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Easter getaway jams to start two weeks early as schools break up

This year's Easter getaway will start two weeks early as millions of families take to the road when many schools break up at the end of this week.

Figures from the RAC suggest some 14m leisure trips will be taken by car between this Friday – the day when most schools finish for Easter – and the end of the weekend. Friday itself is expected to be busiest with some 5.3m individual getaways planned, in addition to all the usual weekday commuter and commercial traffic. This will be followed by Saturday and Sunday when some 5m and 4m leisure trips will take place respectively.

Drivers should also expect a second substantial wave of congestion for the Easter bank holiday weekend a fortnight later.

This weekend people's travel plans may, in some places, be complicated by the weather as the beginning of the school holidays looks likely to be unseasonably cool, with even the possibility of some snow over higher ground in the north. While temperatures should return to nearer the seasonal norm as we move into next week it will be far from wall-to-wall sunshine, with April showers affecting many parts of the UK.

RAC traffic spokesperson Rod Dennis said: "With the Easter bank holiday falling so late this year we are expecting to see a double wave of getaway traffic – firstly at the end of this week, and then again two weeks later for the four-day weekend.

"We're hopeful the weather won't cause drivers too many issues through this coming weekend, but everyone should be ready for some typical short, sharp April showers, with even the possibility of some snow on higher ground in

the north.

“This can be a busy time of year for our patrols so we strongly urge motorists to check over their vehicles before they set out. This is particularly important for people driving long distances. Spending just a few moments to check oil, coolant, together with tyre tread depth and pressures, can mean the difference between a long but completed journey and one disrupted by an inconvenient, and perhaps preventable, breakdown that ruins the start of a holiday.”

Travel this weekend

Date	Leisure trips by car	Suggested best times to travel on major roads
Friday 5 April	5.3m	Before 1500 and after 1900hrs
Saturday 6 April	5.0m	Before 1000 and after 1500hrs
Sunday 7 April	4.1m	Before 1100 and after 1500hrs

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

1	Think carefully about when to travel	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 vehicle is properly prepared	Many breakdowns are avoidable – punctures for instance can be caused by a tyre that is in poor condition or not inflated properly. Check oil and coolant levels as if these run low you could be in for an unwelcome breakdown and a big repair bill.
3	Keep you and your passengers happy	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.

Notes to Editors

* Figures based on a survey of 1,687 UK drivers' travel plans for this weekend

Contacts



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