

Issued January 20, 1956

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Bureau of Labor Statistics
Washington 25, D. C.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR DECEMBER 1955
AND YEAR-END SUMMARY

Consumer prices in United States cities fell 0.3 percent between November and December 1955, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Prices of transportation, food, and housing dropped 0.9, 0.3, and 0.1 percent, respectively. Costs of medical care and personal care each rose 0.3 percent to offset in part the decreases in other portions of urban family living expenses.

The December Consumer Price Index was 114.7 (1947-49 = 100), 0.3 percent higher than in December 1954.

FOOD At 109.5, the retail food price index was 0.3 percent lower than in November, 0.8 percent lower than a year earlier, and at its lowest point since December 1950.

For the second consecutive month, reduced prices of fresh meats accounted for the bulk of the decrease. Pork prices continued to drop, as weekly marketings of hogs reached their highest point on record, showing a reduction of 5.5 percent from their November level. A 3.1 percent decrease in poultry prices was an important factor, and all other cuts of fresh meat also fell. Other contributing factors were a 1.4 percent drop in coffee prices and a slight decline in fresh milk.

Fresh fruit and vegetable prices increased 2.5 percent between November and December, as most individual items rose, led by 14 to 17 percent increases for lettuce, carrots, and cabbage, with smaller advances for potatoes and green beans. Apple prices rose 5.1 percent and lemons also increased, but prices of bananas and grapefruit fell 3.1 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively. Despite the drop of more than a cent a pound for coffee, a 4 percent rise in eggs brought the other-food-at-home index to 113.7, an increase of 0.5 percent over the month.

HOUSING Housing costs edged off slightly (0.1 percent), as a 1.1 percent decrease in prices of housefurnishings was almost completely offset by small increases in residential rents, coal and fuel oil prices, and household operation costs. A major part of this decrease reflects price discounts and concessions allowed during recent months in the purchase of refrigerators, washing machines, cook stoves, and vacuum cleaners.

OTHER COMMODITIES AND SERVICES The decrease of 0.9 percent in the transportation index was the most important factor in the overall index decline. Prices of the 1956 model new cars fell 2.4 percent between November and December, and used car prices declined 3.1 percent.

Scattered increases in fees for dental care and in prices of medicines caused the medical care index to rise, while increased prices for men's haircuts led to the advance in the personal care component. Apparel prices averaged unchanged.

YEAR-END SUMMARY During 1955 the index fluctuated within the range of 114.2 and 115.0, displaying its greatest stability since monthly pricing of all items was initiated in 1940. This overall stability, however, concealed divergent trends in the two main pricing elements. In broad terms, service items increased in cost, while commodities, especially foods, declined on the average.

The 1955 average was 114.5, 0.3 percent lower than the average for 1954, primarily because the index was lower during the first six months of 1955 than the corresponding period in 1954. Beginning in September, the index was higher each month than in the corresponding month of 1954, finishing the year 0.3 percent (0.4 index points) higher in December 1955 than in December 1954.

Food was the only major consumption group which decreased over the year (December 1954-December 1955), 0.8 percent. Food purchased for home consumption declined 1.2 percent. The meats, poultry, and fish component was responsible for the decrease in the food index, falling 7.4 percent. At 94.6 in December 1955, this was the only index subgroup substantially below its 1947-49 average. Prices of all types of fresh meat dropped, but a decrease of more than 15 percent in prices of pork products was largely responsible, as hog marketings were heavy throughout the year. Poultry prices, which had fallen nearly 25 percent over the preceding two-year period, rose an average of about 1 percent in 1955. The other important food subgroup indexes rose moderately, led by a 2.1 percent increase in the fruits and vegetables index. Egg prices rose 28.3 percent, following their marked decline during 1954; contrariwise, coffee prices declined 12.9 percent, despite the temporary advance occasioned by the early autumn reports of crop damage, continuing the reaction from the large 1954 increases. Restaurant meal prices were up 1.5 percent.

