



The Daily

Statistics Canada

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For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Consumer Price Index, March 2000**

Between March 1999 and March 2000, the strong increases in the price of crude oil led to higher energy costs, but these were not translated into generalized price increases for other commodities in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket. For the 12-month period ending in March, the CPI excluding energy rose by 1.4%, while the All-items CPI increased by 3.0%.

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- **Composite Index, March 2000**

The leading indicator grew by 1.1% in March, about the same as the 1.0% advance posted in February. These gains reflect the strength of household demand at the start of the new year, as manufacturing and the U.S. leading index slowed.

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MAJOR RELEASES

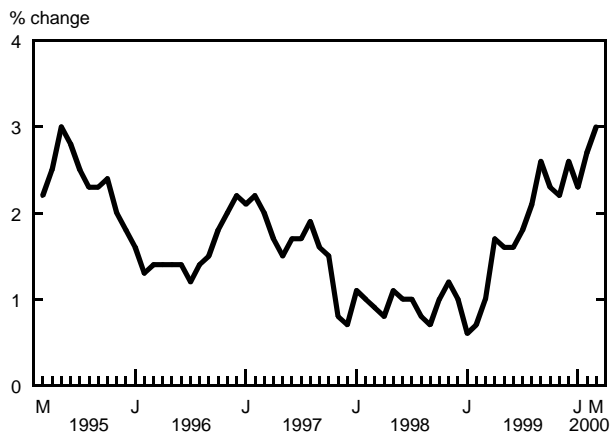
Consumer Price Index

March 2000

Between March 1999 and March 2000, the strong increases in the price of crude oil led to higher energy costs, but these were not translated into generalized price increases for other commodities in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket.

For the 12-month period ending in March, the CPI excluding energy rose by 1.4%, while the All-items CPI advanced 3.0%. This advance in the All-items index is the largest 12-month increase since May 1995. The All-items index excluding energy has grown between 1.1% and 1.6% since April 1999.

Percentage change in the Consumer Price Index from the same month of the previous year



The two energy commodities that had the greatest influence on the overall 12-month increase were gasoline and fuel oil. Gasoline prices rose by 38.0% in March, marking the eighth consecutive month of double-digit annual increases. Fuel oil prices rose by 59.8%, following a high of 63.6% in February, the highest annual increase in the index since its inception in 1950.

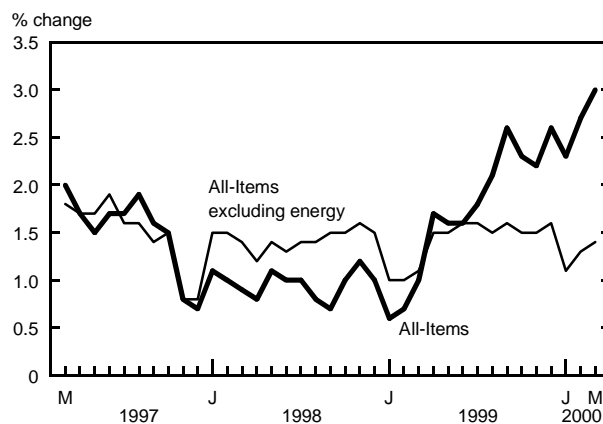
The continued large advances in the gasoline and fuel oil indexes reflect the persistence of high global prices for crude oil and dwindling reserve stocks. The index for natural gas, another important energy component, rose by 8.4% compared with March 1999.

Other commodities contributing to the increase in the index, though to a much lesser extent, were

mortgage interest costs, food purchased from restaurants, and tuition fees. The mortgage interest cost index has shown successively larger increases in each of the past five months.

Partially offsetting the overall increase were price decreases for fresh vegetables, computer equipment and supplies, and fresh fruit.

Annual change in the CPI and in the CPI excluding energy



Monthly rise in the CPI is 0.7%

From February to March 2000, the CPI rose by 0.7%. Higher gasoline prices account for about 57% of this increase. This is the largest month-to-month increase in the All-items index since January 1991, when the Goods and Services Tax was introduced and the Federal Sales Tax eliminated. Price increases for women's clothing and travel tours also contributed to the monthly increase in the All-items CPI, while price decreases for fuel oil and fresh fruit slightly dampened this increase.

Gasoline prices rose by 8.8% in March compared with February, the largest monthly advance since June 1983 (+19.1%). Provincial index rises in March varied between 2.2% in Whitehorse and 11.7% in British Columbia.

Prices for women's clothing increased by 2.3% in March. This is mostly due to a mixture of higher prices on new summer stock and the return to regular prices from discounts in the previous month for several clothing items.

