Brits Put the Brakes on Their Fuel Spending

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Alistair Darling proposed a 2p increase in fuel duty in his pre-budget announcement, but all is not lost. Latest research from Mintel finds that the vast majority of Brits have now taken their foot well and truly off the gas when it comes to fuel spending.

Indeed, Mintel finds that more than 80% of adults in the UK have changed the way they drive over the past 12 months, to cut back on the amount of petrol they use. And as many as a quarter (24%) of Brits have made 5 or more cost-cutting changes to their driving habits.

â€œWhile once it was all about conspicuous spending especially when it came to high performance gas guzzlers, now there is almost a sense of competition for who can be the thriftiest,â€• comments Jim Clark, senior leisure analyst at Mintel. "Most of the changes that Britain's motorists made to their fuel consumption were in response to the soaring oil prices we experienced earlier in 2008. But the lessons learnt will now stand them in good stead for this recent rise in fuel duty."

Ensuring tyres have the correct pressure to maximise fuel efficiency is the most popular course of action taken by car drivers in Britain looking to cut down their petrol bill. Indeed, almost one in four (38%) choose to do just that. This also has the benefit of reducing tyre wear, another important consideration for cost-conscious consumers and those looking to improve their road safety.

Meanwhile, it is lucky that we have entered a cold snap as just over a third (34%) of motorists now keep their air conditioning turned off. What is more, Dad is finally getting his own way as British families will be travelling light, with a similar number (32%) trying not to carry unnecessary weight in the car. All this in the name of fuel efficiency.

And although not everyone can give up using their car altogether, three in ten (28%) say that they now walk, cycle or take public transport more often.

â€œIn the absence of the entire nation throwing away their car keys, using less petrol or diesel is a realistic money saving compromise that most Brits are now willing to make,â€• explains Jim Clark.

When it comes to saving on fuel costs, men take a very technical approach such as checking tyres and keeping an eye on the rev counter, while women are much more likely to make adjustments to their lifestyle. Indeed, while 30% of men cut back on weekend day trips in the car, this rises to 37% amongst women. Similarly, only 28% of men donâ€™t drive as much to see friends who live far away, compared to 34% amongst women.
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