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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR MARCH 1956

Consumer prices in United States cities rose 0.1 percent between February and March 1956, the first advance since November 1955, the U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics announced today. Prices averaged higher over the month for all major categories of family spending except housing and transportation. Housing costs remained at their February level and transportation declined. The Consumer Price Index for March was 114.7 (1947-49 = 100), 0.3 percent higher than in March 1955.

FOOD Retail food prices rose 0.2 percent from February to March, following a 5-month decline. At 109.0, the food index was 1.6 percent below its March 1955 level, primarily because the meats, poultry, and fish component was almost 10 percent lower.

Price advances for fresh vegetables led the increase, supplemented by higher prices for coffee, fats and oils, and restaurant meals. These increases were largely offset by lower costs of fresh meats, milk, and fresh fruits.

Curtailed supplies, following the early freeze in Florida, and some seasonal influences resulted in 4.6 percent higher prices, on the average, for fresh vegetables. Prices of tomatoes were up 29.3 percent, potatoes, 4.3 percent, and lettuce 7.3 percent; however, green bean prices dropped 19.6 percent. Average prices for coffee in cans rose more than 3 cents a pound (from 96.2 to 99.4 cents), and coffee in bags cost 4.1 percent more, reflecting increases in wholesale prices of roasted coffee prior to mid-March. A 2.3 percent increase in prices of shortening led the 1 percent rise in the fats and oils category.

Most meat prices declined as supplies continued ample: beef and veal products dropped 1.7 percent; pork products, 1.2 percent (although ham was 2.2 percent higher); poultry, 0.5 percent; and lamb, 1 percent. The 0.5 percent decrease in milk prices and the 0.8 percent drop in prices of fresh fruits were due chiefly to seasonal adjustments; bananas were down 3.9 percent and oranges, 0.7 percent. Canned and frozen orange juice prices rose, 1.2 and 1.8 percent, respectively.

HOUSING The housing index remained at its February level of 120.7 percent of the 1947-49 average. Prices of housefurnishings advanced 0.6 percent, reflecting higher prices for living room and bedroom suites, dinette sets, curtains, and towels, which were partially offset by reductions in prices of vacuum cleaners, toasters, and other household appliances. The rise of 0.2 percent in household operation costs reflected higher rates for water and an increase in domestic service rates in Philadelphia. Residential rents edged up 0.1 percent. These increases were counterbalanced by reported moderate declines in costs of home-ownership.

OTHER COMMODITIES AND SERVICES Tax changes and increases in rates for services, which typically change in only a few cities in any given month, were important factors in the advances of several group indexes. The change in the Ohio tax on cigarettes accounted for a large part of the 0.2 percent rise in the "other goods and services" component from February to March. The new Pennsylvania sales tax affected most groups of commodities (excluding food and apparel items principally). Higher group hospitalization rates in Detroit contributed substantially to the 0.4 percent increase in medical care costs; the increase in prices of men's haircuts in San Francisco played a similar role in the 0.3 percent rise in the personal care index. Most of the 0.2 percent rise in the reading and recreation group stemmed from higher movie prices in several cities.

The 0.2 percent advance in the apparel index resulted primarily from higher prices for shoes, although prices of some items of men's and boys' clothing also rose. Transportation costs dropped 0.2 percent as used car prices fell 2.3 percent, but streetcar and bus fares were increased in Baltimore and Minneapolis.

TABLE A: Consumer Price Index — U.S. and 20 cities, all items and major groups  
1955 Annual averages  
(1947-49 = 100) 1/

