



Image: RAC

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Petrol prices rise for third straight month adding £2 to a fill-up

The price of petrol shot up by 3.5p to 120p a litre in January – a price last seen the day before the first Covid-19 lockdown on 22 March 2020 and the third consecutive monthly increase, data from RAC Fuel Watch reveals.*

Diesel also went up by more than 3p a litre from 120.05p to 123.43p (3.38p), making for the second rise in as many months. Both fuels, however, are still around 7p a litre cheaper than they were a year ago.

At these prices a full 55-litre tank of unleaded will set drivers back £66 which is nearly £2 (£1.92) more than at the start of January. The diesel equivalent is £67.89 – up £1.86. Compared to the May 2020 low of 105.81p for petrol, a complete fill-up is now around £8 more expensive and diesel nearly £7 (111.23p a litre on 21 May 2020).

The hike appears to have been led by the supermarkets which are extremely influential in retail fuel pricing, currently selling 60% of all fuel sold in the UK.** Asda added more than 5p a litre to petrol taking the average price across all its sites to 115.13p. While this was the biggest rise its unleaded is still the cheapest available at a supermarket, although Sainsbury's is not far behind at 115.87p a litre. Asda also has the lowest priced diesel at 118.16p, with Sainsbury's at 118.81p.

As a result of all four of the big supermarkets raising their fuel prices by around 4p a litre, it's now only 3-3.5p cheaper to buy at their sites compared to the UK average. However, this is a penny less than it was in December when it was 4-4.5p cheaper to buy at a supermarket.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams said:

“Petrol car drivers have sadly seen three months of rising pump prices taking us back to a level last seen at the start of the first lockdown late last March and adding a couple of pounds to the cost of filling up.

“The increase stems from \$5 being added to price of a barrel of oil although this has been cushioned by the pound strengthening a little against the dollar. One thing's for sure prices are nowhere near the lows we saw in late May when petrol was just under 106p a litre and was diesel 111p.

“These latest fuel prices unfortunately show the power of oil production cuts in getting the barrel price back up from the floor at \$13.21, when the impact of international travel restrictions first hit last April, to the \$55 mark now.

“Eyes will now be on the Chancellor who will face a difficult decision at his Budget next month as to whether to pile further misery on drivers by raising fuel duty at a time when pump prices are on this rise and many household incomes are being squeezed as a result of the pandemic.”

Regional pump prices compared (all pence per litre)

Unleaded	03/01/2021	31/01/2021	Change
UK average	116.51	120.00	3.49
East	117.25	120.66	3.41
East Midlands	116.32	119.79	3.47
London	117.65	121.14	3.49
North East	115.22	118.84	3.62
North West	116.23	119.10	2.87
Northern Ireland	112.22	115.89	3.67
Scotland	115.44	119.48	4.04
South East	117.63	121.23	3.60
South West	116.82	119.99	3.17
Wales	114.95	118.93	3.98
West Midlands	115.98	119.69	3.71
Yorkshire And The Humber	115.81	119.15	3.34

Diesel	03/01/2021	31/01/2021	Change
UK average	120.05	123.43	3.38
East	120.90	124.44	3.54
East Midlands	120.19	123.51	3.32
London	120.42	124.16	3.74
North East	119.01	122.44	3.43
North West	119.51	122.94	3.43
Northern Ireland	115.50	118.25	2.75
Scotland	119.48	123.08	3.60
South East	121.42	124.79	3.37
South West	120.28	123.59	3.31
Wales	119.59	122.80	3.21

West Midlands	120.06	123.26	3.20
Yorkshire And The Humber	119.44	122.78	3.34

[Find out more about UK petrol and diesel prices](#) on the RAC website.

Notes to Editors

* UK national average pump prices quoted are based on Experian Catalist data from 3 to 31 January 2021. Wholesale prices, oil price and the value of sterling are based on data from 4 to 29 January 2021.

** <https://ukpia.com/media/2466/ukpia-2020-statistical-review-a4.pdf>

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About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **[Breakdown assistance](#)**. Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the UK, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units

- [Insurance](#). The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers '[black box](#)' [telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **Other motoring services.** The RAC leads in the development of new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the RAC Opinion Panel. The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).

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