



Fuel Sense

Don't let rising fuel prices burn a hole in your personal and business motoring costs



High petrol and diesel prices are now an unavoidable fact of life and they are set to rise even higher. Motorists are already feeling the pinch as the cost of a fill-up climbs to £50, £60 or £70.

This guide from BMW Corporate Finance, the company car and employee car scheme specialist, looks at ways to minimise the impact of rising fuel prices on your personal and business motoring costs. It seems that nothing can stop fuel prices going up but, by taking action now, you could cut your petrol or diesel bill by hundreds of pounds over the next few years.

Fuel cost facts

A petrol-engined car typically covers around seven miles on a litre of fuel, while a diesel manages a bit more – around nine miles. If fuel costs £1 a litre, petrol costs 14p a mile and diesel costs 11p a mile.

That doesn't sound much, but if you drive an average of 30 private miles a day, you are likely to be spending between £1,100 and £1,500 a year on fuel for private driving.

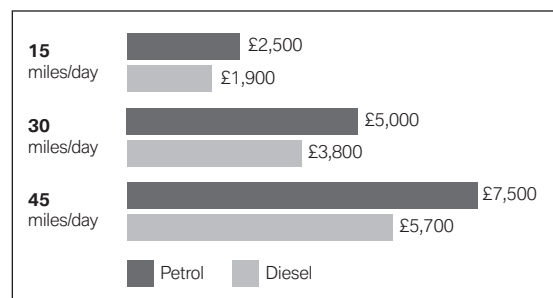
That's a big jump from the £600 to £800 it cost 10 years ago. Unlike in previous decades, the oil producers are already pumping flat out and cannot bring down prices by increasing production.

Beyond the £1 litre

If fuel prices follow recent trends, UK petrol and diesel prices are likely to reach £1.25 a litre over the next two to three years.

It is not all bad news, though. You can make every pound you spend at the pumps literally go further. Turn the page for fuel-saving tips that could save you hundreds – possibly thousands – of pounds over the next three years!

What fuel could cost you



The chart above shows what rising fuel prices could cost you in the next three years, depending on how many private miles you drive. For instance, if you drive 30 miles a day and buy petrol, your private motoring over the next three years will cost you around £5,000, assuming a fuel cost of £1.25 in 2009.

Fuel-saving tips to make every pound go further

Make each litre go further



If someone gave you a bundle of £10 notes and said: "I want you to burn these one at a time for five minutes but after that time you can keep whatever's left", you would try to make each note stay alight as long as possible. It's the same with fuel: the slower you burn it, the more money you keep in your pocket.

Smoothly does it

Avoid over-revving the engine. Hard or sudden braking is also a sign that you are wasting fuel by not anticipating in time to lift off the throttle earlier.

Plan journeys

Allow extra time for hold ups. This means you can avoid wasting fuel and risking your licence by speeding to make up time.

Regular servicing saves fuel

In particular, under-inflated tyres can raise fuel consumption by 10% (at £1 a litre that costs £5 extra every tankful).

Lose 'lb' not '£'

Don't carry unnecessary weight in the car.

Not for wimps

With care, it is possible to cut your fuel consumption by 10% – driving economically is not for wimps; it's for drivers who are too smart to burn their money unnecessarily.

Watch your speed

Sticking to the speed limit is not only safer but noticeably more economical. At high speeds, your car could be using up to 25% more fuel than necessary.

Idling is expensive

Warm a cold engine by driving, not waiting, and turn off the engine if you are stationary in heavy traffic or waiting for passengers.

Streamline your car

Maximise the aerodynamics by closing the windows and removing roofbars whenever they're not needed.

Be cool, not cold

Turn off or turn down air conditioning when not needed: using aircon increases fuel consumption.

Buy at the right price



Supermarket sweep

Supermarket fuel prices are typically 2p a litre below national average prices – not a massive saving but one that adds up over time (and you can also get loyalty card points). Filling stations close to supermarkets are often nearly as cheap, because they try to keep their prices competitive.

Motorway madness

By contrast, motorway service stations are almost always the most expensive places to fill up; costing around £3 a tankful more than supermarkets. Don't be a captive audience; always filling up at lower priced sites really helps to take the sting out of rising fuel prices.

Drive less



Combined with shopping around for cheaper fuel and driving economically, finding ways to drive fewer miles really puts the pounds back in your wallet.

Plan to save

Check out the shortest route before you set out or go online and type 'route planner' into a search engine to find a website to do it for you.

Save the planet

Reducing your mileage by 25 miles a week could save £500 over three years in fuel and prevent more than half a tonne of greenhouse gas emissions.

Think diesel



Diesel owners enjoy a real cost advantage in fuel terms, although technological advances mean that some petrol cars are now also quite frugal. Diesel fuel is more expensive than petrol but the extra miles you get for every litre more than make up for it. If you currently drive a typical petrol car and are lucky enough to be about to acquire a new car, going for diesel could save you £1,000 at the pumps over the next three years.

It pays to use fuel sense

No two cars or drivers are the same but by shopping around and watching fuel economy and mileage, you could save hundreds, possibly thousands of pounds over the next three years. It's also much less stressful and a lot more environmentally friendly into the bargain. That really is 'Fuel Sense'.

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