

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

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR JANUARY 1956

Consumer prices in United States cities declined 0.1 percent between December 1955 and January 1956, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Although lower prices for housefurnishings (down 1.4 percent) and food (down 0.3 percent) were the principal cause of the decrease, prices of apparel and transportation also declined (0.6 and 0.4 percent, respectively). Prices were higher for all other major categories of family spending.

The Consumer Price Index for January was 114.6 percent of the 1947-49 average, 0.3 percent higher than a year ago.

FOOD

The retail food price index was 109.2, 1.3 percent lower than a year ago, and 0.3 percent below the December 1955 level. This is the fourth consecutive monthly decline in food prices. Restaurant meal prices, which had been moving up steadily since June 1955, were slightly lower than in December.

Lower prices for pork, beef, eggs, fresh milk, fats and oils, and coffee, all contributed to the decline, but substantial increases for fresh vegetables offset most of these reductions.

Prices of meats, poultry, and fish decreased as a group for the fourth consecutive month, but the rate of decrease -- 1.4 percent -- was considerably smaller than in the previous months. Costs of pork products dropped 3 percent in response to plentiful supplies, with pork chop prices down by 3 percent and bacon prices dropping 4.3 percent, with reduced prices in all 46 cities surveyed. All other meats, except veal cutlets, also were lower. However, frying chicken prices averaged 0.6 percent higher; most changes were moderate, with the largest increases reported in the central part of the country and the largest decreases in the far west.

The 1.9 percent drop in egg prices over the month was partly seasonal and partly a reaction to the unusual increase between November and December. The dairy products index dropped 0.4 percent, primarily because of a seasonal adjustment in fresh milk prices in some cities. Heavy hog slaughtering led to a 3.1 percent decline in lard prices, and margarine prices dropped 1.6 percent. Coffee prices averaged 0.6 percent lower than in December.

The 6 percent increase in fresh vegetable prices represented both the usual seasonal pattern and the damage to Florida crops of fresh tomatoes and green beans caused by freezing weather in early January. Green bean prices jumped 43.7 percent over the month, and fresh tomatoes were up 21.3 percent. White potato prices rose 8.4 percent. On the other hand, lettuce prices averaged 19.7 percent lower, and there were substantial drops in prices of celery and carrots, down 7.9 and 6.8 percent, respectively. Fresh fruit prices were slightly lower on the average (0.3 percent), as prices of oranges dropped 5.9 percent and grapefruit prices also declined. Apple prices rose 5 percent over the month and banana prices were almost 3 percent higher.

HOUSING

Housing costs declined 0.2 percent between December and January, led by the fall of 1.4 percent in prices of housefurnishings. Widespread "white sale" prices for sheets, towels, and blankets, as well as reduced prices of most electrical appliances were the principal factors in this decrease. Prices of other housing components advanced during the month, as costs of household operation rose 0.4 percent, reflecting further advances in charges for dry cleaning, laundry, and telephone services. The solid fuels and fuel oil group rose 1.2 percent between December

and January. Residential rents continued upward, with a rise of 0.2 percent, influenced by decontrol in one large city and minor increases in several cities. Gas bills were higher in a number of cities.

OTHER COMMODITIES
AND SERVICES

Apparel prices declined 0.6 percent between December and January as end-of-season sale prices were reported for women's and girls' wool coats, women's wool dresses and rayon suits, and girls' wool skirts and sweaters. Some sale prices were also reported for men's wool suits. Prices of women's rayon dresses also declined during the month. However, footwear prices continued to advance and in January were 3.2 percent higher than a year ago.

The decline of 0.4 percent in transportation costs reflected larger concessions by dealers for new cars, continued declines in prices of used cars, and some reductions in charges for auto repair services. Higher transit fares were reported in a few cities. Reading and recreation costs rose 0.5 percent during the month as prices of toys and television sets advanced. The medical care index edged up 0.4 percent and the personal care group rose 0.5 percent between December and January. Widespread increases were reported for toothpaste and face cream. The rise of 0.2 percent for the other goods and services category was mainly the result of higher taxes on cigarettes in a few cities.

