Ditch your modern car for a more cost-effective classic?

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Mini-mise your motoring costs with a classic car…

'The Great British Car Journey' tells us:

With petrol prices continuing to soar, could swapping your modern motor for a classic car

be the answer to bringing your motoring costs down?

The Derbyshire-based classic car visitor attraction Great British Car Journey has done the sums and believes an original 1970s 1000cc classic Mini could prove to be the hero car of today's motorists who are struggling with the rocketing cost of motoring.

Thanks to reduced acceleration levels, lower body weight and lack of electrics, such as windows, aircon, digital displays, a classic Mini gets around 65 mpg compared to a modern small one litre car which averages a true mpg of around 55.9 mpg.

Without the complication of electrics, vehicle maintenance is far more cost effective on a classic car as well, requiring the skills and ability of a mechanic or a Hanes manual, rather than costly diagnostic equipment.

And it's not just fuel where you save with a classic car. Vehicles built or first registered more than 40 years ago do not require an MOT. Additionally, if the vehicle was built before 1 January 1981, then it also doesn't require road tax.

Classic car insurance is often cheaper than standard policies, mostly because insurers see classic cars as a lower risk of being involved in a claim. Many classic car insurers recognise that older vehicles have lower speed limits and classic car owners tend to keep their car well looked after.

Designed by the legendary Alex Issigonis and first manufactured in 1959, 5.3 million classic Minis were produced between 1959 until 2000, and it is estimated around 8,000 of them remain on the roads today. An original classic Mini in good roadworthy condition will set you back around £5,000.

Considered one of four hero cars in the Great British Car Journey story, the Mini revolutionised motoring in the UK, if not the world. Alongside the Austin Seven, Morris Minor and Ford Escort, the classic Mini provided the world with innovative and affordable cars.

Richard Usher, CEO of Great British Car Journey explained: “Whether it’s the looks, nostalgia or driving experience, classic cars have a special place in many people’s hearts. However, I think that appeal is set to grow giving the rising cost of modern motoring. As well being cheaper to run, a classic car is also a great investment with many appreciating in value if they are looked after. Sixty-three years ago, Alex Issigonis’ iconic Mini made motoring economic. Perhaps it could do it again today.”

For people keen to take a classic Mini for a drive, Great British Car Journey offers a 20-minute Drive Dad’s Car driving experience in one of four Minis, including a 1966 Mini 850 MK1, and a Mini Cooper which was manufactured in 2000 and was one of the last to roll off the production line.

Visitors can also discover the wider collection of more than 130classic cars designed and manufactured in the UK between 1920 and 2000, including the Austin Seven, Morris Minor, Ford Escort – cars that were manufactured in their millions, appearing on virtually every street and car park in the UK but have since disappeared.

To arrange a classic Mini driving experience at Great British Car Journey, please visit www.drivedadscar.com

About Great British Car Journey

Great British Car Journey (GBCJ) is located at Derwent Works, Ambergate, Derbyshire DE56 2HE. It opened on 22 May 2021.

Drive Dad’s Car allows visitors to take a selection of over 30 iconic British cars from the Austin Seven to a Rolls Royce Silver Spirit, for a 20-minute test drive with an instructor on a private on-site road.

The attraction boasts a café and gift shop.

GBCJ takes visitors through a nine-stage story of the rise and demise of the British motor

industry (a story that has never been told) using a unique interactive handheld audio visual device which has been created by event technology specialists Imagineear.

Keep up-to-date with developments at Great British Car Journey and Drive Dad's Car on social media:

- Facebook – @GreatBritishCarJourney and @drivedadscar

Kim, from Wheels-Alive, comments:

It is no surprise to owners of classic cars that in most cases they are more cost-effective to run than equivalent modern machinery. Indeed, I have always maintained that in general, it is quite possible to operate up to 10 classics for the price of one 'modern'.

I have been using and enjoying older cars throughout my motoring life so far, and the joy of driving a vehicle that is a bit different from the run-of-the-mill, and has its own more interesting character, has to be experienced to be fully appreciated. I am happy to drive my classics anywhere at any time.

Apart from the savings in fuel, repair and servicing costs, most classics they are appreciating in value, rather than depreciating as is the situation with modern cars, and savings in this regard can be very considerable.

However, driving a classic, rather than a recent model, on a daily basis, is not for everyone, and if you are considering this, there are a few aspects that I would advise you to think about:

1. If you intend to drive a classic car on a daily basis, I feel that it needs to be in the best possible condition to start with, and of course needs to be well-maintained. If it is MoT-exempt (40 years+), it MUST still be kept roadworthy, and many classic owners submit their cars voluntarily for the test each year, to ensure an independent check.

2. It's one thing to drive a classic on a sunny summer's day, quite another on a wet, cold day in winter. Aspects such as keeping rainwater out and ensuring that the heating/ventilation system works as designed are essential for safety as well as comfort. It is also true that using a classic in wintry conditions can play havoc with the bodywork/underbody, when the roads are salted (for example). Comprehensive rustproofing and frequent checks are advised.
3. You need to be sure that the car you intend to drive regularly is fully/properly insured for the type of use you plan, and that you will be covered for the annual mileages anticipated.
4. Before buying a 'regular use' classic, it is worth talking to other owners and if possible travelling in/driving similar examples, to make sure you will like it enough!
5. If you are unable to carry out routine maintenance and repairs yourself, you will need to find a mechanic, specialist or knowledgeable friend who can help you keep the car on the road. You can learn about its intricacies as you go along!
6. When considering buying a classic for frequent use, consider the availability of spares and specialist help. Rare models are lovely but could become a headache if you can't obtain parts in a hurry. By contrast popular vehicles like the classic Minis, Morris Minor/1000s, BMC sports cars and many Triumphs (for example) are especially well catered-for in terms of spares supplies and specialists. The club scene is invaluable too, and there are many other classics which benefit from relevant 'one-make' or 'one model' club support, including parts supply.
   I am not trying to put people off using a classic; on the contrary as mentioned, for many years I have been an advocate of running older cars as being far more cost-effective and fun than driving a modern. I have also found to my personal cost that modern vehicles can be expensive and frustrating at much higher levels than older models!!

   Recent cars incorporate many useful safety and convenience features, notably through the use of electronics, and of course these are positives. Regular readers will know that I test-drive new cars often and they can be terrific to drive. However, as these cars age their inherent complexity can work against them and indeed can even write them off as repairs can be so costly. With the design life of a new car probably being just seven years or so, a more simple and fuel-efficient classic that can operate easily for decades makes a lot of

sense (in environmental terms as well as monetary costs for the owner).

I shall just add that I know people who have voluntarily given up on their expensive-to-run, breakdown-prone recent cars, in favour of basic, straightforward, reliable and easy-to-live-with classics. Not only are they happier, but are also laughing all the way to the bank.

If you opt for a classic to use and enjoy all the time, good luck and have fun with it.