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Drivers set to embark on more than 12m leisure trips over last bank holiday for most this side of Christmas

An estimated 12.5m leisure journeys will be made by car between Friday and the end of Monday as drivers seek to make the most of the last bank holiday in England and Wales this side of Christmas, new figures from RAC Breakdown indicate. *

The RAC expects Friday to be the most popular day for getting away with around 4.3m separate leisure trips planned by drivers eager to make the most

of the long weekend, followed by Saturday with 2.3m and Sunday and Monday each with 1.3m. An estimated additional 3.3m trips will be taken at some point between Friday and the end of Monday, a number that could increase dramatically if there is a further good spell of summery weather. Transport analytics specialists INRIX recommends drivers set off early in the morning in the hope of missing some of the longest queues.

Focus of the jams on the roads is likely to be on the M25 near London – where INRIX predicts the stretch between Bromley and the Dartford Crossing will see some of the busiest conditions throughout the weekend** – and in the south west of England, on the A303 in particular. The RAC’s research suggests some 3.6m leisure trips by car are planned to Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset alone between Friday and Monday, peaking on Friday with around 2m individual journeys.

INRIX also calls out the M60, between J7 for the A56 (Altrincham) and J18 for the M62, and the M25 clockwise, between J7 for the M23 and J16 for the M40, as roads that are likely to see bank holiday tailbacks.

With the inevitable strain on some parts of the road network, the RAC is warning drivers to plan ahead to avoid congestion and do whatever they can to avert a breakdown, with so many that will occur in the next few days being completely avoidable if drivers look over their cars before setting out. Checking tyre pressures and tread, as well as oil and coolant levels, can cut the likelihood of a breakdown dramatically. It’s also vital drivers have enough fuel or charge for whatever journey they are planning, and schedule enough stops to avoid driving tired.

RAC Breakdown spokesperson Rod Dennis said:

“Despite more people choosing to head abroad on holiday this summer compared to the last two years, the cost-of-living crisis has meant many people have again opted for a break in the UK – and that’s lead to some busy conditions on the roads, and sadly a lot of breakdowns. In fact, we’ve seen no reduction in the numbers of people breaking down this summer compared to last, which again suggests the UK’s roads are just as hectic this summer as they were a year ago.

“We’re expecting busy roads to continue throughout this bank holiday weekend, especially to major holiday destinations with people eager to enjoy

some time away before the new school terms begin in England and Wales. The south east and south west of England look as though they may bear the brunt of the traffic, with the message to drivers travelling through these regions clear – head off early in the morning or be prepared to sit in traffic.

“The last thing anyone who is trying to head away or come back from a break wants is a breakdown, yet so many of the jobs our patrols will go out to over the next few days can be avoided so long as a few quick checks are made. Making sure a car is ‘road ready’ can be as simple as ensuring tyres are free of damage, have plenty of tread and are inflated properly, and making sure oil, coolant and screenwash levels are all where they should be. If you’re aware of any existing problems with your car, get these checked out by an approved garage before setting out – a long drive is not the time to put your car to the test.”

INRIX transportation analyst Bob Pishue said:

“We expect to see an increase in travel times throughout the holiday weekend on major roads in the UK, with Thursday and Friday seeing the largest delays compared to normal. Drivers planning to get away are going to find themselves competing with commuters and holiday travellers for road space, so we recommend adjusting travel plans or pack their patience.”

Around 98% of England’s major A-roads and motorways will be free of roadworks over the weekend after National Highways lifted more than 900 miles of works in time for the bank holiday. Some roadworks need to be kept in place for safety reasons so drivers are urged to plan their journeys before setting off by visiting www.trafficengland.com.

National Highways head of road safety Jeremy Phillips said:

“We know that breaking down can be a very upsetting experience, nobody wants to start off their holiday stranded at the side of the road, next to fast moving traffic.

“That’s why we are reminding drivers to check their vehicles before setting off over the Bank Holiday weekend, particularly the tyres.

“Unsafe tyres put you and others at risk as well increasing your chances of

attracting a hefty fine and penalty points.

Met Office Deputy Chief Meteorologist, Rebekah Sherwin, said:

“The bank holiday weekend will see mixed conditions across the UK – although most places will see the sun, it is unlikely to be entirely dry. Most parts of the south and east may well stay dry and bright for the majority of the weekend, while cloudier and wetter weather is expected at times further north and west, with some more persistent rain possible for parts of Northern Ireland and western Scotland on Sunday or Monday. For most, it will feel pleasantly warm in the sunshine, but chillier than of late in the evenings and overnight, especially in more rural areas. Looking a few days ahead details are likely to change, so keep an eye on the latest Met Office forecast on our app or social media.”

The fastest way for RAC members to log a breakdown and get help is online at www.rac.co.uk/reportbreakdown.

The press office email address is press.enquiries@rac.co.uk and media centre is at media.rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to 13 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. The RAC is also at the forefront in helping drivers make the switch to electric vehicles and leads in the development of new solutions for businesses and OEMs, partnering with the best in the motoring and mobility space.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

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