ANNUAL AVERAGE
INDEXES

The following table presents a comparison of annual average indexes for 1955, 1954, and 1950 for the average of United States cities combined. Annual average indexes for the 20 large cities for which the Consumer Price Index is published will be available upon request later in the year.

Group	Indexes (1947-49 = 100)			Percent Change	
	1955	1954	1950	1954 to 1955 to	
				1955	1955
All items -----	114.5	114.8	102.8	- 0.3	11.4
Food -----	110.9	112.6	101.2	- 1.5	9.6
Food at home -----	109.7	111.9	101.2	- 2.0	8.4
Cereals and bakery products -	123.9	121.9	104.5	1.6	18.6
Meats, poultry, and fish ----	101.6	108.0	104.9	- 5.9	- 3.1
Dairy products -----	105.9	106.1	95.9	- .2	10.4
Fruits and vegetables -----	113.5	111.9	97.6	1.4	16.3
Other foods at home -----	111.5	114.8	101.2	- 2.9	10.2
Housing -----	120.0	119.1	106.1	.8	13.1
Rent -----	130.3	128.5	108.8	1.4	19.8
Gas and electricity -----	110.7	107.9	102.7	2.6	7.8
Solid fuels and fuel oil -----	125.2	123.5	110.5	1.4	13.3
Housefurnishings -----	104.1	106.1	100.3	- 1.9	3.8
Household operation -----	119.1	117.4	101.2	1.4	17.7
Apparel -----	103.7	104.3	98.1	- .6	5.7
Men's and boys' -----	105.7	106.8	99.5	- 1.0	6.2
Women's and girls' -----	98.0	98.9	94.8	- .9	3.4
Footwear -----	117.7	116.4	104.0	1.1	13.2
Other apparel -----	90.6	90.7	92.0	- .1	- 1.5
Transportation -----	126.4	128.0	111.3	- 1.2	13.6
Medical care -----	128.0	125.2	106.0	2.2	20.8
Personal care -----	115.3	113.4	101.1	1.7	14.0
Reading and recreation -----	106.6	107.0	103.4	- .4	3.1
Other goods and services -----	120.2	120.1	105.2	.1	14.3

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

Group	January 1956	December 1955	November 1955	January 1955	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	111.6	111.7	115.0	114.3	101.8	59.4
FOOD <u>1/</u>	109.2	109.5	109.8	110.6	100.5	47.1
Food at home	107.5	107.9	108.2	109.4	100.5	47.1
Cereals and bakery products	123.9	123.9	123.9	123.4	102.7	57.2
Meats, poultry and fish	93.3	94.6	97.1	102.4	106.1	41.6
Dairy products	107.3	107.7	107.8	106.4	92.3	49.8
Fruits and vegetables	112.6	110.7	109.0	110.6	102.5	46.3
Other foods at home	112.8	113.7	113.1	111.3	94.1	48.4
HOUSING <u>2/</u>	120.6	120.8	120.9	119.6	104.9	76.1
Rent	131.4	131.1	130.9	129.5	108.7	86.6
Gas and electricity	111.7	111.5	111.5	109.4	102.7	104.9
Solid fuels and fuel oil	129.5	128.0	126.7	126.1	107.6	56.4
Housefurnishings	102.0	103.4	104.5	104.6	97.4	53.4
Household operation	121.2	120.7	120.5	117.7	99.6	68.4
APPAREL	104.1	104.7	104.7	103.3	96.5	52.5
Men's and boys'	106.0	106.1	106.0	105.5	98.1	4/
Women's and girls'	97.9	99.1	99.3	97.6	93.3	4/
Footwear	120.4	119.8	119.2	116.7	102.1	4/
Other apparel	90.7	91.1	91.0	90.5	88.4	4/
TRANSPORTATION	126.8	127.3	128.5	127.6	109.9	68.9
MEDICAL CARE	130.7	130.2	129.8	126.5	105.4	72.6
PERSONAL CARE	118.5	117.9	117.5	113.7	99.2	59.6
READING AND RECREATION	107.3	106.8	106.8	106.9	102.5	63.0
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES <u>3/</u>	120.8	120.6	120.6	119.9	103.7	70.6

