

# MOTORING

## SPECIAL

**Petrol overtakes diesel as the Costa's bestseller**

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### ENVIRONMENT

Reducing pollution

How far is Spain on the road towards zero emissions? [P2&3]

### CLASSIC CARS

Driving for pleasure

A look at the area's classic car clubs and vehicle associations [P6&7]



ENVIRONMENT  
GREEN DRIVING

Smog over central Madrid. :: SUR

# SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT, ONE CAR AT A TIME

Spain is leading the fight against climate change with cutting-edge technology, eco-friendly transport initiatives and by holding corporations and individuals accountable for environmental issues

essarily the best solution.

Mike Berners-Lee, a leading thinker on sustainability and global warming, has highlighted that the hidden cost to the environment of each new car is a massive release of pollutants, a huge amount of waste and the burning of a lot of precious fossil fuel. He has estimated that 630kg of CO<sub>2</sub> is produced for every thousand euros spent on a new car.

Even hybrid cars need to be plugged into a power source in order to fully charge their electric-only systems. This too can be problematic because it means that they are effectively tapping into whatever type of power plant is producing that energy, be it coal, green energy, nuclear, etc.

Spain is slightly more efficient than the EU average for how it gen-

erates power for its electric cars, especially when compared to Poland and Germany, which use far more coal and fossil fuels in their energy production.

The technology is still in its infancy; electric cars do not have the range of conventional models and although Malaga has set up many electric charging stations around the city, the same cannot be said for other areas.

Spain has become an international leader in pioneering environmentally-friendly transport. Barcelona has announced that it will ban cars that are older than 20 years from the roads during the week to cut traffic emissions by 30% over 15 years.

"[The aim] is to reduce emissions by 10% over the next five years to

gradually reach the levels recommended by the World Health Organization and accelerate the adoption of more intensive local measures in order to reach the levels set by the EU before 2020," a spokesperson at Barcelona city council said recently.

SUR reported in February this year that the European Commission had requested that its member states present their proposals for reducing greenhouse gases. Spain was found to have particularly high vehicle emissions.

Dr Aitana Calvo of the Spanish Association of Medical Oncology (SEOM) embraced this, saying that inhaling vehicle fumes could increase the risk of lung and bladder cancers.

Ecologists in Action, however, has criticised the European Commission

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**T**he impact of road vehicles on the environment has become an issue of increasing concern for governments and environmental campaigners over the last few decades. The solution to the problem is complicated, because simply buying a newer, more efficient car is not nec-

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**“Governments have not taken the necessary measures to prevent illegal contamination of the air. It’s criminal and shouldn’t go unpunished” - Raquel Montón, Greenpeace**

for not taking sufficient action, pointing out that it had released similar directives in 2005 and 2010 which had not been followed. Raquel Montón, a Spanish Greenpeace representative, said that “governments have not taken the necessary measures to prevent illegal contamination of the air. It’s criminal and shouldn’t go unpunished.”

The Spanish green party Equo has cited data from ecologists that shows that 94% of people in Spain breathe contaminated air. However, the government is aware of



An electric car at an event in Malaga at the end of last year. :: s. s.

the issue. The Spanish Secretary of State for the Environment, María García Rodríguez, has announced that the national government has invested more than 1.2 billion euros in order to improve air quality in Spain.

In December 2016, Madrid ordered half of most private cars off the roads to tackle worsening air pollution. The restrictions operated between 6.30am and 9pm. The city council said in a statement: “Vehicles with even-number registration plates will be allowed to drive around on even-number days and cars with odd-number registration plates on odd-number days”. The move to ban

half of cars was level three on a scale of four anti-pollution measures. Level four would have banned taxis from the city, except those that were hybrid cars. The measure was very successful in reducing smog, lasting little over a month.

Environmental concerns have often been ignored or slighted by car manufacturers, as evidenced by the recent BMW emissions scandal. However, it is clear that Spain is leading the charge for eco-friendly vehicles.

Seat, Spain’s largest car manufacturer, has confirmed that it will release a fully electric car in 2020 with a range of 311 miles.



The then Prince Felipe inspecting an electric car in 2013. :: EFE

## TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Malaga has long been at the forefront of Spain’s fight against climate change. In 2012, the city launched the ZEM2ALL (Zero Emission Mobility to All) project to raise awareness of the benefits of electric cars. Two hundred people rented Mitsubishi MiEV electric models over a four-year period and 243 electric charging points were built around the city.

