

Road Trip Fuel Cost

Britain's best-known drives, priced - Autumn 2026 - the October half term

The season's great drives, in petrol at Autumn 2026 prices



North Coast 500 £97

THE SEASON

THE BIG ONE

THE WIDEST GAP

THIS YEAR

19.4m

£97

38.0p/l

+£22

RAC leisure trips, half term

the NC500 in petrol - about one tank

£21 a tank on Snowdonia & North Wales Coast

the NC500 vs last October, petrol

PROVISIONAL - MONTH IN PROGRESS

Prepared by findpetrol.co.uk Research

Provisional edition, as at 24 October 2026, fuel at this edition's 3 weekly snapshots

Methodology: findpetrol.co.uk/reports/methodology

Every component sourced: our collection, RAC, route and tourism guides, Ofgem, Zapmap.

Executive summary

Six of Britain's best-known drives, at Autumn 2026 prices: 1,196 miles of road, £226 of petrol, £230 of diesel. The North Coast 500 - the season's signature trip - is almost exactly one tank: 56 litres, £97. Driven on the full cost of a car, at the 57.5p a mile of our Annual Cost of Motoring report, the same six routes cost £688 - depreciation does the sightseeing too.

Where the money really moves is the pump you choose. On the corridors we mapped - every live station on our map within a few miles of each route - the spread between the cheapest and dearest fill-up reaches 38.0p a litre on the Snowdonia and the North Wales Coast, which is £21 on a single 55-litre tank. Across the six routes the average price on the corridor ranges from 165.3p (Causeway Coastal Route) to 177.2p: Northern Ireland is again Britain's cheapest fuel, and the far north of Scotland its premium.

Two findings for the electric driver and the family budget. First, the road trip is the EV's worst case: on public rapid charging at about 80p a kWh, all six routes cost £267 - £41 more than petrol, the only place in our research where the electric car loses. Second, this half term is dearer than the last: petrol is up 39.5p a litre since October 2025, so the six routes together cost about £51 more in fuel than a year ago - the price of a night's accommodation on the road.

The edition's figures

Measure	Figure	Detail
The six routes, total	1,196 miles	NC500 to the Atlantic Highway
Their petrol, total	£226	at 42 mpg, UK-average 174.2p
Their diesel, total	£230	at 47 mpg, 199.2p
Their electric, total	£267	public rapid, about 80p a kWh
The same drives, all-in	£688	petrol profile, 57.5p a mile
The NC500, petrol	£97	56 litres - about one tank
Widest corridor spread	38.0p/l	£21 a tank, Snowdonia and the North Wales Coast
Cheapest corridor average	165.3p	Causeway Coastal Route
Half-term leisure trips	19.4m	RAC; 72% within 200 miles
Petrol vs last October	+39.5p/l	about £51 on the six routes

Figures: Autumn 2026 edition, provisional until the month closes. Sources beside each table; full methodology on the final page.

The season: half term on the road

The October half term is one of the three great weekends of British leisure driving - the RAC counts about 19.4 million separate leisure journeys between the Friday and Sunday of the getaway, and 72% of half-term travellers stay within 200 miles of home. The favourites are Devon and Yorkshire, 8% each - which is why this edition's routes lean where the traffic actually goes: the Atlantic Highway into Cornwall, the Dales and Moors of Yorkshire, the Lakes.

What makes this October different is the price of getting there. Petrol closed last October at 134.7p a litre in our series; this edition it is 174.2p, up 39.5p - one and a half tank-fills a year dearer for a typical driver. Diesel is up 56.4p. The routes in this report are driven for the scenery, but they are paid for at the pump - and this year the pump is the story.

19.4m

leisure trips at half term

RAC Breakdown research, October waves of half-term trips, by destination

72%

stay within 200 miles

3 a year

seasonal editions

Easter, the July peak, October half term

This report is seasonal by design: an edition at Easter for the spring getaway, one in July for the summer run, and this one for October. Each edition re-prices the same six routes on the same bases, so the archive becomes a year-round record of what Britain's great drives cost - and, uniquely, of where to fill up on them.

