7	111.1	106.7	104.0	127.4	118.3	118.0	104.5	113.6
New York	111.2	110.5	113.0		108.0	130.2	109.1	118.6	105.5	127.4	120.7	105.9	106.9	118.0
Philadelphia	114.1	113.5	113.0		101.8	125.4	111.3	111.1	105.1	132.8	120.0	116.4	112.3	122.0
St. Louis	114.7	112.4	114.6		95.8	127.4	108.7	116.5	104.4	137.2	132.4	110.0	100.7	115.4
San Francisco	115.5	112.6	116.1		130.1		109.2	108.3	105.3	143.1	120.0	113.0	104.3	114.6
Percent Change -- December 1952 to March 1953														
U.S. AVERAGE	- 0.4	- 1.8	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.0	- 0.2	0.5	- 0.4	0.3	0.2	- 0.1	- 0.3	1.4
Atlanta	n.a.	- 0.6	n.a.	n.a.	- 0.2	0.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Baltimore	- 0.2	- 1.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	- 0.1	- 0.7	2.2	- 0.1	- 0.2	5.3	- 0.1	- 0.4	0.2
Chicago	- 0.7	- 2.3	0.1	0.7	0	0	- 0.3	0.2	- 0.4	0.3	- 0.2	- 0.2	- 0.4	0.5
Cincinnati	0.1	- 1.5	0.3		4.0	0.2	0	- 0.1	0.8	2.2	3.0	- 0.1	- 1.7	1.2
Detroit	- 0.7	- 2.9	0.2		1.1	0	0.2	- 1.3	0.3	- 0.3	0	0.2	- 0.2	1.7
Los Angeles	0.1	- 1.1	0.5		1.9	0	0.6	0.2	- 1.1	1.9	- 0.2	0	0.9	1.7
New York	- 0.7	- 2.4	0.4		0.3	0	- 0.1	1.5	- 0.3	- 0.2	- 0.5	- 0.1	- 0.2	1.2
Philadelphia	- 0.5	- 2.9	0.4		0	1.4	0.6	0	- 0.1	0.2	0.4	0.2	2.7	1.2
St. Louis	- 0.2	- 2.2	- 0.1		0	1.1	- 1.4	0.7	0	3.2	0.4	0.1	0.5	1.4
San Francisco	- 0.1	- 2.0	0.3		0	0	0.8	0.5	0.2	2.0	0.3	- 0.1	0.1	2.1

See footnotes on table 1 and General Explanation at end of tables.

TABLE 5. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX 1/ -- FOOD AND ITS SUBGROUPS  
 March 1953 Indexes and Percent Changes, February 1953 to March 1953  
 U.S. Average and 20 Large Cities  
 (1947-49 = 100)