Housing costs edged up 1 percent over the year, as residential rents increased 1.3 percent, household operation (heavily dominated by service elements) rose 2.5 percent, coal and fuel oil advanced 2 percent, and the gas and electricity subgroup was up 2.2 percent. These gains were offset in part by a decline of almost 2 percent in the housefurnishings index, reflecting reduced retail prices as a number of manufacturers abandoned or relaxed efforts to obtain conformity with fair trade laws.

The apparel index rose 0.4 percent, featured by a 2.5 percent advance in prices of footwear, reflecting increases at the manufacturing level. The other apparel subgroups rose slightly; even so, women's and girls' apparel averaged slightly lower than in the 1947-1949 base period.

Although the transportation index ended the year at exactly its December 1954 level, it proved the most volatile index group during 1955. Between March and April the group fell 1.6 percent as both new and used car prices dropped. With the introduction of the 1956 models, the group index rose 1 percent between September and October and an additional 1.5 percent in the next month. Prices of the new cars rose more than 12 percent from September to November, but dropped to their 1954 year-end level in December. Used car prices continued their 3-year decline, and at year's end were about 30 percent below their January 1953 level and more than 7 percent lower than the prices of cars of comparable ages at the end of 1954. The large changes in automobile prices tended to obscure higher costs of public transportation, which increased nearly every month.

The medical care and personal care groups reflected persistent advances in price as service elements in the economy continued their efforts to catch up with earlier increases in commodity prices.

Medical care costs rose every month during the year, for a cumulative increase of 3.1 percent, led by higher hospital costs, as fees for professional services and prices of medicines also advanced. Advances in prices of men's haircuts, which occurred in more than half of the 46 cities, accounted for most of the 3.8 percent increase in personal care costs.

The indexes for the reading and recreation group and the other goods and services component rose 0.2 and 0.6 percent, respectively.

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

Group	December 1955	November 1955	October 1955	December 1954	June 1950	Year 1939
	This Month	Last Month	2 Months Ago	Last Year	Pre-Korea	Pre-World War II
INDEXES (1947-49 =100)						
ALL ITEMS	114.7	115.0	114.9	114.3	101.8	59.4
FOOD ^{1/}	109.5	109.8	110.8	110.4	100.5	47.1
Food at home	107.9	108.2	109.4	109.2	100.5	47.1
Cereals and bakery products	123.9	123.9	123.9	123.3	102.7	57.2
Meats, poultry and fish	94.6	97.1	100.9	102.2	106.1	41.6
Dairy products	107.7	107.8	107.5	106.8	92.3	49.8
Fruits and vegetables	110.7	109.0	108.5	108.4	102.5	46.3
Other foods at home	113.7	113.1	113.9	112.0	94.1	48.4
HOUSING ^{2/}	120.8	120.9	120.8	119.7	104.9	76.1
Rent	131.1	130.9	130.8	129.4	108.7	86.6
Gas and electricity	111.5	111.5	111.2	109.1	102.7	104.9
Solid fuels and fuel oil	128.0	126.7	126.3	125.5	107.6	56.4
Housefurnishings	103.4	104.5	104.4	105.4	97.4	53.4
Household operation	120.7	120.5	120.1	117.7	99.6	68.4
APPAREL	104.7	104.7	104.6	104.3	96.5	52.5
Men's and boys'	106.1	106.0	106.0	106.5	98.1	4/
Women's and girls'	99.1	99.2	99.5	99.0	93.3	4/
Footwear	119.8	119.2	118.4	116.9	102.1	4/
Other apparel	91.1	91.0	91.0	91.1	88.4	4/
TRANSPORTATION	127.3	128.5	126.6	127.3	109.9	68.9
MEDICAL CARE	130.2	129.8	128.7	126.3	105.4	72.6
PERSONAL CARE	117.9	117.5	117.0	113.6	99.2	59.6
READING AND RECREATION	106.8	106.8	106.7	106.6	102.5	63.0
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES ^{3/}	120.6	120.6	120.6	119.9	103.7	70.6

