

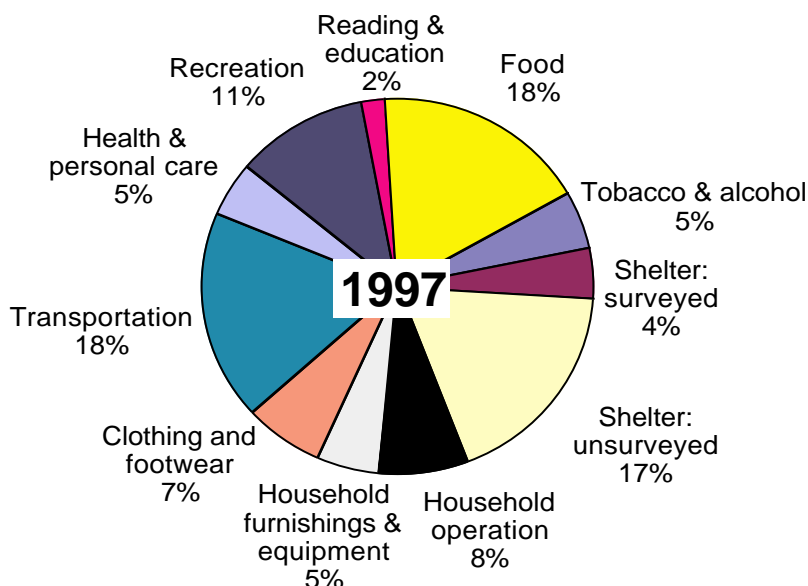
Cost of Living, 1997

In June 1989, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics conducted a complete Spatial Price Survey (a price comparison survey) in Whitehorse, Edmonton and Vancouver. Using the results of this survey as a base, this information sheet presents imputed price indexes for 1996 and 1997, constructed from item-level consumer price indexes obtained from Statistics Canada (See information sheet #12, January 1990, for detailed results of the 1989 Spatial Price Survey.)

The tables in this information sheet report price differences in the form of index numbers. The indexes comparing Whitehorse and Alberta set the Alberta prices to 100; when B.C. and Whitehorse are compared, the B.C. price is set to 100. An index number “x” points above (or below) 100 represents a price level “x” points higher (or lower) in Whitehorse than in the southern province. (During 1995, Statistics Canada re-designed its price surveys to emphasize estimates of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) by province, rather than by major city as in the past. Statistics Canada now focuses on CPI estimates for each of the ten provinces and does not give the same prominence to the city estimates. This does not apply to the two northern territories, where CPI data for Whitehorse and Yellowknife are released as usual. Statistics Canada does not attempt to estimate the CPI for Yukon or N.W.T.)

The items surveyed included goods and services in each of the seven major components of consumer spending: Food; Shelter; Clothing; Transportation; Health and Personal Care; Recreation, Reading and Education; and Tobacco and Alcohol. The assumed pattern of expenditure follows that employed in Statistics Canada’s Consumer Price Index. The goods and services compared in the survey cover over 80 percent of consumer expenditures; the remaining items (all in the area of shelter expenses) could not be accurately compared. The exact weights attached to each component of expenditure vary slightly from year to year in accordance with patterns of consumer spending and are shown in the chart below.

The imputed price indexes are not simplistic extrapolations from the survey-based 1989 indexes; rather, using the 1989 Yukon Spatial Price Survey as a base, they utilize commodity-level price movements as recorded in the Consumer Price Index. Because the Spatial Price Survey was based on a sample of consumer products, the commodity-level index estimates are subject to a certain amount of volatility, which can result in anomalies at low levels of aggregation. The indexes presented here, therefore, are calculated at higher levels of aggregation, ensuring more reliable estimates. Imputing price indexes, as opposed to conducting complete price surveys, is a very cost-effective approach to estimating price indexes for inter-survey years.