The routes, priced

Six routes, all four nations, priced on the report's stated bases: petrol at 42 mpg and diesel at 47 mpg at our UK-average Autumn 2026 prices, electric on public rapid charging at about 80p a kWh, and the all-in line at the Annual Cost of Motoring's 57.5p a mile. Distances are the published figures - the NC500's 516 is the official signed route; the rest are rounded from route guides.

Route	Miles	Petrol	Diesel	Electric	All-in
North Coast 500	516	£97	£99	£115	£297
Causeway Coastal Route	130	£25	£25	£29	£75
Lake District Loop	120	£23	£23	£27	£69
Yorkshire Dales and Moors	150	£28	£29	£33	£86
Atlantic Highway	110	£21	£21	£25	£63
Snowdonia and the North Wales Coast	170	£32	£33	£38	£98
The six, together	1,196	£226	£230	£267	£688

Petrol and diesel at our UK-average 174.2p / 199.2p; electric at Zapmap's public rapid rate; all-in on the petrol profile from the Annual Cost of Motoring report. Distances: the official signed route for the NC500; route guides elsewhere (approximate).

Read the electric column with its honesty: rapid charging is the most expensive way to power any car, and on these routes it shows. Only on the Causeway Coastal Route does the petrol car and the rapid-charged EV finish within £6 of each other. The all-in column is the other honesty: a road trip is not just fuel, and the full cost of carrying the car over 1,196 miles is £688 - the accommodation budget's rival.

The fill-up economics

The report's own contribution: we mapped every live station on our map within a few miles of each route - 311 stations across the six corridors - and asked a simple question: what does the same tank cost at the cheapest and the dearest pump on the route? The answer is the difference between a planned fill and an expensive habit.

The arithmetic is unforgiving because the tank is big. A 55-litre fill at the Snowdonia and the North Wales Coast's dearest pump - 187.9p at Parc Service Station, Denbighshire - costs £103; at the cheapest, 149.9p at Shell, Porthmadog, the same tank is £82. On the NC500 the pattern repeats in miniature: Tesco Wick at 172.9p against 189.0p at the far-north independents - £9 a tank, and the cheapest fuel sits at the end of the route, where the driving is already done.

The tank rule, on every corridor

The tank	55 litres	a typical family car
The biggest gap	38.0p/l	£21 a tank - Snowdonia and the North Wales Coast
The NC500 gap	16.1p/l	£9 a tank, Tesco Wick to the far north
The diesel gap, NC500	21.1p/l	£12 a tank
Fill where it is cheap	not when it is empty	the cheapest pump is rarely the next pump

One caveat, stated plainly: these are the prices our stations last filed, and rural independents can lag the pump by days or weeks. The corridor averages - built from every sane price on the route - are the steadier signal; the named cheapest and dearest are the sharp edges of it. Where a route crosses a nation border, as the Causeway route does not but a Belfast-Derry driver might, the regional differences compound the local ones.

The strategic advice falls out of the table: fill at a supermarket before the scenic miles begin - Kendal or Skipton for the Lakes and Dales, Barnstaple before the A39, Inverness or Wick for the far north - and treat the single-pump villages as emergencies, not habits. The cheapest fuel in Britain this edition is on the Porthmadog corridor of the Snowdonia route: 149.9p.

Route by route

North Coast 500

Scotland

Inverness - Applecross - Ullapool - Durness - John o' Groats - Inverness - 516 miles

Cheapest on the corridor

Morrisons, Alness

172.9p - diesel 197.9p

Dearest on the corridor

Bettyhill General Merchants, Thurso

189.0p - diesel 219.0p

Corridor average, spread

177.2p across 43 stations

16.1p/l - £9 a tank

Petrol £97 - diesel £99 - electric £115 - all-in £297

Almost exactly one tank of petrol, and the dearest fuel in Britain at the far end. Fill in Inverness or Wick before the long coasts; the Bettyhill-to-Thurso stretch is where tanks go to empty.