Prices for travel tours increased by 5.8% in March, which is in keeping with February-March price rises observed in previous years. This is due primarily to the seasonal trend towards higher rates for Florida destinations, which are in great demand in March.

The monthly index for fuel oil declined by 4.9% in March, the first decrease since March 1999. Fuel oil prices, on average, dropped in all provinces east of Manitoba, except on Prince Edward Island. The western provinces and Prince Edward Island showed increases that only partially offset the overall decrease.

Fresh fruit prices dropped by 2.5% in March compared with February. Supply was strong as a result of favourable growing conditions in producing areas.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9940-9956.

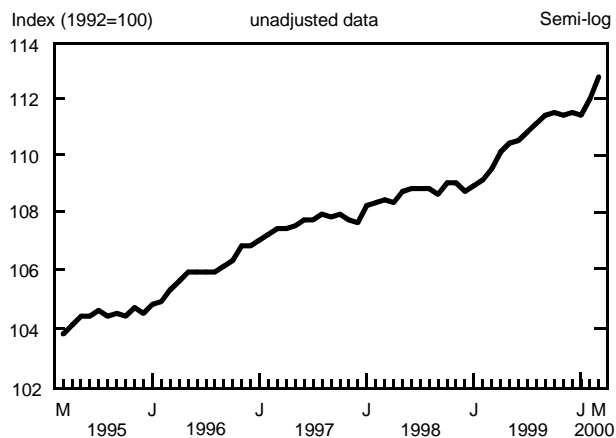
Data are available at 7 a.m. on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca).

The March 2000 issue of the *Consumer Price Index* (62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

The April 2000 Consumer Price Index will be released on May 18.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division. □

Consumer Price Index



Consumer Price Index and its major components 1992=100

	Mar. 2000	Feb. 2000	Mar. 1999	Feb. to Mar. 2000	Mar. 1999 to Mar. 2000
not seasonally adjusted					
				% change	
All-items	112.8	112.0	109.5	0.7	3.0
Food	111.1	110.6	110.7	0.5	0.4
Shelter	107.5	107.4	104.5	0.1	2.9
Household operations and furnishings	109.7	109.3	108.7	0.4	0.9
Clothing and footwear	106.5	105.3	106.2	1.1	0.3
Transportation	131.1	128.5	121.3	2.0	8.1
Health and personal care	111.0	111.1	109.2	-0.1	1.6
Recreation, education and reading	120.8	119.9	117.3	0.8	3.0
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco products	96.7	96.4	93.7	0.3	3.2
Goods	110.9	109.6	106.7	1.2	3.9
Services	115.1	114.8	112.8	0.3	2.0
All-items excluding food and energy	111.6	111.2	109.9	0.4	1.5
Energy	127.0	122.1	103.8	4.0	22.4
Purchasing power of the consumer dollar expressed in cents, compared with 1992	88.7	89.3	91.3		
All-items (1986=100)	144.5				

Consumer Price Index for the provinces, Whitehorse and Yellowknife 1992=100

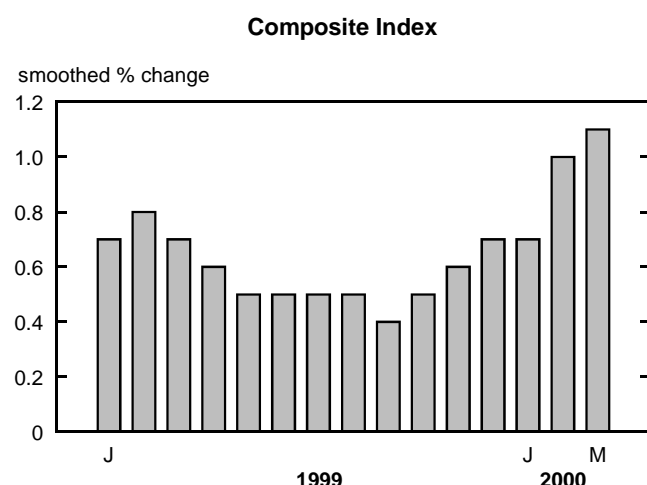
	Mar. 2000	Feb. 2000	Mar. 1999	Feb. to Mar. 2000	Mar. 1999 to Mar. 2000
not seasonally adjusted					
				% change	
Newfoundland	113.0	112.5	109.2	0.4	3.5
Prince Edward Island	110.3	109.2	106.6	1.0	3.5
Nova Scotia	113.5	112.9	108.7	0.5	4.4
New Brunswick	112.2	111.1	107.7	1.0	4.2
Quebec	110.0	109.6	107.4	0.4	2.4
Ontario	113.7	112.8	110.0	0.8	3.4
Manitoba	117.4	116.7	113.8	0.6	3.2
Saskatchewan	115.8	115.0	113.1	0.7	2.4
Alberta	115.8	114.7	111.9	1.0	3.5
British Columbia	112.3	111.4	110.3	0.8	1.8
Whitehorse	113.3	112.9	111.1	0.4	2.0
Yellowknife	110.4	109.9	108.3	0.5	1.9