City	All items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Transportation	Medical care	Personal care	Reading and recreation	Other goods and services
U.S. city average	114.5	110.9	120.0	103.7	126.4	128.0	115.3	106.6	120.2
Atlanta-----	116.3	110.2	125.1	109.6	123.6	124.9	118.4	108.1	121.2
Baltimore-----	115.2	111.7	116.6	102.5	136.5	134.7	109.4	115.6	122.9
Boston-----	113.8	109.5	120.9	102.1	134.2	125.4	113.4	107.2	118.5
Chicago-----	117.9	109.1	129.9	105.8	131.5	129.1	117.6	113.5	117.8
Cincinnati-----	113.7	112.0	118.0	103.5	122.6	129.0	113.3	99.9	116.3
Cleveland-----	115.6	108.9	122.3	103.8	120.3	135.6	118.0	115.3	119.2
Detroit-----	116.5	113.2	122.3	102.0	122.2	132.9	123.6	108.5	124.6
Houston-----	115.9	109.9	123.1	106.5	123.4	124.3	121.8	109.3	119.8
Kansas City-----	115.7	106.8	121.5	103.0	125.4	136.3	119.3	115.1	117.1
Los Angeles-----	115.6	111.8	125.7	103.9	124.7	123.3	117.8	96.8	115.3
Minneapolis-----	116.8	111.6	122.1	104.2	116.8	147.0	119.7	117.0	125.9
New York-----	112.2	110.8	115.7	102.4	128.9	125.9	109.4	104.4	121.0
Philadelphia-----	115.5	113.0	114.3	104.9	136.3	135.1	117.9	112.6	123.9
Pittsburgh-----	113.8	111.2	116.4	102.1	136.9	129.7	116.4	98.4	120.9
Portland, Oregon-----	115.1	110.6	119.0	106.5	123.9	126.9	114.7	115.9	119.6
St. Louis-----	116.0	112.3	120.4	103.8	133.3	140.1	116.5	92.1	116.2
San Francisco-----	115.6	112.9	116.5	103.5	139.5	124.4	110.9	106.8	116.1
Scranton-----	111.4	108.3	115.4	106.0	126.5	120.0	119.1	119.5	115.7
Seattle-----	116.7	112.1	121.3	106.3	127.7	132.9	117.6	108.6	127.7
Washington, D. C.-----	113.6	111.2	116.6	101.5	129.5	119.4	112.6	105.4	130.0

1/ The U. S. average is based on the 46 cities included in the index during 1955. These figures are weighted averages of indexes available for given months and published in regular monthly reports of the index.

**NOTE:** Effective after release of the June 1956 index, the Bureau will discontinue publication of the U. S. and city indexes for all items on the base 1935-39 = 100.

TABLE 1: Consumer Price Index -- United States city average, all items and commodity groups  
Indexes and percent changes for selected dates

Group	Indexes (1947-49=100)					
	March 1956	February 1956	January 1956	March 1955	June 1950	Year 1939
	This month	Last month	2 months ago	Last year	Pre-Korea	Pre-World War II
All items -----	114.7	114.6	114.6	114.3	101.8	59.4
Food <sup>1/</sup> -----	109.0	108.8	109.2	110.8	100.5	47.1
Food at home -----	107.3	107.1	107.5	109.7	100.5	47.1
Cereals and bakery products --	124.4	124.3	123.9	123.9	102.7	57.2
Meats, poultry, and fish -----	92.8	93.6	93.3	102.3	106.1	41.6
Dairy products -----	106.9	107.3	107.3	105.4	92.3	49.8
Fruits and vegetables -----	114.8	113.3	112.6	112.0	102.5	46.3
Other foods at home -----	110.7	109.6	112.8	111.9	94.1	48.4
Housing <sup>2/</sup> -----	120.7	120.7	120.6	119.6	104.9	76.1
Rent -----	131.6	131.5	131.4	130.0	108.7	86.6
Gas and electricity -----	111.7	111.7	111.7	110.3	102.7	104.9
Solid fuels and fuel oil -----	130.6	130.0	129.5	126.2	107.6	56.4
Housefurnishings -----	103.1	102.5	102.0	104.6	97.4	53.4
Household operation -----	121.6	121.4	121.2	117.9	99.6	68.4
Apparel -----	104.8	104.6	104.1	103.2	96.5	52.5
Men's and boys' -----	106.6	106.5	106.0	105.6	98.1	( <sup>4/</sup> )
Women's and girls' -----	98.3	98.3	97.9	97.4	93.3	( <sup>4/</sup> )
Footwear -----	121.9	121.3	120.4	116.7	102.1	( <sup>4/</sup> )
Other apparel -----	91.1	91.0	90.7	90.4	88.4	( <sup>4/</sup> )
Transportation -----	126.7	126.9	126.8	127.3	109.9	( <sup>5/</sup> ) 70.2
Public -----	170.8	170.5	170.3	164.6	117.9	81.3
Private -----	116.8	117.0	117.0	118.2	106.6	65.5
Medical care -----	131.4	130.9	130.7	127.0	105.4	72.6
Personal care -----	119.2	118.9	118.5	113.5	99.2	59.6
Reading and recreation -----	107.7	107.5	107.3	106.6	102.5	63.0
Other goods and services <sup>3/</sup> -----	121.2	120.9	120.8	119.8	103.7	70.6

