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RAC predicts busiest late May bank holiday since 2019 with 19m separate leisure car trips planned

Britain's drivers are collectively planning an estimated 19.2m leisure car trips between this Friday and the end of bank holiday Monday, the highest number since before the coronavirus pandemic, a new study by the RAC and INRIX indicates.

Research of 2,138 drivers' plans* for the last nationwide bank holiday before the end of August suggests Saturday, Sunday and Monday (29 May) will be

the busiest for leisure journeys by car with around 3.3m made each day. When it comes to traffic congestion, Friday may turn out to be busiest when a projected 3m getaway trips are made and those seeking to enjoy the long weekend share the roads with those trying to finish their working weeks. A further 6.3m trips are expected to be taken at some point over the four days.

Transport experts INRIX expect the M25 to be a hotspot for traffic jams over the weekend, with journeys on some stretches – including clockwise from J23 for Hatfield to J28 for Chelmsford and anticlockwise towards the Dartford crossing – taking up to three times longer than normal. Delays are also expected on the M5 in Somerset and M6 in Cheshire and Greater Manchester.

RAC Breakdown spokesman Rod Dennis said:

“With the travel restrictions imposed during Covid now thankfully a distant memory, it’s clear drivers’ desire to getaway has been reignited with our figures for this coming weekend suggesting leisure traffic volumes will be close to what we last saw in 2019.

“The Met Office currently predicts largely settled weather with above average temperatures so we’re expecting this to be a hectic period on major roads as people aim to make the most of the last long weekend before August – and that means it will be a busy time for our patrols too. What’s more, with so many households under the cosh financially, we’re concerned that a lack of essential maintenance might lead to more avoidable breakdowns than we’d normally see. So we’re reminding everyone to ensure their cars are as ready for a getaway as they can be – if a vehicle hasn’t been serviced recently, this is the week to get one done by a qualified professional. In fact, with more [RAC Mobile Mechanics](#), who can complete minor or major servicing at a driver’s home or workplace, are available across the country than ever before, making a far easier and quicker process than many people might think.

“And, whether a car’s been serviced lately or not, a quick look at oil and coolant levels, together with checking tyres are in good condition and inflated properly, can go a long way to avoiding an unwelcome stop at the side of the road this weekend.”

Bob Pishue, transportation analyst at INRIX, added:

“With near record-breaking travellers expected to be on the road for the Bank Holiday, drivers should expect long delays, especially in and around major cities, as commuters mix with holiday travellers. On average, INRIX predicts travel times could be nearly 30% longer than a normal. Knowing when and where congestion will build can help drivers avoid the stress of sitting in traffic. Our advice is to avoid driving during peak hours or use alternative routes.”

The RAC website carries [advice](#) to drivers on how to reduce the chances of a vehicle breakdown.

* Based on a nationally-representative survey of drivers commissioned by the RAC. The research was conducted during w/c 15 May 2023

The press office email address is press.office@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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