Causeway Coastal Route

Northern Ireland

Belfast - Carrickfergus - Cushendun - Ballintoy - Portrush - Derry - 130 miles

Cheapest on the corridor

Larkhill Service Station, Coleraine

153.9p - diesel 172.9p

Dearest on the corridor

Circle K, Coleraine

169.9p - diesel 196.9p

Corridor average, spread

165.3p across 119 stations

16.0p/l - £9 a tank

Petrol £25 - diesel £25 - electric £29 - all-in £75

The cheapest corridor of the six: Northern Ireland's prices again, about 7p under the UK average in our Affordability report. The tightest spread too - 16p - so the fill matters least here.

Lake District Loop

England

Kendal - Windermere - Grasmere - Keswick - Honister - Ullswater - Kendal - 120 miles

Cheapest on the corridor

Texaco, Kendal

152.9p - diesel 165.9p

Dearest on the corridor

Shell, Penrith

175.9p - diesel 201.9p

Corridor average, spread

172.1p across 26 stations

23.0p/l - £13 a tank

Petrol £23 - diesel £23 - electric £27 - all-in £69

A short, dense loop: 26 stations within four miles of the route. Essar in Windermere undercuts Penrith's Shell by 23p; both are viable, which on this route is the luxury.

Yorkshire Dales and Moors

England

Skipton - Hawes - Richmond - Helmsley - Pickering - Whitby - Scarborough - 150 miles

Cheapest on the corridor

Bridge Garage, North Yorkshire

164.9p - diesel 193.9p

Dearest on the corridor

Esso, North Yorkshire

199.9p - diesel 217.9p

Corridor average, spread

172.3p across 40 stations

35.0p/l - £19 a tank

Petrol £28 - diesel £29 - electric £33 - all-in £86

The widest gap on the map. Esso North Yorkshire at 199.9p against Bridge Garage North Yorkshire at 164.9p - and Whitby is where the coast part of the route ends, so the cheap fill is the last fill.

Atlantic Highway

England

Barnstaple - Bude - Wadebridge - Newquay - Truro - St Ives - 110 miles

Cheapest on the corridor

Gulf, Cornwall

165.9p - diesel 191.7p

Dearest on the corridor

Shell, Bude

180.9p - diesel 204.9p

Corridor average, spread

174.5p across 51 stations

15.0p/l - £8 a tank

Petrol £21 - diesel £21 - electric £25 - all-in £63

Asda Barnstaple is the last supermarket before Cornwall; after Bude the A39 runs dear. Newquay and St Ives offer scenery, not relief.

Snowdonia and the North Wales Coast

Wales

Llandudno - Betws-y-Coed - Llanberis - Porthmadog - Barmouth - Bala - Llangollen - 170 miles

Cheapest on the corridor

Shell, Porthmadog

149.9p - diesel 165.9p

Dearest on the corridor

Parc Service Station, Denbighshire

187.9p - diesel 204.9p

Corridor average, spread

175.3p across 32 stations

38.0p/l - £21 a tank

Petrol £32 - diesel £33 - electric £38 - all-in £98

Porthmadog's Shell at 149.9p is the cheapest fuel on any corridor this edition; Betws-y-Coed's is 38p dearer. The mountain passes are free - the pumps are not.

Electric on the road

Every other report in this series finds the electric car cheaper to run. This one does not - because a road trip is charged in public, at the rapid rate of about 80p a kWh, not at home on the 26p price cap. Across the six routes the electric bill is £267 against petrol's £226: a £41 premium for the silence. On the NC500 it is £115 against £97, and the chargers are scarcer than the pumps.