PERCENT CHANGE TO JANUARY 1956 FROM:

	December 1955	November 1955	January 1955	June 1950	Year 1939
ALL ITEMS	- 0.1	- 0.3	0.3	12.6	92.9
FOOD <u>1/</u>	- 0.3	- 0.5	- 1.3	8.7	131.8
Food at home	- 0.4	- 0.6	- 1.7	7.0	128.2
Cereals and bakery products	0	0	0.4	20.6	116.6
Meats, poultry and fish	- 1.4	- 3.9	- 8.9	- 12.1	124.3
Dairy products	- 0.4	- 0.5	0.8	16.3	115.5
Fruits and vegetables	1.7	3.3	1.8	9.9	143.2
Other foods at home	- 0.8	- 0.3	1.3	19.9	133.1
HOUSING <u>2/</u>	- 0.2	- 0.2	0.8	15.0	58.5
Rent	0.2	0.4	1.5	20.9	51.7
Gas and electricity	0.2	0.2	2.1	8.8	6.5
Solid fuels and fuel oil	1.2	2.2	2.7	20.4	129.6
Housefurnishings	- 1.4	- 2.4	- 2.5	4.7	91.0
Household operation	0.4	0.6	3.0	21.7	77.2
APPAREL	- 0.6	- 0.6	0.8	7.9	98.3
Men's and boys'	- 0.1	0	0.5	8.1	4/
Women's and girls'	- 1.2	- 1.4	0.3	4.9	4/
Footwear	0.5	1.0	3.2	17.9	4/
Other apparel	- 0.4	- 0.3	0.2	2.6	4/
TRANSPORTATION	- 0.4	- 1.3	- 0.6	15.4	84.0
MEDICAL CARE	0.4	0.7	3.3	24.0	80.0
PERSONAL CARE	0.5	0.9	4.2	19.5	98.8
READING AND RECREATION	0.5	0.5	0.4	4.7	70.3
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES <u>2/</u>	0.2	0.2	0.8	16.5	71.1

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)
	January 1956	December 1955	January 1955	June 1950	Year 1939	January 1956 ^{1/}
U.S. CITY AVERAGE	114.6	114.7	114.3	101.8	59.4	191.6
CITIES PRICED MONTHLY:						
Chicago	118.1	118.5	117.0	102.8	58.6	201.1
Detroit	116.3	116.7	116.0	102.8	59.0	196.3
Los Angeles	116.0	116.3	115.4	101.3	60.4	193.8
New York	112.1	112.0	112.3	100.9	60.1	185.5
Philadelphia	114.6	114.8	115.4	101.6	59.2	190.7
CITIES PRICED IN JANUARY, APRIL, JULY, OCTOBER ^{2/}						
	January 1956	October 1955	January 1955	April 1950		January 1956
Boston	114.6	114.5	113.0	101.2	61.0	184.5
Kansas City	115.5	116.2	115.3	101.4	61.7	186.0
Minneapolis	116.1	116.4	116.5	^{3/} 102.1	60.7	192.3
Pittsburgh	113.6	113.8	113.8	99.9	58.1	193.1
Portland, Oreg.	116.3	116.2	114.6	101.5	58.3	201.4
CITIES PRICED IN MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER ^{2/}						
	December 1955	September 1955	December 1954	June 1950		December 1955
Atlanta	117.1	117.2	115.7	^{4/} 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	58.6	198.1
CITIES PRICED IN FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST, NOVEMBER ^{2/}						
	November 1955	August 1955	November 1954	May 1950		November 1955
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	115.6	115.7	102.0	59.2	200.6
Washington, D. C.	113.7	113.8	113.5	101.5	60.4	186.7

