



## Taking your vehicle abroad? Make sure that you, and it, are fully prepared!

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The Motor Ombudsman has a six-point checklist for vehicles and travel this Easter...

(Words from Robin Roberts, photograph by Kim Henson).



Having a car that is roadworthy and a journey well planned will help avoid any unforeseen delays during this year's first long weekend.

Every fluid and lubricant is critical to components being able to operate efficiently, such as the brakes, engine and air conditioning, and all should be topped up to vehicle manufacturer-advised levels.

Equally important are the lights. Despite the clocks going forward next week, and days getting longer, bulbs in the front headlights, running lights and rear lamps should be operating at their full potential.

Always make sure that all documentation, including breakdown and insurance documents, are up to date and that you have the appropriate overseas cover which may require the payment of an additional premium.

Also, have to hand a valid passport for border checks, loose change for any tolls, as well as your breakdown policy and helpline numbers in case of emergency.

Seek out the best route to help avoid the main congestion hotspots, and with apps and the internet now readily available, this makes it a lot easier to plan ahead.

Moreover, when on the road, ensure that the live traffic function is activated both on your satellite navigation and infotainment systems, so that you can take the best alternative route in the event of any hold-ups. In addition, check where the petrol stations and rest stops are, as a break from the wheel every couple of hours is advised for staying alert.

Tyres are one of the most important safety features on a car, and are the only part of a vehicle in contact with the tarmac. Keeping every tyre including the spare in good condition and inflated to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended pressures is absolutely vital. Furthermore, inserting a 20p piece into the tread of the rubber is a quick and easy test to determine whether the depth is above the legal limit of 1.6 mm. If the outer band of the coin cannot be seen when it's inserted, then the tread is sufficient.



Electric and plug-in hybrid cars are fast gaining popularity, and therefore, if you drive one of these models, it's important that you are aware of the location of battery charging points along your route, whether in the UK or on the continent.

Research how many miles you are planning to cover, what the distance is between charging stations, and if your accommodation has points available so that you can make sure your car has sufficient range for your trips.

Remember to look up what equipment you need to carry by law if you are heading across the English Channel, as this varies by country. A GB sticker on the rear of the car is essential, unless the registration plate displays the GB Euro-symbol.

It's also good practice when going abroad to have a warning triangle, high visibility reflective jackets and headlamp beam converters in the boot as a minimum, alongside a torch, first-aid kit and blanket.

More continental cities are now introducing green zones and it may be the first time you encounter this even if you've visited a city before so check on-line if any major urban areas you will be visiting have the green-zones and get a carnet window sticker or face a hefty fine through automatic number plate recognition software which might land you with an unexpected home-coming.

Useful advice on travelling can be found on [the AA site](#) and

[RAC comprehensive service](#) information.