

Aug 01, 2020 00:00 BST

Around 1.5m drivers to take a trip to Europe by car for the first time ever this summer in wake of the coronavirus

An estimated 5m drivers hope to take a holiday across the Channel by car this summer, with three-in-10 of these (1.6m) shunning air travel and doing so for the first time, research for RAC Europe suggests.*

With lockdowns gradually lifting and quarantine-free travel agreements now in place with a large number of other countries, the figures based on a survey of 2,000 people indicate a strong desire for holidays abroad in the remaining summer months – with the car clearly being seen as the best ‘vehicle’ for enjoying a safe and comfortable trip.

Government estimates show UK residents made in the region of 12.6m visits to other EU countries via sea ports and the Channel Tunnel last year, with France being the single biggest destination according for 6.2m trips alone.** The RAC’s research therefore suggests around 40% of the overall number of annual visits that might be expected in a year could take place over the few remaining summer months.

The RAC Europe survey also revealed that a similar proportion of people hope to drive to the continent as fly this year – in total around 16% of those questioned said they were keen on a trip by car, with the same proportion (16%) hoping to take advantage of so-called ‘air bridges’ and jetting off. The remainder either hope for a staycation this summer, plan on flying outside Europe or don’t expect to take a holiday at all.

The RAC is reminding drivers to check their breakdown policies cover them properly for a trip out of the UK. This is especially so for those people towing,

with many policies having restrictions in place or offering inferior levels of cover that could put them in an awkward position should an unfortunate breakdown abroad happen.

RAC Europe spokesperson Rod Dennis said:

“With agreements now in place between the UK and other countries permitting travel without the need to quarantine, people are now free to go away on holiday before the end of the summer. Flying, however, appears to be seen as a less attractive option this year. This in turn seems to have sparked a desire in people to drive to mainland Europe under their own steam, with many planning to do so for the first time.

“In many ways, opting to take the car makes a lot of sense – those that do so have a safe space of their own when travelling, with zero or minimal contact needed with other people when crossing borders,^{***} while those staying in a caravan or tent also have the reassurance that they have a holiday base which is as safe an environment as possible. Anyone driving also enjoys the flexibility that comes from having their own form of transport for getting about – and is ideal for seeking out places far from the crowds.

“With so many people expected to be taking staycations this summer due to a combination of a greatly reduced flights schedule, together with a reticence to fly in busy cabins in close proximity to others, this year is clearly being seen as the ideal time to explore Europe by car. The only thing drivers will need to bear in mind is the more limited availability of ferry and Eurotunnel tickets.”

Heading abroad by car this summer? Check you're covered if you break down

European breakdown cover is a must for anyone thinking of driving to the continent this summer. Experiencing car trouble can be stressful enough at home, let alone if you're abroad and don't speak the language. Drivers should look for a **high level of cover** that helps them in whatever situation they find themselves in. For those looking for complete peace of mind, RAC Comprehensive Plus European Breakdown Cover is the best available on the market and is the only policy to cover all roadside costs as well as all costs involved in bringing a vehicle back to the UK if needed (so long as it's not beyond economic repair). Find out more at www.rac.co.uk/european.

Those towing caravans and trailers should look for a **specialist policy** that gives them comprehensive coverage abroad. Most standard breakdown policies don't cover large caravans and motorhomes, or cover the costs of getting a vehicle and caravan back home. RAC Arrival, designed with the Camping and Caravanning Club, offers 'best in market' cover. Find out more at www.rac.co.uk/breakdown-cover/caravanandmotorhome.

Anyone planning on hiring a motorhome will also have to ensure their insurance covers them – the RAC offers flexible temporary 'pay per day' car insurance that can cover any period up to 30 days and may be better value than extending a current motor insurance policy. Details at www.rac.co.uk/insurance/temporary-car-insurance.

Ferry operators and Eurotunnel have put measures in place to give drivers confidence when venturing overseas this summer – check out [Discover Ferries' Ferry Safe campaign](#) and [Eurotunnel's COVID-19 pages](#).

Notes to Editors

* Research conducted on behalf of the RAC among 2,078 UK adults, 10-20 July 2020, prior to changes to Spanish quarantine procedures introduced weekend of 25/26 July. Proportions of those planning a trip by car extrapolated based on there being 31,104,700 petrol and diesel cars in the UK (source: [table VEH0203, April 2020](#))

** Source: [Travel trends estimates: UK residents' visits abroad \(ONS\) for 2019](#). Table 5.07 for 2019. France is followed by Belgium (1.8m trips), Ireland (1.5m) and the Netherlands (1m)

*** Eurotunnel offers a 35-minute contact free crossing, during which time car passengers must remain inside their vehicle

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](#).

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request