^{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 DECEMBER 1955 TO JANUARY 1956
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	- 0.1	- 0.3	- 0.2	- 0.6	- 0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.2
Chicago	- 0.3	- 1.0	- 0.2	0	- 0.4	0.8	0.3	0.3	0
Detroit	- 0.3	- 0.8	- 0.2	- 0.2	- 0.5	0.1	0.4	0.5	- 0.1
Los Angeles	- 0.3	- 0.5	- 0.3	- 0.2	- 0.7	1.0	0.6	0.2	0
New York	0.1	0.4	0	- 1.3	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.7	0
Philadelphia	- 0.2	- 0.1	- 0.1	- 2.6	1.1	0	0.5	0.9	0

TABLE 4. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX -- ALL ITEMS AND COMMODITY GROUPS
 January 1956 Indexes and Percent Changes, October 1955 to January 1956
 U.S. City Average and 10 Cities Priced in January 1956

Group	U.S. CITY AVERAGE	Boston	Chicago	Detroit	Kansas City	Los Angeles	Minneapolis	New York	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Portland, Oreg.
January 1956 Indexes (1947-49 = 100)											
ALL ITEMS	114.6	114.6	118.1	116.3	115.5	116.0	116.1	112.1	114.6	113.6	116.3
FOOD	109.2	108.4	106.5	110.6	104.9	111.5	111.2	109.1	110.5	109.4	110.2
Food at home	107.5	105.8	104.4	108.8	102.9	108.3	110.4	107.3	109.0	108.3	108.9
Cereals and bakery products	123.9	122.1	118.9	119.1	120.3	128.0	125.4	128.7	123.1	124.9	124.6
Meats, poultry and fish	93.3	93.8	87.0	91.5	86.9	94.6	91.1	96.6	95.0	90.6	93.4
Dairy products	107.3	108.9	107.6	105.1	107.5	102.7	110.7	104.6	110.1	109.5	108.6
Fruits and vegetables	112.6	106.6	108.6	123.6	108.3	114.3	120.9	107.4	115.0	109.9	115.4
Other foods at home	112.8	106.8	118.4	113.9	105.3	112.7	121.8	113.5	112.4	121.9	113.4
HOUSING	120.6	123.4	131.0	122.3	121.8	126.3	120.5	116.6	113.9	117.3	121.0
Rent	131.4	129.2	-	-	-	-	144.1	119.0	-	-	130.8
Gas and electricity	111.7	107.1	113.6	114.5	124.9	116.2	124.8	110.1	101.8	125.0	107.8
Solid fuels and fuel oil	129.5	131.5	134.8	123.8	116.6	-	121.0	132.7	127.9	119.4	132.1
Housefurnishings	102.0	106.2	102.0	106.5	102.2	101.1	99.8	102.6	104.2	101.9	104.2
Household operation	121.2	118.9	125.1	114.7	125.7	125.1	122.2	120.7	117.4	120.8	114.1
APPAREL	104.1	101.2	108.0	101.6	103.6	104.2	105.4	102.9	102.9	103.0	108.8
Men's and boys'	106.0	101.1	112.4	108.7	106.6	107.5	107.1	106.2	102.7	104.5	110.3
Women's and girls'	97.9	95.7	99.3	91.5	97.2	97.3	100.9	95.4	99.4	96.1	102.7
Footwear	120.4	114.8	125.6	116.0	118.4	121.8	116.0	119.7	114.2	118.9	124.4
Other apparel	90.7	102.6	94.8	86.9	87.5	82.5	92.5	93.5	90.7	98.2	95.9
TRANSPORTATION	126.8	135.9	130.8	124.6	124.9	125.4	113.8	130.4	135.8	133.5	124.9
MEDICAL CARE	130.7	128.4	135.0	137.4	136.5	126.4	148.9	126.7	136.2	131.6	128.9
PERSONAL CARE	118.5	121.1	122.3	127.2	122.5	118.8	123.1	111.4	125.0	116.8	119.1
READING AND RECREATION	107.3	107.1	115.0	109.0	115.2	96.4	118.1	104.7	113.3	100.3	119.1
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES	120.8	118.9	117.5	123.9	121.1	116.2	126.1	121.0	125.2	121.9	120.5