The results were amazing. The programme saw 2.9 million miles driven with zero emissions, more than 100,000 charges take place and prevented 330 tonnes of CO2 emissions, the equivalent of the consumption of 50 homes in a year.

In September 2017, SUR published an article about the economic and environmental benefits of increasing green transport in the city of Malaga. Hybrid cars

and motorbikes, electric bicycles and roller blades are helping to save money and the environment. An exhibition known as Expoumet, which took place around the city, also showcased the benefits of sustainable transport.

Green energy can have a positive effect on the economy by creating new jobs, caring for the city’s heritage, increasing security and making for a higher standard of living for people across the world.

Malaga mayor Francisco de la Torre said that we all have to be “involved” in a “collective effort to fight against climate change”. He also clarified that there will always be a need for transport, but “we need to make it as efficient as possible”.

The city currently offers electric car and bicycle rentals, as well as several charging stations.

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**T**rials of driverless cars are moving forward in Spain, although there is some concern about their safety because vehicles of this type have been involved in three fatal accidents since 2016.

Experts are still trying to find out why one Tesla autonomous car collided with a large lorry in Florida in that year, why another made by Uber ran over and killed a 49-year-old woman in Arizona last month, and why another Tesla hit a concrete wall in California a few weeks ago. In each case, the person behind the wheel should have been able to respond to a warning from the vehicle, but appeared to do nothing.

Despite the concerns, analysts at Credit Suisse believe that by 2040 about 14 per cent of all new cars will be completely or partly autonomous. The PSA group was the first to test a fully autonomous car in Spain on 23 November 2015, and many of the latest trials are taking place in this country. "Spain is perfect for this, because it has every type of weather condition," says Elías Izquierdo, the head of Mobileye in Spain.

Mobileye is a subsidiary of Intel and the Spanish traffic authority (DGT) which sees a future in which cars are not driven by people as a way of improving road safety.

At present, work is being carried out to produce maps which driverless cars can 'read', and for this purpose Mobileye has provided the DGT with its Advanced Driving Assistance Systems service (ADAS) and Road Experience Management (REM) technology.

The project involves fleets of vehicles - about 5,000 are needed for a large city - which are equipped with the company's cameras, and a server on which to lodge the data. "The new system should be installed in the cars within two or three years, says Izquierdo.

At the moment, the safety or driving assistance systems are based on sensors such as radar or LIDAR, two systems which measure and detect objects via laser. The laser rays they emit impact on the objects and bounce back again.

"The aim is that when the ADAS can't see, it will be able to work from a map," says Izquierdo.



An autonomous car in the town of Phoenix, USA. :: REUTERS

## TECHNOLOGY AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

# SAFE WITHOUT A DRIVER?

Tests are still being carried out despite recent accidents

:: JOSÉ A. GONZÁLEZ

"At the moment Spain has committed to one system, and we will see if it manages to map the whole country. It will create a segmented map with all the information collected by the vehicles' cameras, which record the information about the roads. It will include all types of road signs, and traffic lights," says Izquierdo.

### Maps that design routes

With this data, the autonomous car will be able to geoposition itself through triangulation and if, for example, it has snowed and the system can't see the lines, "thanks to the map it will know where the road runs". "There are 13 brands which have already reached an agreement with us and they could come to Spain for their tests and develop all the technology here," he says.

One of these projects will be in Barcelona, where the council has already incorporated the latest generation Mobileye sensors and data analysis on its urban buses.

"Barcelona wants to be a pioneer in preventing accidents, and hopes to serve as an example to others," says the Mobileye website.

The data collected will be analysed by the DGT and other organisations to prepare the roads in Spain for semi-autonomous and driverless vehicles. The data used will also be used on other projects, to find

new ways of improving road safety.

The Mobileye-DGT agreement is a pioneer in Europe and manufacturers and technologies are now looking towards Spanish motorways, because they are free of asphyxiating regulations for autonomous driving.

Spain rejected the Vienna convention, which defines a vehicle as a combination of car and driver, in 1968, and this means it is able to operate vehicles which can travel for up to 600 kilometres with no direct action by a driver. This has already led to complaints among other EU members, who are unable to develop a technology which is due to come into use in the near future.

According to a study which has been carried out by the DGT, if vehicles in Spain had already had this type of technology it could have prevented or mitigated 4,000 collisions with pedestrians in the past year, reduced head-on collisions by 54 per cent and avoided 19,000 accidents which occurred when cars accidentally left the road.