This chart shows the 1997 weights of eleven components in the spatial price index. These weights, expressed as percentages, represent the relative importance of each item in the average Whitehorse household's annual expenditure on consumer goods and services. Each weight can be thought of as the percentage of a household's disposable income spent on a particular item(s).

Whitehorse - Alberta Highlights

All Items

Retail prices in June 1997 averaged 25.7% higher in Whitehorse than in Alberta, 0.6 percentage points higher than the year before. The greatest price differences were seen in housing (37.8% more) and food (35.3% more).

Food

The gap between Whitehorse and Alberta food prices increased from 33.2% higher in 1996 to 35.3% higher in 1997. Restaurant meals went down slightly - from 37.9% higher in Whitehorse to 37.6% higher in Whitehorse. Food purchased in stores increased from 30.9% higher to 33.8% higher. The most significant price differential was observed in bakery and other cereal products (54.3%).

Housing

Consumer prices in housing were 37.8% higher in Whitehorse than in Alberta, up slightly from last year's 36.9% spread. (Note that rent and owned housing are not included in these price comparisons.) Shelter expenses averaged 50.1% higher in Whitehorse. Household operation expenses were 25.9% higher in Whitehorse, while household furnishings and equipment cost 10.9% more, on average.

Clothing

Clothing prices were 19.3% higher in Whitehorse, down from 19.6% higher in 1996. Prices in each of the clothing sub-components were higher in Whitehorse: women's wear, by 19.8%; men's wear, by 21.5%; childrens' wear, by 16.3%; and clothing material, notions and services, by 30.7%.

Transportation

Consumer prices in transportation averaged 11.1% higher in Whitehorse than in Alberta - up from 10.0% higher in 1996. Private transportation averaged 2.2% more (unchanged from 1996), while public transportation was 55.9% more (up from 53.1%).

Health and Personal Care

Overall, these items cost 16.5% more in Whitehorse than in Alberta, down from last year's 20.4% more.