Percent Change -- October 1955 to January 1956

ALL ITEMS	- 0.3	0.1	- 0.8	- 0.2	- 0.6	- 0.3	- 0.3	- 0.3	- 0.6	- 0.2	0.1
FOOD	- 1.4	- 1.4	- 2.4	- 1.9	- 2.1	- 0.8	- 1.0	- 1.3	- 2.0	- 1.5	- 1.5
Food at home	- 1.7	- 2.0	- 2.6	- 2.2	- 2.3	- 1.0	- 1.0	- 1.7	- 2.3	- 1.8	- 1.4
Cereals and bakery products	0	0	0.1	- 0.1	- 0.3	0.2	- 0.4	0	0.1	- 0.1	0.6
Meats, poultry and fish	- 7.5	- 4.4	- 8.7	- 8.3	- 9.6	- 7.0	- 5.5	- 5.2	- 7.1	- 8.9	- 9.0
Dairy products	- 0.2	- 4.6	1.3	- 0.4	0.1	- 0.3	- 0.2	- 2.2	- 1.1	0.1	0.5
Fruits and vegetables	3.8	2.7	0	4.7	5.1	6.1	4.9	3.5	1.0	6.3	7.5
Other foods at home	- 1.0	- 1.3	- 1.1	- 2.2	- 2.0	- 0.7	- 0.7	- 1.7	- 1.2	- 1.2	- 2.1
HOUSING	- 0.2	1.3	- 0.8	- 0.2	- 0.2	- 0.8	- 0.7	0.3	- 0.8	0.8	1.2
Rent	0.5	<u>1/4.1</u>	-	-	-	-	<u>1/1.9</u>	<u>1/1.0</u>	-	-	<u>1/0</u>
Gas and electricity	0.4	- 4.5	3.0	0.4	2.4	0	5.1	1.1	0	1.3	0
Solid fuels and fuel oil	2.5	4.0	2.4	3.2	0.4	-	1.9	4.8	5.7	0	0
Housefurnishings	- 2.3	0.9	- 5.2	- 1.3	- 0.2	- 2.8	0.1	- 2.0	- 1.4	- 0.2	- 0.8
Household operation	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.1	1.7	1.1	3.0	1.6	0
APPAREL	- 0.5	- 1.6	0	0.3	- 1.1	- 0.4	0	- 1.2	- 2.6	0.8	0.7
Men's and boys'	0	- 1.9	0.2	1.3	- 0.7	- 0.6	0	0.3	- 0.7	0	- 0.2
Women's and girls'	- 1.6	- 2.2	- 0.9	- 1.5	- 2.3	- 0.7	- 0.9	- 3.0	- 5.3	0.6	0.9
Footwear	1.7	1.0	1.9	2.4	1.6	1.1	2.3	1.5	1.3	2.8	2.3
Other apparel	- 0.3	- 1.0	0	0.1	- 0.6	- 0.6	0	- 0.6	- 1.6	0.9	0.3
TRANSPORTATION	0.2	0	- 1.2	1.7	- 1.7	0.7	1.7	2.0	3.0	- 1.5	- 0.9
MEDICAL CARE	1.6	1.7	4.9	3.5	0	1.5	0.5	0.2	0.5	- 0.2	0.1
PERSONAL CARE	1.3	5.9	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.7	0.7	7.2	0.9	1.0
READING AND RECREATION	0.6	0.5	0.4	- 0.3	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.5	1.4	2.3	2.2
OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES	0.2	0.3	- 0.3	- 0.4	3.9	0	- 0.1	- 0.1	0.1	0	0.1

1/ Change from July 1955 to January 1956.

