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## December puts an end to four months of falling petrol prices

A surge in world oil prices in December has brought an end to four months of falling petrol prices with a litre of unleaded going up very slightly (0.24p) to 126.11p, data from [RAC Fuel Watch](#)\* reveals.

The price of oil increased \$3 (\$2.91) a barrel over the course of the month from \$63.61 to \$66.52 – a rise of nearly 5% – as a result of the United States and China cooling their 17-month trade war. As China is one of the world's biggest consumers of oil the dispute had been suppressing the price of crude due to lower demand – much to the benefit of UK drivers at the pumps – until last month.

The supermarkets were quick to react to the rise in wholesale costs, putting up their forecourt prices just two weeks after a headline-grabbing mid-month cut to both petrol and diesel. Asda had led the way on 13 December by cutting 2p off a litre of unleaded, taking its pump price to 117.7p, and reducing diesel by a penny to 122.7p.

But by 29 December the supermarket had already increased its petrol price by 2.5p to 120.26p a litre. Its rivals also increased their unleaded prices. Despite the mid-month cut the average price of petrol at the big four supermarkets went up 0.24p to 121.48p a litre – this is 4.63p lower than the UK average (126.11p). The same was true of diesel: having begun the month at 125.16p at the supermarkets, a litre of diesel closed out December at 126.02p – up 0.87p but still 4.59p below the UK average for all forecourts of 130.61p (up 0.75p on November). The rise in the average price of diesel is the first increase since September.

The cost of filling up a 55-litre family car with petrol is now £69.36 – up 13p

on November – and £71.84 for diesel – up 41p.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams said: “While there was some positive news for drivers in December with an overdue fuel price cut from the supermarkets mid-month, after Christmas things unfortunately took a turn for the worse when oil began to go up as a result of the US’s trade war with China cooling down. This led to the first monthly increase in the average price of unleaded since July.

“This situation very clearly demonstrates how UK drivers are at the mercy of global oil production issues when it comes to filling up. The trade dispute has helped keep a lid on oil prices and, in turn, petrol and diesel pump prices. Countering this, OPEC, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, and its allies have cut production with a view to keeping the oil price higher.

“As we embark on a new decade it is difficult to see that 2020 will be a good year for drivers in terms of fuel prices. As it stands we can’t see any reason for prices to come down significantly. Sadly, it seems more likely that there will be slight increases to contend with, unless of course there is a substantial jump in the value of the pound against the dollar or an unexpected drop in demand for oil.”

### **Regional fuel price variation**

#### **Regional average unleaded pump prices**

<b>Unleaded</b>	<b>02/12/2019</b>	<b>31/12/2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>UK average</b>	<b>125.87</b>	<b>126.11</b>	<b>0.24</b>
Wales	124.50	125.20	0.70
Scotland	124.89	125.53	0.64
Northern Ireland	123.13	123.51	0.38
South West	125.77	126.08	0.31
South East	126.96	127.24	0.28
East	126.31	126.54	0.23
East Midlands	126.07	126.26	0.19

West Midlands	126.01	126.20	0.19
Yorkshire And The Humber	125.49	125.63	0.14
North East	124.22	124.25	0.03
North West	125.58	125.61	0.03
London	127.00	127.02	0.02

### Regional average diesel pump prices

Diesel	02/12/2019	31/12/2019	Change
<b>UK average</b>	<b>129.86</b>	<b>130.61</b>	<b>0.75</b>
East	130.35	131.35	1.00
Scotland	129.45	130.39	0.94
South West	129.90	130.80	0.90
East Midlands	129.93	130.77	0.84
North East	128.37	129.21	0.84
Wales	128.97	129.75	0.78
Yorkshire And The Humber	129.30	130.08	0.78
London	130.55	131.28	0.73
South East	131.14	131.86	0.72
Northern Ireland	127.14	127.83	0.69
West Midlands	129.93	130.58	0.65
North West	129.24	129.88	0.64

Green – cheapest/least; red – most expensive/most

Motorists can keep abreast of the latest fuel prices by visiting the [RAC Fuel Watch webpage](#).

### Notes to Editors

### About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 11m 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 world, 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](#).

## Contacts



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