City	Total Food 2/		Total Food at Home		Cereals & Bakery Products		Meats, Poultry & Fish		Dairy Products		Fruits & Vegetables		Other Foods at Home	
	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change	Index	Percent Change
U.S. AVERAGE	111.7	0.2	111.3	0.2	117.7	0.1	107.4	- 0.3	110.3	- 0.4	115.5	- 0.3	109.1	1.7
Atlanta	112.3	0.6	112.0	0.6	115.3	- 0.2	112.8	0.5	114.9	0.4	117.5	0.1	103.1	1.7
Baltimore	111.7	0.5	111.2	0.5	116.5	0	108.3	0.2	112.5	1.3	114.3	- 0.6	107.4	1.9
Boston	109.6	0.1	109.1	0.1	116.9	0.1	103.4	1.3	109.1	- 2.4	113.8	- 1.4	105.2	2.0
Chicago	109.7	0.1	109.3	0	113.0	- 2.1	101.9	- 0.8	109.1	- 0.1	114.4	0.4	115.5	2.0
Cincinnati	112.7	0.4	112.3	0.4	117.5	0.7	109.0	0.4	110.0	0.1	114.2	- 1.1	114.4	1.6
Cleveland	108.8	0.8	108.4	0.9	114.3	0.4	103.9	1.1	105.9	- 0.3	109.7	0.3	110.7	2.5
Detroit	113.8	0.1	113.4	0.2	115.6	0.4	105.9	- 0.7	111.2	0.1	124.1	- 1.0	110.5	1.8
Houston	111.9	0.3	111.4	0.3	114.6	0.1	105.4	0.1	113.4	0.2	118.6	0.8	109.6	0.4
Kansas City	109.5	0	108.9	0	117.0	- 0.3	105.3	- 0.6	106.9	0.1	111.7	- 0.4	106.6	1.3
Los Angeles	113.2	0.7	112.8	0.8	117.3	- 0.1	110.4	- 0.1	112.9	- 0.1	113.0	2.2	111.1	1.7
Minneapolis	112.6	- 0.2	112.2	- 0.3	119.2	0.2	103.3	- 2.4	109.2	0.5	121.9	- 0.1	116.1	1.8
New York	110.5	- 0.4	109.9	- 0.5	121.6	0.8	106.9	- 2.1	105.1	- 0.6	112.2	- 1.8	109.3	2.4
Philadelphia	113.5	0.3	113.1	0.4	118.0	0.1	108.9	0.3	114.1	0.6	117.5	- 1.1	108.9	1.8
Pittsburgh	112.3	0.3	112.0	0.4	119.5	1.7	103.5	- 1.1	113.0	0.1	114.8	0.1	116.2	1.8
Portland, Ore.	112.5	1.1	112.4	1.3	113.7	0.2	113.5	1.0	110.4	0.1	114.1	2.0	110.7	2.5
St. Louis	112.4	- 0.4	112.0	- 0.4	113.0	0.4	107.9	0.2	107.2	- 3.2	118.5	- 0.8	115.3	0.7
San Francisco	112.6	0.4	112.1	0.4	122.8	0.4	108.8	0.1	111.9	0	115.8	- 0.1	107.1	2.0
Scranton	111.3	0.3	111.0	0.3	115.8	- 0.3	106.6	- 0.2	111.1	0.1	113.4	- 1.3	109.0	2.3
Seattle	111.7	0.8	111.4	1.1	118.6	- 0.1	106.1	0.3	109.8	- 0.1	120.5	1.9	107.1	2.6
Washington, D.C.	110.0	- 0.1	109.5	- 0.2	112.1	- 0.1	104.3	- 0.5	113.7	0.3	112.5	- 2.0	107.3	1.3

See footnotes on table 1 and General Explanation at end of tables.

The Consumer Price Index (revised January 1953) measures the average change in prices of goods and services purchased by city wage-earner and clerical-worker families. The goods and services included in the index "market basket" are those required to maintain the level of living characteristic of such families in 1952. The quantities and qualities of the items in the "market basket" remain the same between consecutive pricing periods, so that the index measures the effect of price change only on the cost of living of these families.

The indexes are presented on a base of 1947-49=100. The index numbers thus show the average increase or decrease in prices from the 1947-49 average. (For convenience of users, these indexes are also shown on the base 1935-39=100. Note that they are calculated using the new samples, items and weights). The city indexes do not indicate whether it costs more to live in one city than in another. Comparisons of city indexes show only whether prices have risen more or less in one city than another since the base period.

The Bureau has been compiling the Consumer Price Index for nearly 40 years. At four different times it has been necessary to bring the "market basket" of goods and services up to date and to modernize the samples and methods of calculation. The indexes in this report are revised as of January 1953. The "market basket" is based on extensive surveys of postwar expenditure patterns of city families, and reflects changes that have occurred since prewar in the amounts, kinds and qualities of things people buy, as well as new things that were not part of our pattern of living a few years ago.

