Ways to Save at the Gas Pump

You might be wondering how to make your gas last longer and how to find the lowest prices. Here are some tips to help you keep some dollars in your pocket the next time you buy gas.

Fill up on weekdays - Prices usually rise on the weekend, so the best times to buy gas are typically Tuesday afternoons or Wednesday mornings.

Track your mileage - Have your car checked if the average miles you get per gallon decreases over time. Note the odometer reading and number of gallons purchased each time you fill up. Divide the miles traveled between fill-ups by the number of gallons purchased.

Look for discount gas cards - Rebate programs offer as much as 10% off the gas you buy!

Avoid running on empty - When your car is on empty you're actually using more gas because your vehicle is running less efficiently. Fill your gas tank when you have half a tank or a little less.

Less is more - Don't carry around items you don't need. For every 100 pounds of weight in your car, fuel economy decreases by 1-2%. Also put heavy items in the trunk instead of on a roof rack, which creates drag and eats up gas.

Look around - Find the places near you that offer the cheapest gas and shop there first.

Consider checking into these great online resources: Cheap Gas, Gas Buddy, and Gas Price Watch.

Avoid idling - Shut off the engine if you have to sit in your car for more than one minute.

Check your tire pressure - Under-inflated tires require more energy to roll. More energy means more gas. When it's time, consider replacing worn tires with low-rolling resistance tires.

Slow down - Driving at posted speed limits saves fuel and saves lives. Each 5 mph over 60 mph is like paying an additional 10 cents per gallon. Use cruise control to maintain your speed.

Avoid gas stations near freeways - Research shows that prices are often higher there.

Don't upgrade - Unless your owner's manual suggests using a higher grade, buy regular gasoline. Costlier high-octane gas does not improve the performance of your vehicle.

Avoid topping off - When you top off your tank, the pump doesn't have enough time to really activate, resulting in short bursts of fuel that may short change you from the amount of gas that you are purchasing.

Maintain your car - Change your oil, spark plugs, and air filter on schedule. Always go to a repair shop if your "Check Engine" light comes on - a faulty oxygen sensor could be the cause, lowering your mileage significantly.

Tighten gas cap - Tightening the gas cap on your car will prevent gas from evaporating and escaping into the air. If you've lost your gas cap, buy a new one as soon as possible.

Combine trips - Several short trips taken from a "cold start" can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm. Carpool whenever possible.

Choose your vehicle wisely - If you own more than one vehicle, remember to drive the one that gets better mileage when you have the option.

Choose your route wisely - Take the route with the flattest terrain and fewest stops. Try to avoid traffic jams and stop-and-go traffic.

Avoid sudden stops and starts - Erratic acceleration and braking can waste up to 50 cents a gallon.

Limit air conditioning - Your A/C consumes fuel. At lower speeds, open the windows or sunroof to stay cool. At higher speeds, use the car's fan instead. Open windows create drag that reduces mileage.

Buy gas from busy stations - Gas station pumps that are refilled regularly are more likely to have fuel that is fresh. Fresh gas has more power than gas that has been sitting in a station's pump.

Made in the shade - Park in the shade and it will minimize fuel evaporation as well as help keep your car cool in the summer.

Fill up at night - Believe it or not, pumps deliver more gas when temperatures are lower.

Get a tune-up - A simple tune-up on your car can improve your gas mileage by an average of 4.1 percent!

Check your oil - Use the recommended grade of motor oil, preferably one with "energy conserving" on the label. Gas mileage could improve 1 to 2 percent.