Composite Index

March 2000

The leading indicator grew by 1.1% in March, about the same as the 1.0% advance posted in February. These gains reflect the strength of household demand at the start of the new year, as manufacturing and the U.S. leading index slowed.



The housing index recorded a second straight gain in March; single-family homes took over from multiples

in buttressing housing starts, which hit their highest two-month total since 1992. The strength in housing demand also spurred on furniture and appliance sales for the second month in a row. Spending on other durable goods continued to grow at twice the pace of three months ago. All these gains in household spending reflect buoyant consumer confidence, bolstered by the strength in labour and stock markets.

New orders for durable goods posted their smallest gain in six months, as machinery dipped in line with the slowdown in investment intentions for this year. Business services employment eked out another small increase compared with the rapid gains it saw in 1998 and 1999.

In the United States, new orders for capital goods also slowed the growth of the U.S. leading indicator. Among other declines, building permits dipped as interest rates rose.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 193.

For more information on the economy, see the April 2000 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227), which will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. □

Composite Index

	Oct. 1999	Nov. 1999	Dec. 1999	Jan. 2000	Feb. 2000	March 2000	Last month of data available % change
Composite leading indicator (1992=100)	153.7	154.6	155.7	156.8	158.4	160.1	1.1
Housing index (1992=100) ¹	99.6	99.1	98.2	97.6	98.1	99.2	1.1
Business and personal services employment ('000)	2,345	2,349	2,358	2,365	2,372	2,379	0.3
TSE 300 stock price index (1975=1,000)	7,055	7,158	7,424	7,726	8,161	8,602	5.4
Money supply, M1 (\$ millions, 1992) ²	79,757	80,365	82,007	82,782	84,035	85,580	1.8
U.S. composite leading indicator (1992=100) ³	107.8	107.9	107.9	108.0	108.2	108.3	0.1
Manufacturing							
Average work week (hours)	38.8	38.7	38.7	38.7	38.8	39.0	0.5
New orders, durables (\$ millions, 1992) ⁴	20,703	21,100	21,348	21,538	21,773	21,800	0.1
Shipments/inventories of finished goods ⁴	1.90	1.91	1.91	1.91	1.91	1.91	0.0 ⁵
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales (\$ millions, 1992) ⁴	1,391	1,404	1,416	1,415	1,419	1,432	0.9
Other durable goods sales (\$ millions, 1992) ⁴	6,490	6,558	6,584	6,623	6,683	6,735	0.8
Unsmoothed composite	154.9	155.9	158.4	160.2	162.8	163.2	0.2

¹ Composite index of housing starts (units) and house sales (multiple listing service).

² Deflated by the Consumer Price Index for all items.

³ The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the month immediately preceding.

⁴ The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for two preceding months.

⁵ Difference from previous month.



OTHER RELEASES

Travel between Canada and other countries

February 2000

In February, the overall number of trips by foreigners to Canada decreased 1.8% from January to 4.1 million. Meanwhile, the number of international trips by Canadians increased 1.9% over the previous month to 4.0 million, mostly due to the increase in the number of their overnight trips to the United States. (Unless otherwise stated, data are seasonally adjusted.)

Canadians made 1.3 million overnight trips to the United States in February, up 7.2% from January — the highest level in more than two years. Americans made 1.3 million overnight trips this side of the border, down slightly (-0.4%) from January.

Although the car remains by far the most common mode of transportation for travel between Canada and the United States, air travel has been gaining ground since the signing of the Open Skies Agreement in February 1995. Americans made 320,000 overnight air trips to Canada in February, up 1.3% over January. Air travel accounted for 24.6% of overnight trips by Americans to Canada in February compared with 19.9% five years earlier. Canadians increased their overnight air trips to the United States by 11.1% from January to a record high of 444,000. The share of overnight air trips south of the border has increased from 24.4% in February 1995 to 35.0% in February 2000.

Americans made 2.2 million same-day car trips to Canada in February, practically unchanged (+0.3%) from January. Meanwhile, the number of such trips by Canadians to the United States decreased 1.2% from January to 2.3 million.