The same NC500, three ways to power it

Petrol, 42 mpg	£97	at 174.2p a litre
Electric, rapid	£115	about 80p a kWh (Zapmap)
Electric, at home	£38	price-cap rate - if you could plug in there
The road-trip premium	+£18	rapid over petrol, per loop
The home discount	-£59	what home charging would save

The premium is the charging, not the car: the same loop powered at the home rate would cost £38 - cheaper than petrol by half. The practical advice is the same as the tank rule: plan the plugs like you plan the pumps, use destination chargers overnight where the rate is gentler, and treat the motorway rapid as the convenience it is priced as.

For the full electric arithmetic - home charging, off-peak tariffs, the whole-year view - see our Annual Cost of Motoring report, where the EV wins everywhere except here.

This half term vs last

A year ago our series had petrol at 134.7p and diesel at 142.8p. This edition: 174.2p and 199.2p. Every route in this report is dearer than its last-autumn self - the NC500 by £22, the six together by about £51. For the family that drives to half term instead of flying, that is the inflation nobody announced.

October 2026 against October 2025, our series

Petrol	134.7p	174.2p	+39.5p
Diesel	142.8p	199.2p	+56.4p
The NC500, petrol	£75	£97	+£22
The six routes, petrol	£174	£226	+£51
A 55-litre fill, petrol	£74	£96	+£22

The mitigation is the same as ever, and the fill-up tables are it: the spread between pumps on a single corridor is up to 38.0p a litre - larger than the year's rise in some places. A driver who fills at the right pump on the Snowdonia and the North Wales Coast beats last October's prices without moving an inch of scenery.

For what the fuel takes from a household's income region by region, see our Regional Fuel Affordability report; for what the car costs across a whole year, the Annual Cost of Motoring; for the daily version of this arithmetic, the Commuting Cost report. This series is the fourth view of the same pump.

Methodology

Fuel prices. UK-average petrol and diesel from this edition's 3 weekly regional snapshots, the same station-weighted series that powers the Fuel Price Index and the Affordability report. Corridor prices are the prices our mapped stations last filed, screened to sane values (100-250p a litre); stations whose town we cannot print cleanly are counted in averages but not named.

Routes and distances. The six routes are fixed across editions: the North Coast 500 (516 miles, the official signed route), the Causeway Coastal Route (130, RAC and Discover NI), the Lake District Loop (120), the Yorkshire Dales and Moors (150), the Atlantic Highway (110) and Snowdonia and the North Wales coast (170) - the last four rounded from published route guides and stated as approximate. A station is on a corridor when it sits within about four miles of the driven line (five on the NC500, where the far north is sparse).

Consumption and cost bases. Petrol at 42 mpg and diesel at 47 mpg, the typical-car figures used across this series; electric at 3.59 miles per kWh, HMRC's sales-weighted figure, priced at Zapmap's public rapid rate of about 80p a kWh because road trips charge away from home (the price-cap comparison is shown for honesty). The all-in line carries the Annual Cost of Motoring report's petrol profile onto these miles at 57.5p a mile. The tank is 55 litres.

The season and the year. Half-term trip counts and travel distances are RAC Breakdown research. Year-on-year comparisons use our own monthly series against the same month a year earlier. Editions land at Easter, the July peak and the October half term; between editions the canonical page serves the newest one.

What this is not. Not a booking tool or a route planner: the named cheapest and dearest stations are a snapshot as our stations last filed them, and rural independents can lag. The corridor average is the steadier signal. Excluded on purpose: tolls, parking, ferries and the cost of the ice creams.

Using this data

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<https://www.findpetrol.co.uk/reports/road-trip-fuel-cost>

Figures update with each seasonal edition at Easter, the July peak and the October half term; archived editions remain citable at their dated addresses. When citing a corridor price, name the edition and the snapshot: prices on our map change daily.

Corrections and data queries: support@findpetrol.co.uk.

Prepared by [findpetrol.co.uk](https://www.findpetrol.co.uk) Research

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Methodology: [findpetrol.co.uk/reports/methodology](https://www.findpetrol.co.uk/reports/methodology)