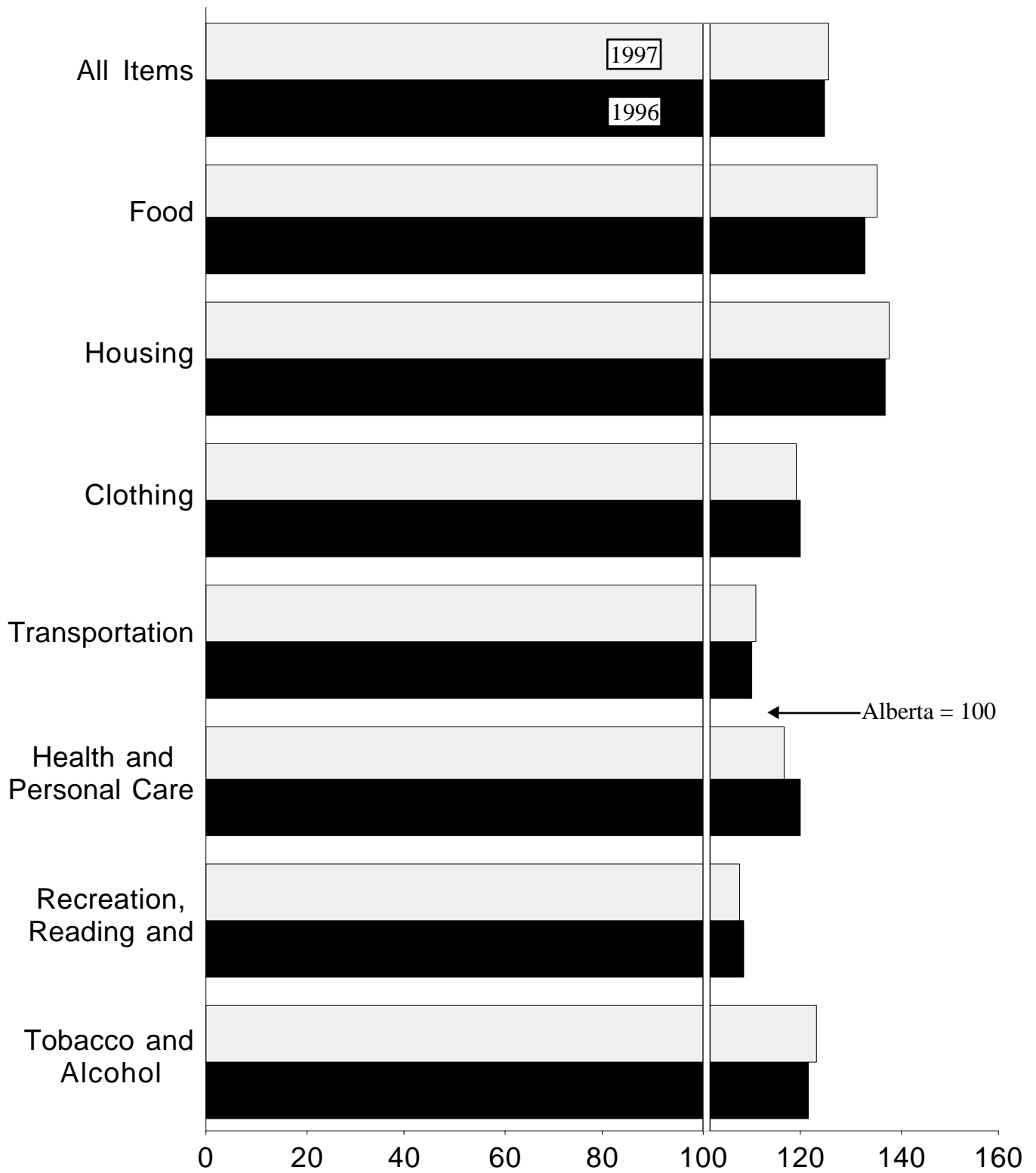
Recreation, Reading and Education

Retail prices in this component were 7.7% higher in Whitehorse, down from 8.5% higher in 1996. The recreation sub-component was 10.9% higher in Whitehorse, while education and reading was 8.3% lower.

Tobacco and Alcohol

Consumer prices for tobacco and alcohol averaged 23.5% higher in Whitehorse, up from last year's 21.4% gap. Prices in the tobacco sub-component were 16.5% higher, compared to 18.8% higher last year. Alcoholic beverages were 29.7% higher, compared to 24.0% higher last year.

Whitehorse Compared to Alberta, 1996 and 1997



Whitehorse - Alberta Item Comparisons

Alberta = 100

		1996	1997	
Food	Food purchased in stores	Meat	120.9	126.4
		Fish and other seafood	110.7	116.3
		Dairy products and eggs	130.3	128.7
		Bakery and other cereal products	159.3	154.3
		Fruit, fruit preparations, and nuts	124.7	138.8
		Vegetables and vegetable preparations	127.6	142.2
		Other food products	128.3	125.0
		Total	130.9	133.8
		Restaurant meals	137.9	137.6
	Total	133.2	135.3	
Housing	Shelter	147.3	150.1	
	Household operations	128.3	125.9	
	Household furnishings & equipment	115.2	110.9	
	Total	136.9	137.8	
Clothing	Women's wear	118.7	119.8	
	Men's wear	119.1	121.5	
	Children's wear	116.2	116.3	
	Clothing material, notions, and services	132.8	130.7	
	Total	119.6	119.3	
Transportation	Private transportation	102.2	102.2	
	Public transportation	153.1	155.9	
	Total	110.0	111.1	
Health and Personal Care	Health care	126.2	122.4	
	Personal care	117.1	112.9	
	Total	120.4	116.5	
Recreation, Reading and Education	Recreation	111.7	110.9	
	Education and reading	90.4	91.7	
	Total	108.5	107.7	
Tobacco and Alcohol	Alcoholic beverages	124.0	129.7	
	Tobacco	118.8	116.5	
	Total	121.4	123.5	
All Items		125.1	125.7	

Whitehorse - B.C. Highlights

All Items

Retail prices in 1997 averaged 11.5% higher in Whitehorse than in B.C., 2.2 percentage points higher than in 1996 (9.3%). The greatest price differences were seen in housing (18.9%), food (15.5%) and recreation, education and reading (7.8%) .