Canadians travelled for at least one night to overseas destinations on 356,000 occasions in February, up 6.4% from January. Over the same period, the number of overnight trips by overseas residents to Canada decreased by 1.6%, down to 372,000.

Among travellers from Canada's most important overseas markets, travellers from South Korea (+43.6%), Italy (+28.9%), United Kingdom (+21.1%) and France (+21.0%) made substantially more overnight trips to Canada in February 2000 than in the same period last year, while travellers from Hong Kong (-17.9%), Japan (-8.6%) and Germany (-6.1%) recorded the largest drop in the number of trips to Canada (unadjusted data).

Travel between Canada and other countries

	Jan. 2000 ^r	Feb. 2000 ^p	Jan. to Feb. 2000	Feb. 2000 ^p	Feb. 1999 to Feb. 2000
	seasonally adjusted			unadjusted	
	'000	% change		'000	% change
Canadian trips abroad¹	3,935	4,012	1.9	3,321	7.9
Same-day car trips to the United States	2,329	2,302	-1.2	1,868	6.0
Total trips, one or more nights	1,516	1,623	7.0	1,370	11.0
United States ²	1,181	1,266	7.2	930	15.0
Car	670	710	5.9	371	10.0
Plane	399	444	11.1	509	19.0
Other modes of transportation	111	113	1.1	50	5.0
Other countries ³	335	356	6.4	440	3.0
Travel to Canada¹	4,156	4,082	-1.8	2,776	0.3
Same-day car trips from the United States	2,231	2,238	0.3	1,754	-2.0
Total trips, one or more nights	1,684	1,674	-0.6	931	4.0
United States ²	1,306	1,301	-0.4	732	3.0
Car	837	828	-1.0	443	3.0
Plane	315	320	1.3	229	4.0
Other modes of transportation	154	154	-0.1	61	-7.0
Other countries ³	378	372	-1.6	198	10.0
Most important overseas markets					
United Kingdom	..	..	..	47	21.1
Japan	..	..	..	19	-8.6
France	..	..	..	25	21.0
Germany	..	..	..	12	-6.1
Taiwan	..	..	..	8	12.6
Australia	..	..	..	9	12.9
Hong Kong	..	..	..	9	-17.9
Mexico	..	..	..	5	17.7
Netherlands	..	..	..	4	12.6
Italy	..	..	..	4	28.9
Switzerland	..	..	..	4	2.2
South Korea	..	..	..	6	43.6

^r Revised figures.^p Preliminary figures.¹ Totals exceed the sum of same-day car trips and total trips, one or more nights because they include all of the same-day trips.² Estimates for the United States include counts of cars and buses, and estimated numbers for planes, trains, boats and other methods.³ Figures for other countries exclude same-day entries by land only via the United States.

.. Figures not available.

Note: Month-to-month comparisons use seasonally adjusted data. Year-over-year comparisons use unadjusted data.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2661-2697, 5780-6049 and 8200-8329.

The February 2000 issue of *Touriscope, international travel* (66-001-PPB, \$8/\$73) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

For data requests, contact Pearl Bellefeuille (613-951-1674; fax: 613-951-2909; pearl.bellefeuille@statcan.ca). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Johanne Plante (613-951-1910; fax: 613-951-2909; johanne.plante@statcan.ca), Tourism Statistics Program. ■

Railway carloadings

10-day period ending March 31, 2000

Non-intermodal traffic loaded during the ten-day period ending March 31 increased 9.6% to 7.8 million tonnes compared with the same period in 1999. The number of cars loaded increased 10.6%.

Intermodal traffic tonnage totalled 661 000 tonnes, a 23.1% increase from the same period of last year. The year-to-date figures increased 19.2%.

Total traffic increased 10.5% during the period. This brought the year-to-date total to 68.5 million tonnes, an increase of 12.6% from the previous year.

All year-to-date figures have been revised.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0009; laroque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

Dairy statistics

February and March 2000 (preliminary)

Dairy statistics for February and March are now available.

These data will be included in the January-March 2000 issue of *The dairy review* (23-001-XPB, \$36/\$119; 23-001-XIB, \$27/\$89), which will be released in May. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Anna Michalowska (613-951-2442; 1-800-465-1991; fax: 613-951-3868), Agriculture Division. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Touriscope, international travel, vol. 16, no. 2
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Change the statistics on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1995, each Canadian took an average of about 40 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1995** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was noticeably weak again in 1995, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow moderate growth during the year.

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