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Bumper bank holiday on the roads expected with 18m leisure trips by car planned

An estimated 18m leisure trips will be taken by car this weekend, 1.8m more than last year as drivers seek to make the most of what is the last bank holiday before Christmas in most of the UK, new research from RAC Breakdown suggests.*

Despite the summery weather taking a leave of absence, the figures suggest traffic could be bumper-to-bumper on some popular routes as families and

friends embark on long weekends, bank holiday daytrips, or drive home from their summer staycations. The figures suggest a slight increase (up 1.8m) in trips compared to 2019, most likely as a result of more people returning from UK-based holidays this year.

Friday is expected to see the largest volume of cars on the road with an estimated 5.6m separate trips planned, followed by Saturday (4.7m) and bank holiday Monday itself (4.4m). Sunday looks a little quieter with the equivalent of 3.7m leisure journeys by car expected.

Separate RAC research conducted at the start of August suggested a total of around 45m daytrips would be taken by drivers this month, with more than a quarter of drivers (28%) saying they planned on taking more daytrips than last year. The latest research suggests a large proportion of these trips might well be being taken this coming weekend.

RAC Breakdown spokesperson Rod Dennis said:

“It’s been anything but a normal summer for so many reasons, but our research indicates that millions of us are still desperate to eke out the last of the summer and enjoy time away, whether that’s a day trip to see friends or family or a long weekend in a caravan or camping. In fact, it may even turn out to be busier on the roads than last year with many more people returning home this weekend after a staycation.

“Both official Government statistics and our own data from insurance customers show that weekend traffic is now back to pre-lockdown levels. The numbers of people breaking down are also around where we would expect them to be for late August. It’s clear therefore that despite the pandemic, the car has been a vital part of making sure many people have been able to enjoy the summer safely.

“Key to getting as much out of the bank holiday weekend as possible will be drivers arriving at their destinations when they plan to. While some queues on popular stretches of road, especially to tourist hotspots, will likely lead to some delays a breakdown has the potential to cause far more problems for people.

“Our teams will be working incredibly hard to rescue drivers who run into

trouble, but in so many cases breakdowns can be avoided. A quick check of a car's 'vitals' – tyre pressure and tread, oil and coolant levels – can make the difference between a smooth trip or one blighted by a breakdown. It's also very important those towing caravans and trailers complete a range of checks, too."

Melanie Clarke, Highways England's customer service director, said:

"We do everything we can to make journeys as smooth as possible and 97 per cent of the road network we manage will be free from roadworks over the bank holiday.

"Safety is our priority and we know from experience that breakdowns can easily be avoided if motorists carry out simple vehicle checks before setting off over this period. Let's all enjoy summer safely."

Ian Hewlett, technical manager at The Camping and Caravanning Club, which partners with the RAC to provide the specialist RAC Arrival breakdown policy, said:

"When towing remember not to exceed the maximum speed limit on motorways of 60mph, or slower on other road types. Travelling a little slower can save you fuel, while taking regular breaks helps to keep you fresh and focussed as well as making the journey more pleasant for everyone."

The RAC website has comprehensive adviceto drivers on how to reduce the chances of a vehicle breakdown. RAC partner the Camping and Caravanning Club also publishes guides to towing caravans and trailers safely.

Top tips for travelling this bank holiday weekend

1	Think carefully about when to travel	Most bank holiday 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 – and anything you are towing – are 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. If you're towing, checkthe Camping and Caravanning Club's pre-journey checklists
3	Keep you and your passengers happy…	Hungry, thirsty or tired passengers are recipes for in-car irritability – and 'carguments' – so pack enough food and water to keep your passengers happy, and plan in enough breaks along the way.
4	… including your dogs if you are travelling with them	Only use a safe and well-secured pet carrier, and make sure they aren't hungry when you set off – it's best to give them a light meal a few hours before leaving. And of course, make sure you give your dog exercise if you are going on a long journey – they need to stretch their legs just as much as you do.
5	Make sure your breakdown cover package covers you for every eventuality	Those towing caravans and trailers should look for a specialist policy that gives them comprehensive coverage. Most standard breakdown cover policies don't cover large caravans and motorhomes.RAC Arrival, designed with the Camping and Caravanning Club, offers 'best in market' cover.

Notes to Editors

* 2020 figures based on a survey of 1,835 UK drivers' travel plans for this weekend, and extrapolated to cover equivalent of 31.2m UK licensed cars. 18m figure covers planned trips Friday to Monday inclusive

The press office email address is press.enquiries@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.

ISDN radio studio facilities are available for interviews Monday to Friday.

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.

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