PERCENT CHANGE TO DECEMBER 1955 FROM:

	November 1955	October 1955	December 1954	June 1950	Year 1939
ALL ITEMS	- 0.3	- 0.2	0.3	12.7	93.1
FOOD ^{1/}	- 0.3	- 1.2	- 0.8	9.0	132.5
Food at home	- 0.3	- 1.4	- 1.2	7.4	129.1
Cereals and bakery products	0	0	0.5	20.6	116.6
Meats, poultry and fish	- 2.6	- 6.2	- 7.4	-10.8	127.4
Dairy products	- 0.1	0.2	0.8	15.7	116.3
Fruits and vegetables	1.6	2.0	2.1	8.0	139.1
Other foods at home	0.5	- 0.2	1.5	20.8	134.9
HOUSING ^{2/}	- 0.1	0	0.9	15.2	58.7
Rent	0.2	0.2	1.3	20.6	51.4
Gas and electricity	0	0.3	2.2	8.6	6.3
Solid fuels and fuel oil	1.0	1.3	2.0	19.0	127.0
Housefurnishings	- 1.1	- 1.0	- 1.9	6.2	93.6
Household operation	0.2	0.5	2.5	21.2	76.5
APPAREL	0	0.1	0.4	8.5	99.4
Men's and boys'	0.1	0.1	- 0.4	8.2	4/
Women's and girls'	- 0.2	- 0.4	0.1	6.2	4/
Footwear	0.5	1.2	2.5	17.3	4/
Other apparel	0.1	0.1	0	3.1	4/
TRANSPORTATION	- 0.9	0.6	0	15.8	84.8
MEDICAL CARE	0.3	1.2	3.1	23.5	79.3
PERSONAL CARE	0.3	0.8	3.8	18.9	97.8
READING AND RECREATION	0	0.1	0.2	4.2	69.5
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES ^{3/}	0	0	0.6	16.3	70.8

^{1/} Includes restaurant meals not shown separately.

^{2/} Includes home purchase and other home-owner costs not shown separately.

^{3/} Includes tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and "miscellaneous services" (such as legal services, banking fees, burial services, etc.).

^{4/} Not available.

TABLE 2. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX -- ALL ITEMS INDEXES FOR SELECTED DATES
U.S. CITY AVERAGE AND 20 LARGE CITIES

City	(1 9 4 7 - 4 9 = 1 0 0)					(1935-39 = 100)
	December 1955	November 1955	December 1954	June 1950	Year 1939	December 1955 _{1/}
U.S. CITY AVERAGE	114.7	115.0	114.3	101.8	59.4	191.8
CITIES PRICED MONTHLY:						
Chicago	118.5	119.1	117.0	102.8	58.6	201.8
Detroit	116.7	116.8	116.2	102.8	59.0	197.0
Los Angeles	116.3	116.3	115.3	101.3	60.4	194.3
New York	112.0	112.5	112.2	100.9	60.1	185.4
Philadelphia	114.8	115.0	115.6	101.6	59.2	191.0
CITIES PRICED IN MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER 2/						
Atlanta	117.1	117.2	115.7	_{1/} 101.3	58.3	198.6
Baltimore	115.8	115.5	114.8	101.6	57.9	199.1
Cincinnati	114.2	113.7	113.3	101.2	58.4	192.3
St. Louis	116.1	116.5	115.4	101.1	59.3	193.8
San Francisco	115.9	115.6	115.7	100.9	58.5	198.1
CITIES PRICED IN FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST, NOVEMBER 2/						
Cleveland	116.2	116.0	115.3	100.4	59.2	198.0
Houston	116.7	115.5	116.7	103.5	59.5	197.6
Scranton	110.9	111.5	112.3	100.2	58.5	184.3
Seattle	117.4	116.6	115.7	102.0	59.2	200.6
Washington, D. C.	113.7	113.8	113.5	101.6	60.4	186.7
CITIES PRICED IN JANUARY, APRIL, JULY, OCTOBER 2/						
Boston	114.5	113.8	113.5	101.2	61.0	184.3
Kansas City	116.2	115.9	115.7	101.4	61.7	187.1
Minneapolis	116.4	117.5	116.9	_{3/} 102.1	60.7	192.8
Pittsburgh	113.8	114.0	114.3	99.9	58.1	193.5
Portland, Oreg.	116.2	114.7	115.2	101.5	58.3	201.3