TABLE 5. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX -- FOOD AND ITS SUBGROUPS
January 1956 Indexes and Percent Changes, December 1955 to January 1956
U. S. City Average and 20 Large Cities
(1947-49 = 100)

City	Total Food		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. CITY AVERAGE . . .	109.2	- 0.3	107.5	- 0.4	123.9	0	93.3	- 1.4	107.3	- 0.4	112.6	1.7	112.8	- 0.8
Atlanta	108.2	- 0.1	106.2	- 0.2	117.8	1.3	95.2	- 1.7	108.8	0.3	113.6	2.7	105.5	- 1.3
Baltimore	110.5	0.1	107.9	0.1	121.2	- 0.1	94.8	- 0.9	108.8	- 0.1	112.5	4.3	111.9	- 1.1
Boston	108.4	0	105.8	- 0.2	122.1	0	93.8	0.1	108.9	- 4.7	106.6	4.4	106.8	- 0.3
Chicago	106.5	- 1.0	104.4	- 1.1	118.9	- 0.5	87.0	- 2.0	107.6	0.5	108.6	- 2.1	118.4	- 1.1
Cincinnati	110.3	- 0.1	108.6	- 0.1	123.8	0.2	93.1	- 1.1	110.3	0.3	112.8	1.8	118.0	- 0.8
Cleveland	107.1	0	105.3	0	118.9	- 0.3	90.9	- 0.8	105.0	0.1	107.0	2.2	115.8	- 0.9
Detroit	110.6	- 0.8	108.8	- 1.0	119.1	0.2	91.5	- 2.2	105.1	- 0.4	123.6	- 0.6	113.9	- 0.8
Houston	107.0	- 0.6	105.5	- 0.8	117.6	0	88.9	- 3.3	109.9	0	113.0	0.9	111.0	- 0.1
Kansas City	104.9	- 0.8	102.9	- 0.8	120.3	0	86.9	- 1.1	107.5	0	108.3	0	105.3	- 1.8
Los Angeles	111.5	- 0.5	108.3	- 0.6	128.0	0	94.6	- 1.5	102.7	- 0.3	114.3	- 1.1	112.7	0.1
Minneapolis	111.2	- 0.4	110.4	- 0.4	125.4	0	91.1	- 1.0	110.7	0	120.9	0.9	121.8	- 1.0
New York	109.1	0.4	107.3	0.4	128.7	0.1	96.6	- 0.8	104.6	- 0.7	107.4	5.6	113.5	- 1.0
Philadelphia	110.5	- 0.1	109.0	0	123.1	- 0.1	95.0	- 1.1	110.1	- 2.4	115.0	5.3	112.4	- 0.6
Pittsburgh	109.4	0.1	108.3	0	124.9	- 0.1	90.6	- 2.3	109.5	0	109.9	4.3	121.9	- 0.4
Portland, Ore.	110.2	- 1.7	108.9	- 1.6	124.6	0	93.4	- 3.7	108.6	0.1	115.4	- 1.6	113.4	- 1.7
St. Louis	110.2	0	107.8	- 0.1	118.8	- 0.2	90.6	- 1.2	100.9	0	121.5	2.2	121.2	- 0.6
San Francisco	112.3	- 0.2	111.0	- 0.3	130.7	- 0.1	100.1	- 1.1	105.4	0.1	119.1	0.8	111.5	- 0.4
Scranton	106.2	0.3	105.3	0.2	119.3	0.3	90.8	- 2.0	107.7	0	108.1	5.8	110.6	- 0.5
Seattle	110.7	- 0.8	109.5	- 1.0	127.6	- 0.2	93.9	- 2.1	110.8	- 0.1	119.3	- 0.7	110.7	- 1.2
Washington, D.C.	110.4	0.6	108.5	0.8	121.6	0	91.6	- 1.1	113.1	0.2	114.6	7.8	112.9	- 1.1

