



Image: Getty. All rights reserved

Feb 05, 2024 09:00 GMT

Fuel prices stop falling in January - but RAC finds 14p difference between supermarkets' cheapest and most expensive prices

After three months of falling fuel prices, data from [RAC Fuel Watch](#)* shows prices at the pump have ground to a halt but analysis of government data reveals there is currently a 14p difference between the highest and lowest-priced supermarket petrol.

The average price of a litre of unleaded stayed at 140.5p in January while diesel remained at 148.5p, making full tanks £77.24 and £81.73p. In Northern Ireland however, petrol was 4.2p cheaper than the UK average at 136.2p by the end of the month and diesel was 3.5p lower at 144.9p, showing drivers are still not being charged a fair price across the whole of the country.

This is further emphasised by Costco pricing their petrol at an average of 130p and diesel at 139.6p. Meanwhile, independently run forecourt Grindley Brook in Whitchurch, Shropshire, is only charging 133.9p for petrol – nearly 7p less than the UK average. This has forced three nearby retailers to compete by pricing their unleaded at 136.9p, again well below the average price across the country.

Analysing the prices charged by the big four supermarkets that dominate UK fuel retailing via the Government's voluntary price reporting scheme, the RAC has found wildly different prices are being charged from place to place.

On 31 January there was 14p difference between the cheapest supermarket fuel and the most expensive. The cheapest litre of unleaded found by the RAC was sold by Sainsbury's for 131.9p in Wantage, Oxfordshire and Cwmbran in Wales, with the most expensive being Morrisons at 145.9p in Bude, Cornwall, as well as in Fakenham and Diss in Norfolk. While the average difference between a litre of petrol at a supermarket was nearly 12p (11.6p), Tesco had the smallest gap – 8p – between its low of 138.2p and its high of 142.9p.

Petrol	Average	Min	Max	Spread
Asda	138.0p	132.7p	144.9p	12.2p
Morrisons	137.6p	132.7p	145.9p	13.2p
Sainsbury's	138.1p	131.9p	144.9p	13.0p
Tesco	138.2p	134.9p	142.9p	8.0p
Whole UK	138.0p	131.9p	145.9p	14.0p

For diesel there was a spread of more than 14p between Sainsbury's forecourts in Banbury and Cwmbran charging 139.9p, compared to Frome, Somerset at 153.9p. The average spread between supermarkets' high and low diesel was just over 11p (11.3p).

Diesel	Average	Min	Max	Spread
Asda	146.5p	141.7p	153.7p	12.0p
Morrisons	146.0p	141.7p	151.9p	10.2p
Sainsbury's	146.4p	139.9p	153.9p	14.0p
Tesco	146.5p	141.9p	150.9p	9.0p
Whole UK	146.4p	139.9p	153.9p	14.0p

The wholesale prices of both petrol and diesel increased by 3p and 4p respectively in January on the back of oil rising to more than \$80 for the first time since the end of November.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams said: “While petrol is at its lowest point for well over two years, January unfortunately brought an end to three consecutive months of falling prices at the pumps.

“It is still concerning to see that fuel remains considerably cheaper in Northern Ireland and that the supermarkets are charging wildly different prices for identical petrol and diesel at different locations around the UK.

“The data retailers are voluntarily providing to the Competition and Markets Authority has shed a whole new light on the pump price postcode lottery. It seems blatantly wrong to us that the very same petrol or diesel can vary in price by as much as 14p a litre, depending on where drivers are filling up.

“Hopefully this will be addressed by the new price monitoring body recommended in the CMA’s report when it’s eventually set up, along with ‘rocket and feather’ pricing where retailers are too slow at passing on the savings from lower wholesale prices to their forecourts. We really can’t afford to have a repeat of 2022 where the CMA concluded drivers had been overcharged by major retailers to the tune of £900m. The question is how soon such a body is realistically going to be established, especially with a General Election on the horizon.

“Despite the attacks on tankers in the Red Sea the oil market appears relatively stable on the back of weaker global demand. Positively for drivers, analysts aren’t forecasting much short-term change from the current barrel price of \$82.

“Interestingly, the recent rise in the price of a barrel has had the effect of squeezing bloated supermarket margins by around 3p a litre. This means drivers are now getting a slightly fairer deal when they fill up, but the big question is whether they will be content to operate at this level or whether they will look to get back to an average margin of around 10p, which is in stark contrast to the 3.5p they made on a litre in 2019.”

Motorists looking to save money at the pumps should start using the [fuel finder feature in the free myRAC app](#) as it can help shave off as much as 6p a litre**. The app can be [downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play](#).

Up to nine searches a day can be made over a two, five or 10-mile radius, with each giving the five cheapest prices.

The web page has more information about the average price of petrol and diesel at the big four supermarkets and at motorway services. It also features graphs showing average prices since 2000 as well as a daily financial breakdown of the cost of a litre of petrol and diesel.

Regional pump prices

Unleaded – pence per litre	01/01/2024	31/01/2024	Change	End of month variance to UK average
UK average	140.70	140.44	-0.26	
East	141.01	141.23	0.22	0.79
East Midlands	141.40	140.85	-0.55	0.41
London	142.64	142.41	-0.23	1.97
North East	139.45	139.44	-0.01	-1.00
North West	140.42	139.94	-0.48	-0.50
Northern Ireland	135.71	136.22	0.51	-4.22
Scotland	138.98	139.89	0.91	-0.55
South East	142.08	141.60	-0.48	1.16

South West	140.60	140.55	-0.05	0.11
Wales	139.44	139.36	-0.08	-1.08
West Midlands	140.41	140.42	0.01	-0.02
Yorkshire and the Humber	139.52	139.49	-0.03	-0.95
Diesel – pence per litre	01/01/2024	31/01/2024	Change	End of month variance to UK average
UK average	148.60	148.42	-0.18	
East	148.46	148.52	0.06	0.10
East Midlands	148.64	148.70	0.06	0.28
London	151.10	150.32	-0.78	1.90
North East	148.03	147.70	-0.33	-0.72
North West	148.09	147.81	-0.28	-0.61
Northern Ireland	144.86	144.92	0.06	-3.50
Scotland	148.30	149.13	0.83	0.71
South East	149.87	149.58	-0.29	1.16
South West	148.63	148.57	-0.06	0.15
Wales	148.12	147.94	-0.18	-0.48
West Midlands	148.57	148.26	-0.31	-0.16
Yorkshire and the Humber	147.90	148.07	0.17	-0.35

Notes to Editors

* UK average pump prices quoted are based on Experian Catalist data from 1-31 January 2024. Wholesale prices, oil price and the value of sterling are based on data from Fuel Prices Online from 2-31 January 2024

** The myRAC Fuel Finder uses data from Experian Catalist to help drivers find the cheapest fuel near them, or any location they want to search. Experian Catalist collects fuel prices for all main fuel types from just about every forecourt across the UK and updates prices the following day. Prices are

updated at around 8am every day of the year, including weekends and bank holidays. The 6p saving is based on difference between average and lowest petrol and diesel prices in 20 areas selected at random. As of 01/09/23.

The press office email address is press.office@rac.co.uk and media centre is at media.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.

About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to more than 13 million private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. The RAC is also at the forefront in helping drivers make the switch to electric vehicles and leads in the development of new solutions for businesses and OEMs, partnering with the best in the motoring and mobility space.

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