_{1/} These are the same indexes shown in column 1, converted to a base of 1935-39 = 100.

_{2/} Foods, fuels, rents, and a few other items priced monthly; other commodities and services priced quarterly.

_{3/} June 1950; formerly priced March, June, September, December.

_{4/} May 1950; formerly priced February, May, August, November.

TABLE 3. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX -- PERCENT CHANGES FROM NOVEMBER 1955 TO DECEMBER 1955
U.S. City Average and Five Cities Priced Monthly
All Items and Commodity Groups

City	All Items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Trans- portation	Medical Care	Personal Care	Reading and Recreation	Other Goods & Services
U.S. CITY AVERAGE	- 0.3	- 0.3	- 0.1	0	- 0.9	0.3	0.3	0	0
Chicago	- 0.5	- 0.2	- 0.8	- 0.7	- 1.5	0	0	0	- 0.1
Detroit	- 0.1	- 0.4	- 0.2	0.2	0.2	0	0.2	- 0.3	0
Los Angeles	0	0.5	- 0.2	0.2	- 0.7	0.5	- 0.1	- 0.1	0
New York	- 0.4	- 1.1	0.1	0.1	- 1.2	0	0.2	- 0.4	- 0.1
Philadelphia	- 0.2	- 0.7	- 0.1	- 0.3	- 0.9	0.5	6.3	0.4	0.2

TABLE 4. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX -- ALL ITEMS AND COMMODITY GROUPS
 December 1955 Indexes and Percent Changes, September 1955 to December 1955
 U.S. City Average and 10 Cities Priced in December 1955