  

Group	Percent change to March 1956 from:					
	February 1956	January 1956	March 1955	June 1950	Year 1939	
	All items -----	0.1	0.1	0.3	12.7	93.1
Food <sup>1/</sup> -----	.2	- .2	- 1.6	8.5	131.4	
Food at home -----	.2	- .2	- 2.2	6.8	127.8	
Cereals and bakery products --	.1	- .4	- .4	21.1	117.5	
Meats, poultry, and fish -----	- .9	- .5	- 9.3	-12.5	123.1	
Dairy products -----	- .4	- .4	1.4	15.8	114.7	
Fruits and vegetables -----	1.3	2.0	2.5	12.0	147.9	
Other foods at home -----	1.0	- 1.9	- 1.1	17.6	128.7	
Housing <sup>2/</sup> -----	0	.1	.9	15.1	58.6	
Rent -----	.1	.2	1.2	21.1	52.0	
Gas and electricity -----	0	0	1.3	8.8	6.5	
Solid fuels and fuel oil -----	.5	.8	3.5	21.4	131.6	
Housefurnishings -----	.6	1.1	- 1.4	5.9	93.1	
Household operation -----	.2	.3	3.1	22.1	77.8	
Apparel -----	.2	.7	1.6	8.6	99.6	
Men's and boys' -----	.1	.6	.9	8.7	( <sup>4/</sup> )	
Women's and girls' -----	0	.4	.9	5.4	( <sup>4/</sup> )	
Footwear -----	.5	1.2	4.5	19.4	( <sup>4/</sup> )	
Other apparel -----	.1	.4	.8	3.1	( <sup>4/</sup> )	
Transportation -----	- .2	- .1	- .5	15.3	80.5	
Public -----	.2	.3	3.8	44.9	110.1	
Private -----	- .2	- .2	- 1.2	9.6	78.3	
Medical care -----	.4	.5	3.5	24.7	81.0	
Personal care -----	.3	.6	5.0	20.2	100.0	
Reading and recreation -----	.2	.4	1.0	5.1	71.0	
Other goods and services <sup>3/</sup> -----	.2	.3	1.2	16.9	71.7	

<sup>1/</sup> Includes restaurant meals not shown separately.  
<sup>2/</sup> Includes home purchase and other home-owner costs not shown separately.  
<sup>3/</sup> Includes tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and "miscellaneous services" (such as legal services, banking fees, burial services, etc.).  
<sup>4/</sup> Not available.  
<sup>5/</sup> Corrected.

TABLE 2: Consumer Price Index -- All items indexes for selected dates  
U.S. city average and 20 large cities

City	[1947-49=100]					[1935-39=100]
	March 1956	February 1956	March 1955	June 1950	Year 1939	March 1956 <sup>1/</sup>
United States city average -----	114.7	114.6	114.3	101.8	59.4	191.8
Cities priced monthly:						
Chicago -----	117.7	118.3	117.0	102.8	58.6	200.4
Detroit -----	116.9	116.4	116.3	102.8	59.0	197.3
Los Angeles -----	116.1	115.8	115.1	101.3	60.4	194.0
New York -----	112.2	112.1	112.4	100.9	60.1	185.7
Philadelphia -----	115.8	114.7	115.8	101.6	59.2	192.7
Cities priced in March, June, September, December <sup>2/</sup>	March 1956	December 1955	March 1955	June 1950	Year 1939	March 1956
Atlanta -----	116.8	117.1	115.3	( <sup>3/</sup> )101.3	58.3	198.1
Baltimore -----	115.2	115.8	114.9	101.6	57.9	198.0
Cincinnati -----	114.3	114.2	113.4	101.2	58.4	192.5
St. Louis -----	115.7	116.1	115.6	101.1	59.3	193.1
San Francisco -----	116.8	115.9	115.6	100.9	58.6	199.6
Cities priced in February, May, August, November <sup>2/</sup>	February 1956	November 1955	February 1955	May 1950	Year 1939	February 1956
Cleveland -----	115.7	116.2	114.9	100.4	59.2	197.2
Houston -----	116.6	116.7	115.7	103.5	59.5	197.4
Scranton -----	111.1	110.9	111.7	100.2	58.5	184.6
Seattle -----	116.2	117.4	116.3	102.0	59.2	198.6
Washington, D. C. -----	113.4	113.7	113.2	101.6	60.4	186.2
Cities priced in January, April, July, October <sup>2/</sup>	January 1956	October 1955	January 1955	April 1950	Year 1939	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	( <sup>4/</sup> )102.1	60.7	192.3
Pittsburgh -----	113.6	113.8	113.8	99.9	58.1	193.1
Portland, Oregon -----	116.3	116.2	114.6	101.5	58.3	201.4

