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Drivers told to expect jams as schools break up for summer

Drivers are expected to make more than 9m individual leisure journeys by car between Friday and the end of the weekend, with the start of the summer school holidays in England and Wales likely to be marked by the sight of miles of queuing traffic.

Research conducted by the RAC of the travel plans of 2,300 motorists* suggests that 'getaway' traffic will peak on Friday at around 3.8m separate leisure trips – and with normal weekday commuter traffic also vying for space on the roads, the RAC expects the day to be something of a 'frantic Friday' for many people desperate to start their summer breaks.

Data from transportation analytics provider [INRIX**](#) shows drivers on some routes will experience some very lengthy delays compared to a normal Friday. Those heading south on the M5 between Gloucester and Devon can expect delays of around an hour and a quarter, while those going west on the A303 between the M3 in Hampshire and A37 in Somerset – another very popular holiday route – can expect journeys to take an hour longer than usual. A single breakdown or collision could easily extend these delays still further. [A full list of expected delays can be found here.](#)

Saturday is likely to be the next busiest day on the roads, with the RAC estimating 3.2m leisure journeys by car, followed by 2.2m on Sunday as families take to the road to start their summer holidays. In total, over the 16 days between Friday 20 July and Saturday 4 August, the research suggests in the region of 34m individual leisure trips will be taken – with Saturday 28 July alone seeing in the region of 4.5m journeys.

RAC traffic spokesman Rod Dennis said: "This weekend tends to be one of the

busiest on the roads for leisure journeys, second only to Easter and Christmas. On some popular routes, this may well mean gridlock, especially through the second half of Friday when commuters and holidaymakers will be sharing space on the same stretches of the UK's roads. As a result, it will almost certainly feel like a 'frantic Friday' for some.

"The next peak after this weekend will be Saturday 28 July according to our research, by which time the vast majority of schools in England and Wales will have broken up for the summer. And if the weather remains fine, that could lead to many more people deciding to jump in the car to enjoy a short notice 'staycation', adding to the weight of traffic."

INRIX data scientist Joshua Kidd said: "Our data suggests that the UK's major transport corridors will be worst affected as the country's schools break for the summer. As a result, the shortest routes to popular holiday destinations may not be the quickest. Drivers should ensure they check live traffic reports before setting off and consider using alternative routes to avoid the worst of the congestion. If possible, they should also try to leave early morning or in the evening, as the midday and early afternoon periods will be the busiest times to travel."

Met Office Chief Meteorologist, Steve Ramsdale, said: "With temperatures expected to climb again as we head towards the weekend, and some locations expected to experience temperatures of 30C or more under clear skies, it is vital motorists plan for longer journeys in warm sunshine. With clear skies UV levels will be high, while the potential for delays may mean there are longer spells between travel breaks. Keeping hydrated will help overcome uncomfortable journeys."



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

Travel this weekend – in numbers

Date	Leisure trips by car	Worst times to travel	Best times to travel	Worst roads for long delays
Friday 20 July	3.8m	1400 to 1730hrs	1900 to 2100hrs	M40 south, J3a to J1a: 1hr 30min delay at lunchtime M5 south, J12 to J31: 1hr 17min delay late afternoon M5 north, J31 to J12: 1hr 9min delay mid-afternoon A303, M3 to A37: 52min delay late afternoon
Saturday 21 July	3.2m	1130 and 1300hrs	0700 and 0900hrs	M25 anticlockwise, J23 to J16: 40min delay early afternoon M1 north, J6 to J23a: 20min delay late afternoon
Sunday 22 July	2.2m	1200 and 1300hrs	0700 and 0900hrs	M25 anticlockwise, J23 to J16: 30min delay at lunchtime M40 south, J3a to J1a: 20min delay late afternoon

Top tips for avoiding – or just coping – with the jams

1	Think carefully about when you're travelling	Most traffic queues are caused by too many cars on the same roads at the same time. If you can travel outside the peak times – think early in the morning or later in the evening – you can easily miss them.
2	Make sure your car, and anything you are towing, are up to the job...	Many summer breakdowns are avoidable – punctures for instance can be caused by a tyre that is in poor condition or just not inflated properly. And ageing batteries can struggle in lots of stop-start traffic – consider replacing it if you have any concerns. And check your air conditioning is cooling properly – if it's not, it might need re-gassing, an easy job for a good garage.
3	...and make sure you and your passengers are as well	Hungry, thirsty or tired passengers are recipes for in-car irritability – and 'carguments'. So when setting out, pack enough food and water to keep your passengers happy, and plan in enough breaks along the way.

The RAC's Rod Dennis added: "Where possible, we'd recommend drivers try to avoid the busiest times on the roads – or just allow for a longer journey by planning in enough stops, especially if travelling with young children.

"It's also essential drivers know their vehicles are up to the job before setting off on a long drive – there are few worse ways to start a summer holiday than being stuck at the side of the road. A 10 minute check of the condition of the tyres on a car (and on a trailer or caravan if you have one), and of the oil and coolant levels, could save hours of misery."

The RAC has put together a [comprehensive guide on to how to avoid breakdowns experienced in warmer weather](#) to help drivers.

Notes to Editors

* Data commissioned to the RAC by Ragdoll Research. Base: 2,300 motorists, surveyed between 5 July and 12 July 2018

** INRIX predictions are based on historical and recent travel trends for the

holiday week

About the RAC

First formed in 1897, the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members and championing the interests of motorists for more than 120 years.

Today it has more than eight million members and 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. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – is one of a kind and 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](#). It provides a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump - and tracks these prices daily to help drivers check if the price they pay to fill up is a fair one.

About INRIX

INRIX is the global leader in connected car services and transportation analytics. Leveraging big data and the cloud, INRIX delivers comprehensive services and solutions to help move people, cities and businesses forward. Our partners are automakers, governments, mobile operators, developers, advertisers, as well as companies large and small. Learn more at [INRIX.com](#).

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