Group	U.S. CITY AVERAGE	Atlanta	Baltimore	Chicago	Cincinnati	Detroit	Los Angeles	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis	San Francisco
December 1955 Indexes (1947-49 = 100)											
ALL ITEMS	114.7	117.1	115.8	118.5	114.2	116.7	116.3	112.0	114.8	116.1	115.9
FOOD	109.5	108.3	110.4	107.6	110.4	111.5	112.1	108.7	110.6	110.2	112.5
Food at home	107.9	106.4	107.8	105.6	108.7	109.9	109.0	106.9	109.0	107.9	111.3
Cereals and bakery products	123.9	116.3	121.3	119.5	123.6	118.9	128.0	128.6	123.2	119.0	130.8
Meats, poultry and fish	94.6	96.8	95.7	89.8	94.1	93.6	96.0	97.4	96.1	91.7	101.2
Dairy products	107.7	108.5	108.9	107.1	110.0	105.5	103.0	105.3	112.8	100.9	105.3
Fruits and vegetables	110.7	110.6	107.9	110.9	110.8	124.4	115.6	101.7	109.2	118.9	118.1
Other foods at home	113.7	106.9	113.2	119.7	119.0	114.8	112.6	114.6	113.1	121.9	112.0
HOUSING	120.8	127.1	119.0	131.2	119.8	122.5	126.7	116.6	114.0	122.5	117.3
Rent	131.1	-	-	-	133.1	-	-	-	-	138.1	133.7
Gas and electricity	111.5	119.6	99.9	110.5	119.1	114.3	116.2	109.9	101.8	103.8	136.3
Solid fuels and fuel oil	128.0	123.3	127.9	131.8	135.0	121.4	-	129.7	126.9	141.8	-
Housefurnishings	103.4	108.2	98.2	105.2	98.0	106.8	103.5	104.2	105.8	102.5	103.7
Household operation	120.7	131.6	114.7	124.5	129.0	114.0	125.1	119.5	117.1	125.3	110.5
APPAREL	104.7	110.2	102.4	108.0	103.9	101.8	104.4	104.3	105.7	103.7	104.4
Men's and boys'	106.1	111.3	101.4	112.4	103.2	107.5	108.3	106.0	103.2	106.1	105.1
Women's and girls'	98.1	104.5	98.2	99.5	98.5	97.1	97.2	98.2	104.8	96.1	99.6
Footwear	110.8	127.5	118.7	125.1	127.6	115.3	121.1	115.3	113.0	121.3	121.5
Other apparel	91.1	91.3	94.2	94.8	87.9	87.0	83.2	94.2	92.2	95.4	88.7
TRANSPORTATION	127.3	124.4	135.3	131.3	122.5	125.2	126.3	129.5	134.3	133.6	140.7
MEDICAL CARE	130.2	128.6	136.5	133.9	137.1	137.3	125.2	126.5	136.2	140.1	125.7
PERSONAL CARE	117.9	124.0	113.4	121.9	116.8	126.7	118.1	111.2	124.4	118.6	110.7
READING AND RECREATION	106.8	109.8	115.4	114.6	98.8	108.5	96.2	104.0	112.3	91.4	105.2
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES	120.6	125.0	123.3	117.5	116.3	124.0	116.2	121.0	125.2	117.2	117.4

Percent Change -- September 1955 to December 1955

ALL ITEMS	- 0.2	- 0.1	0.3	- 0.3	0.4	- 0.2	0.2	- 0.5	- 0.3	- 0.3	0.3
FOOD	- 1.9	- 2.5	- 1.9	- 2.6	- 1.8	- 1.8	0	- 2.9	- 2.8	- 3.1	- 0.4
Food at home	- 2.3	- 3.0	- 2.9	- 3.0	- 2.3	- 2.0	- 0.3	- 3.6	- 3.5	- 3.3	- 0.6
Cereals and bakery products	- 0.1	- 0.8	- 0.5	0.2	- 0.4	- 0.3	0.1	- 0.2	0.9	- 0.1	0
Meats, poultry and fish	- 8.6	- 9.6	- 8.0	-10.2	-10.1	- 8.5	- 6.2	- 7.2	- 9.8	-10.9	- 5.8
Dairy products	1.1	0.2	- 0.1	1.0	3.7	0	0	- 0.6	3.6	0	0.5
Fruits and vegetables	0.5	- 2.0	- 2.8	- 0.7	0.8	5.2	7.1	- 5.0	- 5.5	- 0.5	6.1
Other foods at home	- 0.4	0.6	- 0.4	- 0.1	0.3	- 1.8	0.3	- 2.0	- 1.0	0.4	- 0.8
HOUSING	0.3	1.0	1.6	0.2	1.2	- 0.5	- 0.5	1.1	- 0.2	1.2	0.8
Rent	0.5	-	-	-	1/ 0.9	-	-	-	-	1/ 1.5	1/ 1.2
Gas and electricity	0.3	0	0.2	0	0.3	0.3	0	0.0	- 0.5	0	0
Solid fuels and fuel oil	2.2	0	4.3	2.3	4.4	1.7	-	3.0	7.5	1.4	-
Housefurnishings	- 0.2	1.2	0	- 1.1	0.6	- 0.6	- 1.2	1.0	1.5	- 0.7	0.3
Household operation	0.8	0.4	2.5	0.3	1.2	0.2	0.2	0	2.7	1.5	- 0.1
APPAREL	0.1	- 0.3	0.1	0.1	0	- 0.3	- 0.2	0.1	- 0.2	- 0.2	0.1
Men's and boys'	0.2	- 0.1	0.5	0.4	- 0.5	0.2	0.5	0	- 0.2	0	0.2
Women's and girls'	- 0.4	- 0.9	- 0.4	- 0.6	- 0.3	- 1.5	- 1.0	- 0.4	- 0.7	- 0.9	- 0.3
Footwear	1.4	2.1	0.8	1.5	1.7	1.7	0.7	1.6	0.6	1.3	0.7
Other apparel	0.1	- 0.7	0	0	0	- 0.2	- 0.1	0.1	- 0.1	- 0.4	0
TRANSPORTATION	1.6	2.0	- 0.2	0.5	1.7	3.1	2.5	2.1	2.7	2.0	1.7
MEDICAL CARE	1.6	0.8	1.4	4.2	7.5	3.5	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.2
PERSONAL CARE	1.1	1.2	3.6	0.2	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.5	6.7	0.3	0.1
READING AND RECREATION	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.2	- 0.7	- 0.7	0.3	- 1.0	0.4	- 0.3	- 1.1
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES	0	0	0	0.6	0.1	- 0.3	0	- 0.1	1.5	0.1	0.1