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

<sup>2/</sup> Foods, fuels, rents, and a few other items priced monthly; other commodities and services priced quarterly.

<sup>3/</sup> May 1950; formerly priced February, May, August, November.

<sup>4/</sup> June 1950; formerly priced March, June, September, December.

TABLE 3: Consumer Price Index -- Percent changes from February 1956 to March 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
United States city average ---	0.1	0.2	0	0.2	- 0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2
Chicago -----	- .5	- .5	- 1.1	.6	- .4	.2	.1	0	0
Detroit -----	.4	.5	.1	.3	- .1	3.6	0	.3	.1
Los Angeles -----	.3	.1	.2	.3	.6	0	.2	.8	0
New York -----	.1	.2	.2	- .1	- .2	0	- .2	- .4	.1
Philadelphia -----	1.0	.7	1.6	.4	.5	1.0	1.6	1.3	.2

TABLE 4: Consumer Price Index -- All items and commodity groups  
 March 1956 indexes and percent changes, December 1955 to March 1956  
 U.S. city average and 10 cities priced in March 1956

Group	U.S. City Average	Atlanta	Balti- more	Chicago	Cincin- nati	Detroit	Los Angeles	New York	Phila- delphia	St. Louis	San Francisco
Indexes (1947-49=100)											
All items -----	114.7	116.8	115.2	117.7	114.3	116.9	116.1	112.2	115.8	115.7	116.8
Food -----	109.0	107.9	110.2	106.3	109.6	111.0	111.5	108.8	111.1	110.7	112.1
Food at home -----	107.3	105.6	107.4	104.1	108.0	109.1	108.2	106.9	109.2	108.2	110.7
Cereals and bakery products --	124.4	118.9	121.3	119.0	124.2	119.2	123.5	129.1	123.9	119.4	130.6
Meats, poultry, and fish ----	92.8	94.3	93.7	86.2	93.1	91.2	93.8	95.6	95.3	91.8	100.0
Dairy products -----	106.9	109.0	108.9	107.6	110.9	104.7	102.9	104.3	109.7	100.2	105.7
Fruits and vegetables -----	114.8	114.7	112.7	110.3	110.9	127.6	118.6	109.5	118.7	122.5	121.5
Other foods at home -----	110.7	102.8	110.7	117.1	116.1	112.8	109.9	111.3	110.1	120.5	108.3
Housing -----	120.7	126.2	116.4	129.7	120.1	122.8	126.5	116.9	115.9	120.1	119.3
Rent -----	131.6	135.0	126.8	153.9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Gas and electricity -----	111.7	119.4	99.9	113.8	118.3	114.3	116.2	110.3	101.8	103.8	136.3
Solid fuels and fuel oil -----	130.6	123.3	130.3	134.9	135.0	123.8	--	135.8	133.1	143.5	--
Housefurnishings -----	103.1	107.6	97.5	101.9	97.4	107.1	101.9	102.7	108.8	102.2	104.3
Household operation -----	121.6	131.7	115.2	126.7	129.4	115.2	124.8	120.8	118.4	125.6	110.9
Apparel -----	104.8	110.7	103.7	108.5	105.3	102.3	105.0	103.7	104.1	104.0	105.3
Men's and boys' -----	106.6	111.5	102.6	112.8	104.6	109.5	108.5	106.5	103.9	105.8	106.0
Women's and girls' -----	98.3	105.0	99.5	100.3	100.0	91.8	97.0	96.3	100.1	96.4	100.4
