

Dec 17, 2015 12:59 GMT

31 million Christmas car journeys to take place by Boxing Day as motorists get set for a festive rush

- *Christmas Eve will be the main day for getaways by road*
- *Ice creams rather than ice scrapers set to be a common sight as winter warmth continues*
- *Festive trips will cost the average family £7 less per petrol fill up this year than in 2014*

This year's great Christmas getaway will see 31 million car journeys taken by road as motorists leave to spend the festive season with family and friends,* according to new RAC Traffic Watch data.

Christmas Eve is expected to be the busiest day with 4.1 million separate journeys taken, with drivers competing with everyday traffic to get quickly and safely to their chosen festive holiday destination.

According to the RAC Traffic Watch study, which asked more than 1,700 motorists about their Christmas getaway driving plans, Christmas Day and Boxing Day are not far behind with some 7.1 million Christmas journeys taking place across both days.

Many motorists, however, are planning on starting their break earlier, with 3.3 million journeys taking place on Saturday 19 December and 3.5 million on Sunday 20 December. With many schools breaking up on Friday 18 December, this suggests Saturday could be the day when most presents are wrapped and

cars are packed up.

And, while the getaway will inevitably be challenging due to the volume of traffic and the unprecedented number of roadworks currently taking place on major roads, at least falling fuel prices will make the cost of travelling by car substantially cheaper this year.

Thanks to plunging fuel prices it typically costs £7 less to fill up a petrol family car such as a Vauxhall Astra or Ford Focus than it did in December 2014. Diesel drivers should see a saving of at least £8 per tank at the pumps, but given recent falls in the wholesale price of the fuel the RAC believes they should be paying even less this side of Christmas.

RAC Traffic Watch spokesman Rod Dennis said: “Around 11 million separate Christmas-related car journeys will take place between Christmas Eve and Boxing Day, and this is consistent with previous years – but motorists may benefit from traffic flows that are more evenly spaced out this year, perhaps as a result of schools breaking up a full week before Christmas Day.

“Christmas Eve is set to be the most hectic and it’s a good idea motorists plan ahead for that now. While there are 101 different things to think about before the big day, performing some basic maintenance such as checking oil and coolant levels, and making sure tyres are inflated properly can go a long way towards making the Christmas getaway journey a little smoother.

“Strangely, this Christmas ice creams are likely to be a more common sight than ice scrapers, with unusually high temperatures right across the UK. However, with the unseasonable winter warmth will likely come a lot of rain, especially in northern and western parts of the country so we are advising motorists to keep a close eye on the weather forecast, and heed any warnings issued by the Met Office before they set out.

“And, the other bit of good news is the reduced cost of fuel this festive season will make travelling to see family and friends substantially cheaper than last year. Coupled with low inflation, families should feel less of a squeeze on their finances this year – although we are urging retailers to cut the price of diesel to reflect falling wholesale prices.”

Christmas getaway car journeys this year

Tuesday 22 December	3.3 million journeys
Wednesday 23 December	3.3 million journeys
<i>Thursday 24 December</i>	<i>4.1 million journey s</i>
Friday 25 December	3.5 million journeys
Saturday 26 December	3.5 million journeys

Anticipated worst times to travel on the roads

Thursday 24 December	Between 4pm and 9pm
Sunday 20 December	Between 9am and 4pm
Friday 25 December	Between 9am and 12pm

Anticipated busiest roads

M25	In both directions	Surrey
A4 and M4	Westbound	West of London
M5	Southbound	Between Gloucester and Portishead

Notes to Editors

* Figure covers expected Christmas car journeys between 18/12/15 and 26/12/15 inclusive. Research conducted by ragdoll with 1,759 motorists as respondents; figure extrapolated to 29.6 million licensed cars as of 2014.

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used

car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 34 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 98% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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