1/ Change from June 1955 to December 1955.

TABLE 5. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX -- FOOD AND ITS SUBGROUPS
December 1955 Indexes and Percent Changes, November 1955 to December 1955
U. S. City Average and 20 Large Cities
(1947-49 = 100)

City	Total Food		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. CITY AVERAGE . . .	109.5	- 0.3	107.9	- 0.3	123.9	0	94.6	- 2.6	107.7	- 0.1	110.7	1.6	113.7	0.5
Atlanta	108.3	0.2	106.4	0.2	116.3	0.1	96.8	- 2.3	108.5	0.3	110.6	3.3	106.9	0.9
Baltimore	110.4	0.1	107.8	- 0.6	121.3	- 0.2	95.7	- 1.5	108.9	0	107.9	- 1.0	113.2	0.2
Boston	108.4	- 0.7	106.0	- 1.0	122.1	- 0.1	93.7	- 1.6	114.3	0.2	102.1	- 2.5	107.1	- 0.7
Chicago	107.6	- 0.2	105.6	- 0.3	119.5	0.4	88.8	- 3.3	107.1	1.5	110.9	1.7	119.7	0.3
Cincinnati	110.4	0.1	108.7	- 0.3	123.6	0.2	94.1	- 2.8	110.0	0.2	110.8	1.4	119.0	1.0
Cleveland	107.1	- 0.3	105.3	- 0.3	119.2	0.1	91.6	- 2.0	104.9	0.4	104.7	1.4	116.8	0.3
Detroit	111.5	- 0.4	109.9	- 0.5	118.9	- 0.2	93.6	- 2.5	105.5	0	124.4	1.9	114.8	- 0.6
Houston	107.7	- 0.4	106.3	- 0.6	117.6	- 0.2	91.9	- 3.3	109.9	0.2	112.0	1.1	111.1	0.8
Kansas City	105.7	0.2	103.7	0.3	120.3	- 0.2	87.9	- 2.9	107.5	0.2	108.3	3.9	107.2	1.0
Los Angeles	112.1	0.6	109.0	0.6	128.0	0.1	96.0	- 1.6	103.0	0.1	115.6	3.5	112.6	1.4
Minneapolis	111.7	0.1	110.8	0.2	125.4	- 0.1	92.0	- 1.9	110.7	0.1	119.8	2.1	123.0	1.3
New York	108.7	- 1.1	106.9	- 1.4	128.6	- 0.1	97.4	- 2.1	105.3	- 1.9	101.7	- 2.3	114.6	0
Philadelphia	110.6	- 0.7	109.0	- 1.0	123.2	0.3	96.1	- 2.5	112.8	0	109.2	- 1.1	113.1	- 0.4
Pittsburgh	109.3	- 0.5	108.3	- 0.6	125.0	0	92.7	- 1.8	109.5	0.2	105.4	- 0.4	122.4	- 0.1
Portland, Ore.	112.1	0.8	110.7	1.0	124.6	0.4	97.0	- 2.5	108.5	0	117.3	5.2	115.4	2.4
St. Louis	110.2	- 1.2	107.9	- 0.9	119.0	- 0.1	91.7	- 4.3	100.9	0.3	118.9	1.2	121.9	0.4
San Francisco	112.5	0.5	111.3	0.5	130.8	0.1	101.2	- 1.6	105.3	- 0.1	118.1	2.5	112.0	1.9
Scranton	105.9	- 0.1	105.1	0	119.0	0.2	92.7	- 1.6	107.7	0.2	102.2	2.2	111.1	- 0.1
Seattle	111.6	0.6	110.6	0.6	127.8	0.3	95.9	- 3.6	110.9	0.9	120.1	6.2	112.0	1.7
Washington, D.C.	109.7	- 0.2	107.6	- 0.2	121.6	- 0.1	92.6	- 1.7	112.9	0.1	106.3	0.6	114.1	0.5