Footwear -----	121.9	128.7	121.1	124.6	129.2	117.9	125.4	120.8	117.2	123.0	123.2
Other apparel -----	91.1	91.5	94.9	95.1	88.6	87.3	83.3	93.9	92.0	95.6	89.1
Transportation -----	126.7	124.5	136.8	130.6	121.1	124.2	125.4	131.0	136.0	132.2	139.3
Public -----	170.8	153.6	185.8	165.3	162.8	142.7	150.8	186.7	186.0	182.6	178.5
Private -----	116.8	118.7	118.3	115.5	111.1	120.4	121.2	111.1	115.3	114.8	125.9
Medical care -----	131.4	128.8	136.5	135.4	137.2	142.4	126.4	126.6	137.5	140.4	128.2
Personal care -----	119.2	124.7	116.4	122.5	118.1	127.6	119.6	111.2	127.2	118.7	116.4
Reading and recreation -----	107.7	110.0	117.1	115.3	100.7	109.2	95.8	104.3	114.9	91.6	107.6
Other goods and services -----	121.2	125.8	123.5	117.5	118.4	124.1	116.1	121.1	125.5	121.9	117.5
Percent change from December 1955 to March 1956											
All items -----	0	- 0.3	- 0.5	- 0.7	0.1	0.2	- 0.2	0.2	0.9	- 0.3	0.8
Food -----	- 0.5	- .4	- .2	- 1.2	- .7	- .4	- .5	.1	.5	.5	- .4
Food at home -----	- .6	- .8	- .4	- 1.4	- .6	- .7	- .7	0	.2	.3	- .5
Cereals and bakery products --	.4	2.2	0	-.4	.5	.3	.4	.4	.6	.3	-.2
Meats, poultry, and fish ----	- 1.9	- 2.6	- 2.1	- 2.9	- 1.1	- 2.6	- 2.3	- 1.8	-.8	.1	- 1.2
Dairy products -----	- .7	.5	0	.5	.8	-.8	-.1	-.9	- 2.7	-.7	.4
Fruits and vegetables -----	3.7	3.7	4.4	-.5	.1	2.6	2.6	7.7	8.7	3.0	2.9
Other foods at home -----	- 2.6	- 3.8	- 2.2	- 2.2	- 2.4	- 1.7	- 2.4	- 2.9	- 2.7	- 1.1	- 3.3
Housing -----	- .1	- .7	- 2.2	- 1.1	.3	.2	-.2	.3	1.7	- 2.0	1.7
Rent -----	.4	(1/).4	(1/).1	(1/).4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gas and electricity -----	.2	-.2	0	3.0	-.7	0	0	.4	0	0	0
Solid fuels and fuel oil -----	2.0	0	1.9	2.4	0	2.0	-	4.7	4.9	1.2	-
Housefurnishings -----	-.3	-.6	-.7	- 3.1	-.6	.3	- 1.5	- 1.4	2.8	-.3	.6
Household operation -----	.7	.1	.4	1.8	.3	1.1	-.2	1.1	1.1	.2	.4
Apparel -----	-.1	.5	1.3	.5	1.3	.5	.6	-.6	- 1.5	.3	.9
Men's and boys' -----	.5	.2	1.2	.4	1.4	1.9	.2	.5	.7	-.3	.9
Women's and girls' -----	-.8	.5	1.3	.8	1.5	- 1.4	-.2	- 1.9	- 4.5	.3	.8
Footwear -----	1.8	.9	2.0	-.4	1.3	2.3	3.6	1.3	3.7	1.4	1.4
Other apparel -----	0	.2	.7	.3	.8	.3	.1	-.3	-.2	.2	.5
Transportation -----	-.5	.1	1.1	-.5	- 1.1	-.8	-.7	1.2	1.3	- 1.0	- 1.0
Public -----	1.8	0	10.1	0	0	0	0	4.5	6.5	0	0
Private -----	-.8	0	-.8	-.7	- 1.3	- 1.0	-.8	.1	-.3	- 1.3	- 1.1
Medical care -----	.9	.2	0	1.1	.1	3.7	1.0	.1	1.0	.2	2.0
Personal care -----	1.1	.6	2.6	.5	1.1	.7	1.3	0	2.3	.1	5.1
Reading and recreation -----	.8	.2	.6	.6	1.9	.6	-.4	.3	2.3	.2	2.3
Other goods and services -----	.5	.6	.2	0	1.8	.1	-.1	.1	.2	4.0	.1

1/ Change from September 1955 to March 1956.