TABLE 6. RETAIL FOOD PRICES FOR JANUARY 1956 AND DECEMBER 1955
U.C. City Average

Food and Unit	January 1956	December 1955	Food and Unit	January 1956	December 1955
CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS:	(Cents)	(Cents)	Fresh (continued)	(Cents)	(Cents)
Flour, wheat	5 lb.	53.5	Grapefruit *	each	9.9
Biscuit mix	20 oz.	27.1	Peaches *	lb.	10.3
Corn meal	lb.	12.6	Strawberries *	pt.	
Rice	lb.	17.3	Grapes, seedless *	lb.	
Rolled oats	20 oz.	19.3	Watermelons *	lb.	
Corn flakes	12 oz.	22.0	Potatoes	10 lb.	51.9
Bread, white	lb.	17.8	Sweetpotatoes	lb.	11.9
Soda crackers	lb.	26.9	Onions	lb.	8.3
Vanilla cookies	7 oz.	23.7	Carrots	lb.	15.9
MEATS, POULTRY AND FISH:			Lettuce	head	13.7
Round steak	lb.	85.5	Celery	lb.	13.5
Chuck roast	lb.	46.7	Cabbage	lb.	9.7
Rib roast	lb.	67.4	Tomatoes	lb.	33.4
Hamburger	lb.	38.5	Beans, green	lb.	31.3
Veal cutlets	lb.	110.4	Canned		
Pork chops, center cut	lb.	65.1	Orange juice	46 oz. can	35.3
Bacon, sliced	lb.	55.0	Peaches	#2 1/2 can	35.1
Ham, whole	lb.	55.1	Pineapple	#2 can	33.5
Lamb, leg	lb.	64.6	Fruit cocktail	#303 can	26.6
Frankfurters	lb.	52.2	Corn, cream style	#303 can	17.9
Luncheon meat, canned	12 oz.	41.5	Peas, green	#303 can	21.6
Frying chickens, dressed 1/2	lb.	42.0	Tomatoes	#303 can	15.2
Frying chickens, ready-to-cook	lb.	50.0	Baby foods	4 1/2-5 oz.	9.7
Ocean perch, fillet, frozen	lb.	42.6	Dried		
Haddock, fillet, frozen	lb.	46.6	Prunes	lb.	35.2
Salmon, pink, canned	16 oz.	59.2	Beans	lb.	16.7
Tuna fish, canned	6-6 1/2 oz.	34.8	OTHER FOODS AT HOME:		
DAIRY PRODUCTS:			Vegetable soup	11 oz. can	14.1
Milk, fresh, (grocery)	qt.	22.3	Beans with pork	16 oz. can	14.8
Milk, fresh, (delivered)	qt.	23.7	Pickles, sweet	7 1/2 oz.	27.3
Ice cream	pt.	28.8	Catsup, tomato	14 oz.	22.9
Butter	lb.	71.1	Coffee 2/	1b can	96.2
Cheese, American process	lb.	57.7	Tea bags	pkg. of 16	24.3
Milk, evaporated	14 1/2 oz. can	13.9	Cola drink, carton	36 oz.	32.3
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:			Shortening, hydrogenated	3 lb.	88.7
Frozen			Margarine, colored	lb.	28.2
Strawberries	10 oz.	30.6	Lard	lb.	19.0
Orange juice concentrate	6 oz.	19.0	Salad dressing	pt.	35.1
Peas, green	16 oz.	21.4	Peanut butter	lb.	54.5
Beans, green	10 oz.	23.7	Sugar	5 lb.	52.5
Fresh			Corn syrup	24 oz.	23.7
Apples	lb.	13.4	Grape jelly	12 oz.	26.3
Bananas	lb.	16.8	Chocolate bar	1 oz.	4.6
Oranges, size 200	doz.	50.4	Eggs, Grade A, large	doz.	67.7
Lemons	lb.	19.4	Gelatin, flavored	3-4 oz.	8.6

* Priced only in season

1/ Discontinued.

2/ Formerly included coffee in bags.

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.