Food

The gap between food prices in Whitehorse and B.C. increased from 11.3% in 1996 to 15.5% in 1997. Food purchased in stores increased from 10.4% higher to 16.5% higher. The most significant price differentials occurred in vegetables and vegetable preparations (38.8%) and in fruit, fruit preparations and nuts (24.7%). Restaurant meals were higher in Whitehorse than in B.C., by 13.4%.

Housing

Consumer prices in housing were 18.9% higher in Whitehorse than in B.C., up from 17.2% in 1996. (Note that rent and owned housing are not included in these price comparisons.) Shelter costs averaged 26.1% higher in Whitehorse. Household operation expenses were 13.8% higher in Whitehorse, while items associated with household furnishings and equipment cost 2.2% less, on average.

Clothing

Clothing prices were 6.9% higher in Whitehorse, down by 2.4 percentage points from 1996 (9.3%). Prices in each of the following clothing sub-components were higher: women's wear, by 10.2%; men's wear, by 5.0%; children's wear, by 1.9%, and clothing material, notions and services, by 35.5%.

Transportation

Consumer prices in transportation averaged 2.3% higher in Whitehorse than in B.C. - up from 1.1% lower in 1996. Private transportation averaged 4.8% less, while public transportation was 35.3% more.

Health and Personal Care

Overall, these items cost 0.6% more in Whitehorse than in B.C., down from last year's 2.4% more.