TABLE 5: Consumer Price Index -- Food and its subgroups  
 March 1956 indexes and percent changes, February 1956 to March 1956  
 U.S. city average and 20 large cities  
 [1947-49=100]

City	Total food		Total food at home		Cereals and bakery products		Meats, poultry, and fish		Dairy products		Fruits and 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 ---	109.0	0.2	107.3	0.2	124.4	0.1	92.8	-0.9	106.9	-0.4	114.8	1.3	110.7	1.0
Atlanta -----	107.9	0	105.6	-.3	118.9	.1	94.3	-2.0	109.0	.3	114.7	.7	102.8	.4
Baltimore -----	110.2	.3	107.4	.2	121.3	0	93.7	-1.4	108.9	0	112.7	1.2	110.7	1.2
Boston -----	107.6	0	104.9	.1	122.1	.2	91.1	-1.5	107.6	-1.2	108.9	.6	105.5	2.2
Chicago -----	106.3	-.5	104.1	-.6	119.0	.1	86.2	-1.6	107.6	0	110.3	-2.0	117.1	.9
Cincinnati -----	109.6	.1	108.0	.3	124.2	.3	93.1	-.9	110.9	.2	110.9	.6	116.1	1.2
Cleveland -----	106.6	0	104.5	.1	119.7	.3	89.7	-1.5	101.7	-.5	109.3	1.4	114.0	.9
Detroit -----	111.0	.5	109.1	.5	119.2	-.3	91.2	-.8	104.7	-.1	127.6	2.2	112.8	1.1
Houston -----	106.1	-.6	104.5	-.8	117.6	.2	89.2	-.4	104.3	-4.9	113.9	.4	109.3	.4
Kansas City -----	104.9	.2	102.9	.2	120.5	0	87.2	-1.7	107.3	-.2	108.6	1.2	104.8	1.9
Los Angeles -----	111.5	.1	108.2	0	128.5	.2	93.8	-1.0	102.9	.1	118.6	2.4	109.9	-.7
Minneapolis -----	111.2	0	110.4	0	125.8	-.1	91.1	-1.2	110.7	-.4	123.8	.8	119.5	1.1
New York -----	108.8	.2	106.9	.3	129.1	.1	95.6	-.7	104.3	-.2	109.5	1.0	111.3	1.5
Philadelphia -----	111.1	.7	109.2	.5	123.9	.3	95.3	-.7	109.7	-.4	118.7	2.3	110.1	1.5
Pittsburgh -----	109.8	.5	108.8	.7	125.5	.2	91.2	-.2	109.9	-.1	114.1	3.6	119.6	.8
Portland, Oreg. ----	110.8	.5	109.6	.7	125.0	-.1	92.8	-.9	108.9	0	119.1	1.8	114.1	2.4
St. Louis -----	110.7	.9	108.2	.8	119.4	.2	91.8	.4	100.2	-.2	122.5	1.6	120.5	1.7
San Francisco -----	112.1	.4	110.7	.4	130.6	.1	100.0	-.7	105.7	0	121.5	1.2	108.3	1.2
Scranton -----	106.1	.7	105.3	.8	119.1	-.3	91.1	-.1	107.6	-.1	111.1	3.0	108.1	1.7
Seattle -----	110.9	.6	109.8	.7	131.5	0	93.1	-.4	111.1	0	122.3	2.1	108.7	2.0
Washington, D.C. ---	110.0	.1	107.9	.1	121.6	-.2	90.6	-2.6	113.3	.2	114.5	.8	111.8	2.5

TABLE 6: Consumer Price Index -- Average retail prices of selected foods  
 U.S. city average

