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Foreign roads put the UK's to shame, say drivers

An overwhelming majority of UK drivers think the roads they've driven on in other European countries put the UK's potholed-plagued streets to shame, new [RAC Europe](#) research shows.*

As many as 72% of drivers who have experience of driving abroad think the condition of roads – such as the number and severity of potholes – is worse in the UK than in other countries, with just 8% saying the UK fares better. More than six-in-10 (62%) meanwhile say roadside litter is less of a problem

abroad than it is this side of the Channel compared to the tiny 7% who think the UK roads are the cleanest.

In fact, of the 14 different aspects of roads and driving the RAC asked drivers to compare between the UK and other European countries, the UK comes out better on just one – the ease of understanding road signs, with 38% of drivers saying they find this more straightforward at home than abroad. Nearly half (49%), however believe there is little or no difference and 13% say they find foreign road signs clearer.

On the issue of motorway driving speeds, around half (53%) of drivers said they see little difference in the number of people driving excessively fast whether they are at home or abroad, but a third (32%) still said the problem was less prevalent in other countries. And while half (51%) said they can't tell the difference between the standard of driving of UK drivers and their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, 28% still felt foreign motorists drive better – compared to a fifth (21%) who think UK motorists do.

Overall, four-in-10 drivers felt the experience of driving abroad is better abroad than it is in the UK, with only a quarter (24%) saying they prefer getting behind the wheel this side of the Channel.

RAC Europe spokesperson Rod Dennis:

“This research is utterly damning when it comes to the state of many of our nation's roads when we compare them to the pristine ribbons of asphalt that can be found just across the Channel. We've said for years that given the amount drivers pay in tax, it's verging on the ridiculous that they have to endure no end of potholes when driving at home. It's clear from what drivers have told us they seem to forget all about potholes once they've left the UK, with unanimous agreement that foreign roads are simply better.

“But it's not just the pothole crisis that beleaguers the UK. Drivers tells us there is far less roadside litter abroad, and the visibility of painted road markings and traffic congestion – both in urban areas and on motorways – are both much better elsewhere in Europe. It's perhaps little wonder then that around half of all the drivers we surveyed (48%) have enjoyed driving abroad in the past, whether in their own car or one rented in the country where they were staying. Interestingly, a quarter expect to have taken their own car abroad by the end of 2023.

“We urge anyone venturing abroad this summer in their own car to ensure they have the reassurance that comes from having a [quality European breakdown policy](#) behind them. And for anyone hiring a car abroad, having [car hire excess insurance](#) can make a lot of sense as rental firms routinely charge thousands of pounds if a car is damaged or stolen, a cost that drivers can get reimbursed if they’ve taken out this insurance before they go.”

* RAC Opinion Panel survey of 2,000 drivers, of which 1,423 have driven elsewhere in Europe

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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.

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