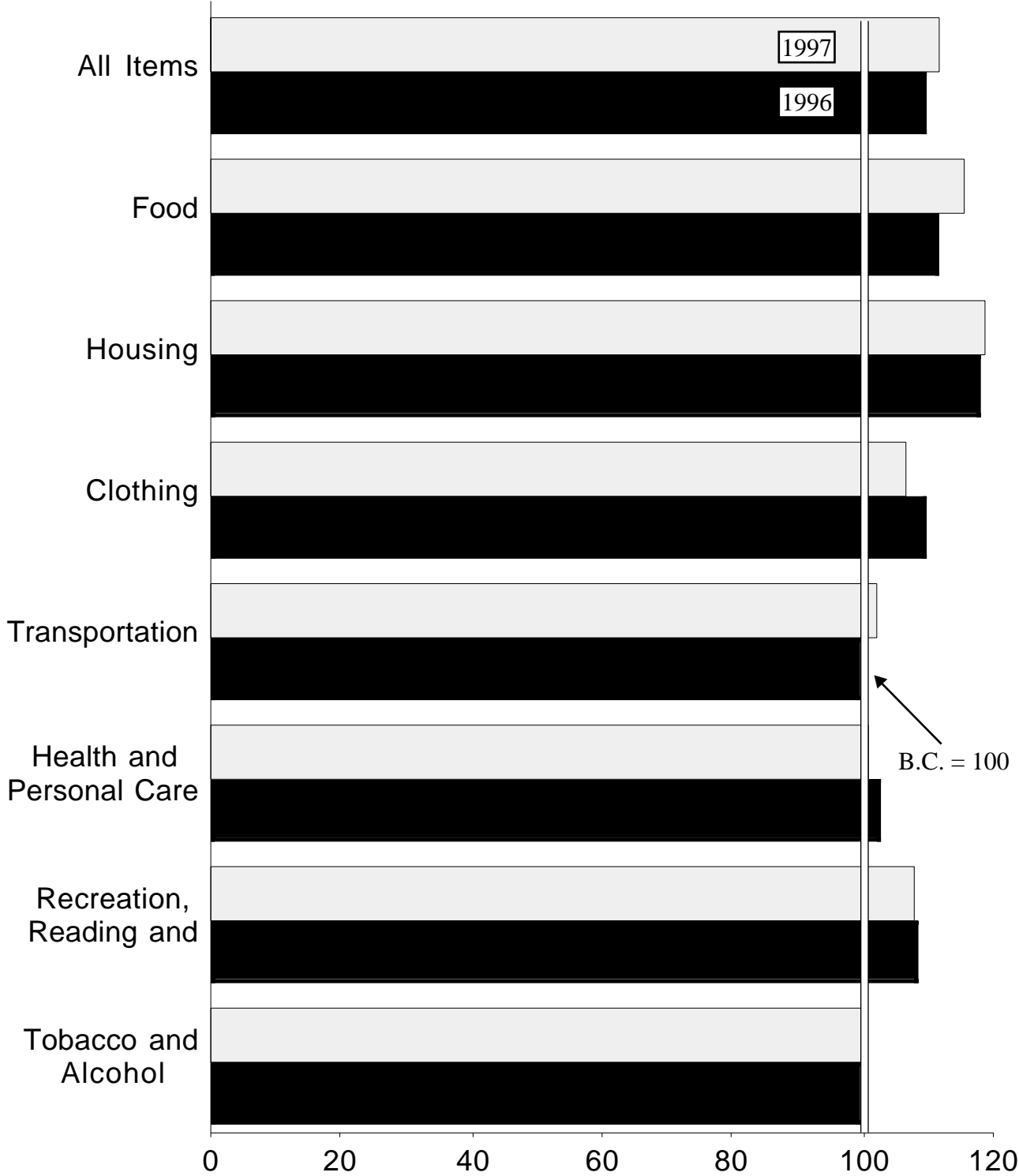
Recreation, Reading and Education

Retail prices in this component were 7.8% higher in Whitehorse, down from 7.9% higher in 1996. The recreation sub-component was 7.0% higher in Whitehorse and education and reading was 11.5% higher.

Tobacco and Alcohol

Consumer prices for tobacco and alcohol averaged 0.1% lower in Whitehorse than in B.C., compared to 1.3% lower in 1996. Prices in the tobacco sub-component were 8.2% lower, compared to 6.4% lower last year. Alcoholic beverages cost, on average, 6.1% more.

Whitehorse Compared to B.C., 1996 and 1997



Whitehorse - B.C. Item Comparisons

B.C. = 100

		1996	1997	
Food	Food purchased in stores	Meat	95.8	105.7
		Fish and other seafood	99.0	102.0
		Dairy products and eggs	111.5	110.3
		Bakery and other cereal products	119.9	119.5
		Fruit, fruit preparations, and nuts	100.0	124.7
		Vegetables and vegetable preparations	117.2	138.8
		Other food products	121.3	117.1
		Total	110.4	116.5
	Restaurant meals	113.4	113.4	
	Total	111.3	115.5	
Housing	Shelter	121.2	126.1	
	Household operations	116.9	113.8	
	Household furnishings & equipment	100.8	97.8	
	Total	117.2	118.9	
Clothing	Women's wear	112.9	110.2	
	Men's wear	109.7	105.0	
	Children's wear	104.3	101.9	
	Clothing material, notions, and services	131.2	135.5	
	Total	109.3	106.9	
Transportation	Private transportation	92.5	95.2	
	Public transportation	134.0	135.3	
	Total	98.9	102.3	
Health and Personal Care	Health care	117.6	116.4	
	Personal care	93.5	91.4	
	Total	102.4	100.6	
Recreation, Reading and Education	Recreation	108.4	107.0	
	Education and reading	105.2	111.5	
	Total	107.9	107.8	
Tobacco and Alcohol	Alcoholic beverages	102.3	106.1	
	Tobacco	93.6	91.8	
	Total	98.7	99.9	
All Items		109.3	111.5	

