

# How To Save Money On Gas

One dollar, thirty-seven cents. Is that a lot of money? Well, that depends, a lot of money for what? A stick of chewing gum, yeah. A car? Jump at the chance. The average price of gasoline in the US last year was exactly that: \$1.71. Throughout the country, folks complained that prices had never been so high, and they could hardly afford to drive to work anymore. But was it really that bad? In comparison to the rest of the world, the US seems to have gotten off easy:

Belgium—\$3.73/gallon, \$2.02 more than what we were complaining about  
Netherlands—\$4.27/gallon, just about 2.5 times what you paid at the Shell Station down the street  
UK—\$4.66/gallon, a nickel short of three dollars more than the US

And these are just a handful of nations that had it much worse than the States; Germany paid an average of \$3.70 a gallon. France averaged at \$4.02 a gallon.

In spite of this information, \$1.71 is still higher than we're used to. There are a few ways you can "trick" your car into needing less gas and get the highest possible gas mileage out of it. You might as well save that \$20.00 you would have spent filling up the tank; keep it for a rainy day.

Check the car's owner's manual (*it came with an owner's manual?*) to see what type of gas is best for the car. If it needs Premium, splurge. If it doesn't, why bother? Only two percent of cars in the US require the expensive stuff, yet 20 percent of gas sold is Premium. Save the \$.30 a gallon.

Keep your car in good running order. Tune the engine when it needs tuning. Change the oil after 3,000 miles or when the light goes on, whichever comes first. Follow the owner's manual. This will give your vehicle the highest fuel economy and best efficiency.

Drive like a scared 16-year-old behind the wheel for the first time. No, don't crash, but be careful. Actually follow speed limits. Ease into a stop and ease onto the gas when it's your turn at the stop sign. No need to slam your foot on the pedal. Don't jump from 30 mph to 55 mph to 45 mph; keep your speed constant. When you accelerate quickly, the car uses more fuel.

Keep your tires at their appropriate inflation (again, check the owner's manual). This betters fuel efficiency by proving less resistance against the road.

If you're not golfing, take the clubs out of the trunk. While you're at it, get rid of all that unneeded junk that just piles up. The heavier your vehicle, the more fuel you waste.

If you have to run to the grocery store to pick up a gallon of milk, go to the dry cleaners and get your clothes too. Running more errands in one trip can save on the total amount of miles driven and save the gas.

Carpool. Sure, it seems like one trip won't matter, but the trips to the kids' baseball practice add up. Make a deal with another parent and take turns. Then relish in that moment alone while the rug rats take their excess energy out on a stick of wood.

There are so many minor ways to preserve gas that in the long run, \$1.71 doesn't seem so bad anymore. If this isn't convincing for you, go look at what the UK pays each time they fill up their car. Still not convinced? Well then forget the car. Take a walk.