TABLE 6. RETAIL FOOD PRICES FOR DECEMBER 1955 AND NOVEMBER 1955
U.S. City Average

Food and Unit	December 1955	November 1955	Food and Unit	December 1955	November 1955
CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS:	(Cents)	(Cents)	Fresh (continued)	(Cents)	(Cents)
Flour, wheat 5 lb.	53.4	53.4	Grapefruit * each	10.3	10.6
Biscuit mix 20 oz.	27.1	27.1	Peaches * lb.		
Corn meal lb.	12.6	12.6	Strawberries * pt.		
Rice lb.	17.4	17.5	Grapes, seedless * lb.		18.6
Rolled oats 20 oz.	19.3	19.3	Watermelons * lb.		
Corn flakes 12 oz.	22.0	22.0	Potatoes 10 lb.	47.8	47.1
Bread, white lb.	17.8	17.8	Sweetpotatoes lb.	11.4	10.9
Soda crackers lb.	27.0	26.9	Onions lb.	8.4	8.2
Vanilla cookies 7 oz.	23.8	23.7	Carrots lb.	17.1	14.9
MEATS, POULTRY AND FISH:			Lettuce head	17.1	15.0
Round steak lb.	87.1	88.1	Celery lb.	14.6	14.8
Chuck roast lb.	47.7	48.6	Cabbage lb.	9.4	8.0
Rib roast lb.	68.2	68.7	Tomatoes lb.	27.6	27.8
Hamburger lb.	38.3	39.0	Beans, green lb.	21.8	21.4
Veal cutlets lb.	108.9	109.0	Canned		
Pork chops, center cut lb.	67.2	73.2	Orange juice 46 oz. can	35.2	35.4
Bacon, sliced lb.	57.5	60.9	Peaches #2 ½ can	35.0	34.9
Ham, whole lb.	55.7	56.9	Pineapple #2 can	33.4	33.3
Lamb, leg lb.	66.2	67.2	Fruit cocktail #303 can	26.6	26.6
Frankfurters lb.	52.4	52.9	Corn, cream style #303 can	17.7	17.5
Luncheon meat, canned 12 oz.	42.0	42.4	Peas, green #303 can	21.6	21.6
Frying chickens, dressed 1/ lb.			Tomatoes #303 can	15.3	15.2
Frying chickens, ready-to-cook lb.	49.7	51.2	Baby foods 4 ½-5 oz.	9.7	9.7
Ocean perch, fillet, frozen lb.	42.5	42.4	Dried		
Haddock, fillet, frozen lb.	46.0	45.5	Prunes lb.	35.0	34.9
Salmon, pink, canned 16 oz.	58.7	58.4	Beans lb.	17.1	17.4
Tuna fish, canned 6-6 ½ oz.	35.2	35.3	OTHER FOODS AT HOME:		
DAIRY PRODUCTS:			Vegetable soup 11 oz. can	14.2	14.1
Milk, fresh, (grocery) qt.	22.4	22.4	Beans with pork 16 oz. can	14.8	14.8
Milk, fresh, (delivered) qt.	23.9	23.9	Pickles, sweet 7 ½ oz.	27.3	27.3
Ice cream pt.	28.8	28.8	Catsup, tomato 14 oz.	23.0	22.9
Butter lb.	71.1	71.0	Coffee lb.	91.6	93.0
Cheese, American process lb.	57.7	57.8	Tea bags pkg. of 16	24.2	24.2
Milk, evaporated 14 ½ oz. can	13.8	13.7	Cola drink, carton 36 oz.	32.4	32.4
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:			Shortening, hydrogenated 3 lb.	88.7	88.9
Frozen			Margarine, colored lb.	28.5	28.8
Strawberries 10 oz.	30.6	30.7	Lard lb.	19.7	19.9
Orange juice concentrate 6 oz.	18.9	18.9	Salad dressing pt.	35.2	35.2
Peas, green 10 oz.	21.4	21.4	Peanut butter lb.	54.9	55.2
Beans, green 10 oz.	23.8	23.8	Sugar 5 lb.	52.4	52.3
Fresh			Corn syrup 24 oz.	23.6	23.7
Apples lb.	12.8	12.2	Grape jelly 12 oz.	26.3	26.2
Bananas lb.	16.4	16.9	Chocolate bar 1 oz.	4.6	4.7
Oranges, size 200 doz.	53.6	53.6	Eggs, Grade A, large doz.	69.0	66.4
Lemons lb.	19.0	18.0	Gelatin, flavored 3-4 oz.	8.6	8.6