Food and unit	March 1956	February 1956	Food and unit	March 1956	February 1956
<b>Cereals and bakery products:</b>	<b>Cents</b>	<b>Cents</b>	<b>Fresh—Continued</b>	<b>Cents</b>	<b>Cents</b>
Flour, wheat ----- 5 lb.	53.1	53.0	Grapefruit * ----- each	9.5	9.6
Biscuit mix ----- 20 oz.	26.8	26.9	Peaches * ----- lb.		
Corn meal ----- lb.	12.5	12.5	Strawberries * ----- pt.		
Rice ----- lb.	17.2	17.2	Grapes, seedless * ----- lb.		
Rolled oats ----- 20 oz.	19.2	19.2	Watermelons * ----- lb.		
Corn flakes ----- 12 oz.	21.8	21.8	Potatoes ----- 10 lb.	57.3	54.8
Bread, white ----- lb.	17.7	17.6	Sweet potatoes ----- lb.	11.9	11.8
Soda crackers ----- lb.	27.6	27.5	Onions ----- lb.	7.8	7.9
Vanilla cookies ----- 7 oz.	23.8	23.8	Carrots ----- lb.	13.0	14.1
<b>Meats, poultry, and fish:</b>			Lettuce ----- head	14.7	13.7
Round steak ----- lb.	81.3	83.0	Celery ----- lb.	13.2	13.1
Chuck roast ----- lb.	44.2	45.0	Cabbage ----- lb.	7.9	8.2
Rib roast ----- lb.	64.6	65.9	Tomatoes ----- lb.	42.2	32.6
Hamburger ----- lb.	37.5	37.8	Beans, green ----- lb.	26.4	32.8
Veal cutlets ----- lb.	110.1	112.4	<b>Canned:</b>		
Pork chops, center cut ----- lb.	67.3	69.2	Orange juice ----- 48-oz. can	36.0	35.5
Bacon, sliced ----- lb.	52.8	53.9	Peaches ----- #2½ can	34.8	34.9
Ham, whole ----- lb.	57.1	55.9	Pineapple ----- #2 can	33.5	33.4
Lamb, leg ----- lb.	63.8	64.4	Fruit cocktail ----- #303 can	26.2	26.2
Frankfurters ----- lb.	51.4	51.3	Corn, cream style ----- #303 can	17.9	17.8
Luncheon meat, canned ----- 12 oz.	40.7	40.7	Peas, green ----- #303 can	21.6	21.6
Frying chickens, ready-to-cook ----- lb.	50.0	50.3	Tomatoes ----- #303 can	15.3	15.2
Ocean perch, fillet, frozen ----- lb.	41.8	41.8	Baby foods ----- 4½ to 5 oz.	9.7	9.7
Haddock, fillet, frozen ----- lb.	46.0	46.3	<b>Dried:</b>		
Salmon, pink, canned ----- 16 oz.	59.0	58.9	Prunes ----- lb.	35.6	35.5
Tuna fish, canned ----- 6 to 6½ oz.	34.2	34.0	Beans ----- lb.	16.3	16.4
<b>Dairy products:</b>			<b>Other foods at home:</b>		
Milk, fresh, (grocery) ----- qt.	22.1	22.2	Vegetable soup ----- 11-oz. can	14.0	14.0
Milk, fresh, (delivered) ----- qt.	23.5	23.6	Beans with pork ----- 16-oz. can	14.6	14.6
Ice cream ----- pt.	28.7	28.8	Pickles, sweet ----- 7½ oz.	26.9	26.9
Butter ----- lb.	70.8	70.8	Catsup, tomato ----- 14 oz.	22.9	22.7
Cheese, American process ----- lb.	57.1	57.0	Coffee ----- 1b. can	99.4	96.2
Milk, evaporated ----- 14½-oz. can	13.8	13.8	Tea bags ----- pkg. of 16	23.2	23.1
<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b>			Cola drink, carton ----- 36 oz.	32.3	32.3
<b>Frozen:</b>			Shortening, hydrogenated ----- 3 lb.	90.6	88.6
Strawberries ----- 10 oz.	30.2	30.2	Margarine, colored ----- lb.	28.2	28.0
Orange juice concentrate ----- 6 oz.	19.8	19.4	Lard ----- lb.	18.7	18.7
Peas, green ----- 10 oz.	21.1	21.0	Salad dressing ----- pt.	34.7	34.6
Beans, green ----- 10 oz.	23.4	23.4	Peanut butter ----- lb.	53.6	53.6
<b>Fresh:</b>			Sugar ----- 5 lb.	52.4	52.4
Apples ----- lb.	13.9	13.7	Corn syrup ----- 24 oz.	23.5	23.5
Bananas ----- lb.	16.6	17.2	Grape jelly ----- 12 oz.	26.2	26.1
Oranges, size 200 ----- doz.	49.8	50.1	Chocolate bar ----- 1 oz.	4.5	4.5
Lemons ----- lb.	17.8	18.4	Eggs, Grade A, large ----- doz.	59.3	59.2
			Gelatin, flavored ----- 3 to 4 oz.	8.4	8.5

\* Priced only in season.

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.