About 300 items are priced to estimate the average change in prices of all items in the "market basket." Among these items are all the important goods and services that wage and clerical workers buy. Prices are collected at regular intervals, and the successive prices are compared to determine price changes. The items priced are described by detailed specifications to insure that as far as possible, the same quality is priced each time, and that differences in reported prices are measures of price change only. Prices are obtained in a sample of 46 cities representative of all cities in the U.S., including the 12 largest urban areas with populations over 1 million, 9 other large cities, 9 medium-sized cities, and 16 small cities. In each city, prices are reported by stores of various kinds and by service establishments and individuals (such as physicians and dentists) from whom wage and clerical workers buy goods and services.

Foods, fuels, rents, and a few other items are priced monthly in all cities. Prices of most other goods and services are obtained on a regular rotating pricing cycle--monthly in the 5 largest cities, every 3 months in 25 large and medium-sized cities, and every 4 months in the 16 smallest cities. In any given month, goods and services other than foods, fuels and rents are priced in 17 or 18 cities out of the 46. Price collection extends over 3 or 4 weeks, centered on the 15th of the month. Prices for a few items (e.g., auto insurance, railroad fares) are computed from published sources.

Food. Food prices are collected monthly from chain and representative independent food stores in all 46 cities, during the first 3 days of the week which includes the 15th of the month. Prices for restaurant meals are based on menus collected on the regular pricing cycle for each city as described above.

Rent. Rents are obtained each month by mail from tenants of representative samples of dwellings in each of the 46 cities, and once every 2 years by personal visit, when local samples of dwellings are also reviewed. The rent index measures changes in rent from one period to another for the same rented dwellings, with the same facilities, furnishings and services.

Other Shelter. Materials and services for house maintenance and repair are priced on the regular city pricing cycle. Prices of houses, fire insurance rates, mortgage interest and taxes, which change only occasionally, are obtained annually or biennially, and changes estimated between pricing dates. Sales prices of houses are obtained from records of mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration.

Fuels, including Gas and Electricity. Prices prevailing on the 15th of the month are collected monthly by mail from fuel dealers and utility companies in 46 cities.

All Goods and Services other than Foods, Fuels and Rents. Prices are collected in person, on the city cycle described above, from samples of representative department stores, apparel and shoe stores, housefurnishings and appliance dealers, barber shops, beauty shops, doctors, hospitals, moving picture theaters, etc. Prices for such items as newspapers, street car and bus fares, and telephone service are collected by mail. Prices of used cars are obtained from car dealers through a trade association.

Price changes for all items in each city are combined in accordance with their importance in the "market basket" for that city to obtain an average price change for that city. Price changes for the 46 cities are combined for the U.S. with the use of 1950 population data. Each city is given an importance or weight proportionate to the wage-earner and clerical-worker population it represents in the index. The 12 largest cities, each weighted by its own population, when combined have about two-fifths of the total weight in the national index. Each of the 3 other city-size groups has about one-fifth of the total weight; i.e., the 9 other large cities, the 9 medium-sized cities, and the 16 small cities. City indexes are compiled for the 20 largest of the 46 cities priced for the national average. The remaining 26 cities in which prices are collected are:

Anna, Illinois	Huntington, W. Virginia	Pulaski, Virginia
Camden, Arkansas	Laconia, New Hampshire	Ravenna, Ohio
Canton, Ohio	Lodi, California	Rawlins, Wyoming
Charleston, W. Virginia	Lynchburg, Virginia	San Jose, California
Evansville, Indiana	Madill, Oklahoma	Sandpoint, Idaho
Garrett, Indiana	Madison, Wisconsin	Shawnee, Oklahoma
Glendale, Arizona	Middlesboro, Kentucky	Shenandoah, Iowa
Grand Forks, N. Dakota	Middletown, Connecticut	Youngstown, Ohio
Grand Island, Nebraska	Newark, Ohio	

The present index, as described above, has been linked (spliced) to the "interim adjusted" Consumer Price Index for 34 cities, issued through December 1952, to form a continuous series back to 1913. <sup>1/</sup>

For detailed descriptions of the Consumer Price Index, its uses and limitations, see the following:

"The Consumer Price Index," A Short Description of the Index as Revised, 1953.