* Priced only in season.

1/ Discontinued.

The Consumer Price Index measures the average change in prices of goods and services customarily purchased by city wage-earner and clerical-worker families. Index numbers are presented on the base 1947-49 = 100, and show the average increase or decrease in prices from the 1947-49 average. For the convenience of users, indexes are also calculated on the base 1935-39 = 100.

About 300 items are priced for the index to estimate the average change in prices of a fixed quantity of goods and services from one period to the next. Among these are all the important items that wage and clerical workers buy, and they are selected so that their average price change will be representative of the price changes on all items. Prices are collected in 46 cities which are representative of all cities in the United States.

Foods, fuels, rents, and a few other items are priced every month in each city. Prices of most other goods and services are obtained every month in the 5 largest cities, every 3 months in 16 other large cities and in 9 medium-sized cities, and every 4 months in 16 small cities. In each city, prices are reported by representative retail stores and service establishments patronized by wage and clerical worker families.

Indexes are calculated for all cities combined (the U.S. city average) and for each of the 20 largest cities. No separate index numbers are calculated for the following 26 medium-sized and small cities which are included in the U.S. average:

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	

In the calculation, price changes on individual items are weighted by their importance in wage-earner and clerical-worker family spending. City data are combined by weighting with 1950 population data to arrive at the U.S. city average.

Comparison of city indexes shows only that prices in one city changed more or less than in another. City indexes do not measure differences in price level between cities.

A detailed description of the index containing lists of items priced, their weights, cities included, and an explanation of the index calculation, its uses and limitations, is available in Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin No. 1140 - "The Consumer Price Index - A Layman's Guide," for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. Price 20 cents.

A more technical description of the Consumer Price Index is available upon request to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington 25, D. C.

Historical series of index numbers for the U.S. city average and 20 individual large cities are available upon request. These series include index numbers for All Items, Food, Apparel, and Rent for periods from 1913 to date; and for other groups of goods and services from 1947 to date.

