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March sees welcome relief at the pumps as fuel drops by 2.5p a litre

- *5% drop in oil price causes biggest fall in the price of diesel since January 2016*
- *Largest fall in petrol price since November*

The price of fuel fell by more than 2.5p a litre in March bringing the average price of petrol down to 117.54p and diesel to 119.54p, data from [RAC Fuel Watch](#) reveals*.

At the start of March a litre of unleaded cost 120.15p and diesel 122.19p, but the biggest fall in the price of a barrel of oil since last July (\$3 – \$55.31 on 1 March to \$52.30 on 30 March) led the supermarkets to make two 2p-a-litre cuts in the course of the month, winding back prices to a similar level they started 2017 at and shaving £1.40p off a tank.

An average 55-litre family petrol car now costs £64.65 to fill up with diesel slightly higher at £65.75.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams said: “March brought some much-needed spring cheer to motorists with a significant 2.5p a litre reduction in the average price at the pumps. While prices were static in February, the two months before that saw 5p a litre added, completing a year of rising average pump prices. March saw the biggest fall in the price of diesel since January 2016 and since November last year for petrol.

“With longer days and the prospect of warmer weather many motorists will

be making some longer journeys so lower fuel prices are very welcome but the big question is what will happen as we move towards the summer.

“Everything really hinges on the oil market and whether more is done to curb supply with a view to getting the price to rise. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), together with some non-members, have cut production, but their efforts have been undermined by the US ramping up its fracking production.

“The low oil price that gave rise to fuel being sold for under £1 a litre in January 2016 was all driven by OPEC over-producing to lower the oil price and stop US fracking activity but every week now more fracking rigs are coming online. This is no doubt causing a major headache for OPEC. It must decide whether to cut production further and allow the US to gain more market share as the oil price rises or reconsider returning to over producing and lowering the oil price to make fracking less financially viable and keeping its market share, albeit at a reduced price.

“The strength of the pound against the dollar is also important as fuel, like oil, is traded in dollars, but having suffered a big drop in the value of the pound after the Brexit vote the new norm seems to be a pound that is consistently worth \$1.24. The absence of any further significant downward movement should mean fuel prices will be mostly decided by the oil market.”

Regional fuel price variation

Scotland enjoyed the biggest drop in the price of both petrol and diesel with a fall of 2.9p a litre, nicely ahead of the UK average of 2.6p. The North East has – for the second consecutive month – recorded the cheapest petrol and diesel prices in the UK with unleaded at an average of 116.50p and diesel at 118.53p at the end of March. The South East continues to sell the most expensive fuel in the land with a litre of petrol costing 118.38p and diesel 120.30p.

Regional average unleaded pump prices

Unleaded	01/03/2017	30/03/2017	Change
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UK average	120.15	117.54	-2.61
Scotland	119.61	116.71	-2.90
Wales	119.51	116.65	-2.86
East Midlands	120.20	117.42	-2.78
Northern Ireland	119.26	116.57	-2.69
North East	119.18	116.50	-2.68
Yorkshire And The Humber	119.64	117.02	-2.62
London	120.61	118.03	-2.58
West Midlands	120.25	117.67	-2.58
North West	120.05	117.50	-2.55
East	120.41	117.87	-2.54
South East	120.88	118.38	-2.50
South West	120.03	117.61	-2.42

Regional average diesel pump prices

Diesel	01/03/2017	30/03/2017	Change
UK average	122.19	119.54	-2.65
Scotland	122.17	119.29	-2.88
East Midlands	122.06	119.32	-2.74
North East	121.26	118.53	-2.73
Yorkshire And The Humber	121.65	118.94	-2.71
East	122.76	120.07	-2.69
London	122.54	119.86	-2.68
West Midlands	122.20	119.52	-2.68
South East	122.97	120.30	-2.67
South West	122.20	119.57	-2.63
Wales	121.66	119.04	-2.62
Northern Ireland	121.24	118.78	-2.46
North West	121.96	119.58	-2.38

Motorists can keep abreast of the latest fuel prices by visiting:

rac.co.uk/fuelwatch or following [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](https://twitter.com/racfuelwatch).

Notes to Editors

* The RAC Fuel Watch March report is based on an analysis of Experian Catalist average prices from 1 to 30 March 2017.

For all media enquiries, please contact the RAC press office team:
press.enquiries@rac.co.uk

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](https://twitter.com/racfuelwatch). 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 30 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 92% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request