"The Revised Consumers' Price Index--A Summary of Changes in the Index and Suggestions for Transition from the 'Interim Adjusted' and 'Old Series' Indexes to the Revised Index."

Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin No. 1039: "Interim Adjustment of the Consumers' Price Index."

January 1951 Report: "Consumers' Price Index and Retail Food Prices."

December 1952 Report: "Consumers' Price Index and Retail Food Prices."

Monthly Labor Review articles:

The Revised Consumer Price Index (February 1953).

Adjusted Consumers' Price Index: Relative Importance of Items (June 1951).

Interim Adjustment of Consumers' Price Index (April 1951).

Selection of Cities for Consumer Expenditure Survey-1950 (April 1951).

Revision of the Consumers' Price Index (July 1950).

<sup>1/</sup> See December 1952 report, "Consumers' Price Index and Retail Food Prices." Tables of rebased "interim adjusted" indexes for the U. S. and for 20 cities are available upon request.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
 Martin P. Durkin, *Secretary*  
 Bureau of Labor Statistics  
 Tenth Floor, 105 West Adams Street, Chicago 3, Ill.

FOR RELEASE: Tuesday, 11:00 A.M., DST  
 April 28, 1953.

"OLD SERIES" CONSUMERS' PRICE INDEX - MARCH 1953

The "old series" Consumer Price Index for March 1953 was 188.8 (1935=39=100), a rise of 0.1 percent from February, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics announced today. Over the quarter, December to March, the index declined 1.2 percent. The slight increase over the month was due chiefly to higher prices for the miscellaneous group. The decrease between December and March resulted from the sizeable decline in food prices, particularly beef.

The "old series" consumers' price index, discontinued at the end of 1952, with the issuance of the official revised series, was reinstated by direction of President Eisenhower and Secretary of Labor Martin P. Durkin in response to requests of both labor and management groups having wage contract escalator clauses dependent on it. It will be continued through the June 1953 indexes.

The Bureau has followed the practices and procedures previously used in the compilation of the "old series". The items priced, the cities in which prices are collected, the weights used to combine them, and the calculation methods are those regularly used in the "old series" in 1952 and immediately preceding years.

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"OLD SERIES" CONSUMERS' PRICE INDEX FOR MODERATE-INCOME FAMILIES  
 U.S. Average and 4 Cities by Groups  
 March 15, 1953  
 (1935-39=100)

City	: All : Items	: Food	: Apparel	: Rent	: Fuel, Elec. & : : Refrigeration: House- : : Total: Gas & : furnish- : : Elec. : ings :		: Miscel- : laneous	
U.S. AVERAGE	188.8	222.9	201.7	138.6	154.1	100.6	206.4	178.9
Chicago, Ill.	192.5	223.1	205.4	161.4	142.5	83.5	193.3	179.7
Cincinnati, Ohio	190.3	226.4	202.0		162.4	109.8	195.0	181.4
Detroit, Mich.	<u>1</u> /196.2	225.0	198.7		164.8	93.6	217.1	197.5
St. Louis, Mo.	190.5	234.9	202.3		156.6	88.4	183.5	172.8
<u>Percent Change from December 15, 1952</u>								
U.S. AVERAGE	-1.2	-3.5	-0.4	0.6	0.5	0.8	-0.1	1.2
Chicago, Ill.	-1.9	-4.4	-1.4	0.6	0.6	0	-0.4	0.2
Cincinnati, Ohio	-0.3	-3.0	0.6		1.8	4.7	-0.1	3.9
Detroit, Mich.	-1.0	-3.6	-0.4		-0.2	0.9	0.3	0.7
St. Louis, Mo.	-1.1	-3.8	0.1		0.4	0	-2.0	2.7

1/ Jan. corrected from 196.0 to 197.8; Feb. corrected from 193.9 to 196.0. The U.S. indexes for Jan. and Feb. are correct as published. 4/28/53 - Labor-Chicago.