As part of the Visión Cero project, which aims to stop all deaths and serious injuries on Spanish roads, the DGT and Mobileye are firmly supporting the application of the latest technology for the safety of drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

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Classic car owners and vehicle enthusiasts get together to share their passion for motors on the roads of Andalucía :: BEN CLARKE

**T**he Costa del Sol has long been home to a variety of car owners' clubs, catering to both English and Spanish speakers who are loyal to a particular brand of vehicle or classic car enthusiasts. They also enjoy links with the Malaga Automobile and Fashion Museum, which boasts a collection of 90 classic vehicles. The clubs cater for residents of Malaga province right the way down to Gibraltar, and have diverse memberships encompassing an array of different nationalities.

The Classic Car Club of Andalucía is run by Ian Giles, who was already living in Spain when he joined the club at its inception 10 years ago. "We've got a very active cosmopolitan membership of around 400 to 500 members, a reflection of the people who live down here on the Costa del Sol. What's important about the club is that it's open to classic cars but also cars of a classic nature or modern classic cars like a Porsche or Ferrari that have been made for a number of years without change," he told SUR in English.

The Classic Car Club members get together at El Chaparral golf club on the first Tuesday of every month, as well as organising a clas-

**The clubs have very active cosmopolitan memberships, a reflection of the people who live along on the Costa del Sol**

sic car run on the Saturday that follows the club night. In early May, the club will be holding a two-week tour of classic cars from London to Monte Carlo. Ian explained that celebrities from show business and Formula 1 will attend and the event will be tied in with classic Formula 1 racing at Monte Carlo.

Another organisation, the Sol Classic Car Club was established in 2004; Qasim Shaikh has been its president since 2006. The club began from an informal meeting of local car enthusiasts in Marbella, but soon grew into the large organisation that it is today.

Qasim explains that members' cars have to be at least 15 years old and have been in production for 25 years. "We help each other with parts and technology as well as holding seminars about the actual technology itself. The club is about bringing people together; we're a

not-for-profit with a focus on the social aspect of motoring."

Win Percy, the British former motor racing driver, is a member of the club. Qasim himself has a Series 1 Bentley and a MG Midget. The most remarkable car in the club is a 90-year-old Bullnose Morris. "Luckily the Spanish vehicle authorities are quite relaxed. There is no way on earth that that car could go through a modern ITV test," said Qasim.

The Gibraltar Classic Vehicle Association was founded in 2001. Its president is Howard Danino, who joined the association in 2006 and became president in 2010. The club has over 100 members with about 150 vehicles. It has strong ties with associations on the Costa del Sol and organises a wide range of events.

"The next major event is an international rally, which will take place on 19 May. We'll meet in Casemates Square and drive around Gibraltar before stopping for lunch. The following day we'll have a scenic drive of about 100km in the direction of Tarifa. That should only cost around 25 euros per person and we'll provide a printable map," Howard explained. "We have events every month and venture



Several vintage cars at La Cañada in Marbella. :: CLUB VEHÍCULOS HISTÓRICOS



A vintage car of the Classic Car Club Andalucía during a trip to Clitheroe,

into Spain every other month so there's always a lot on."

The other classic vehicle association on the Costa is the Spanish-speaking Club Vehículos

Históricos Costa del Sol which also organises a variety of monthly events. The club has around 40 members and often meets for dinners. The group is open to enthu-

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Members of the Sol Classic Cars Club pictured with their vehicles in April 2018. :: SOL CLASSIC CAR CLUB



The Ferrari Club's Christmas meeting. :: FERRARI OWNERS' CLUB ANDALUCÍA



Lancashire. :: CLASSIC CAR CLUB ANDALUCÍA

### LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

► Classic Car Club of Andalucía.  
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► Sol Classic Car Club.  
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[qasim.shaikh@gmail.com](mailto:qasim.shaikh@gmail.com)

► Gibraltar Classic Vehicle Association.  
[www.gibraltarclassiccar.com](http://www.gibraltarclassiccar.com)  
[howard@gibraltar.gi](mailto:howard@gibraltar.gi)

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siasts as well as classic vehicle owners. Their major annual outing is the Vuelta a la Península Ibérica, a two-week event where club members drive around the entirety of Spain, Portugal and Andorra.

#### Modern car owners

The Costa del Sol also has two car clubs for enthusiasts of specific makes of car, whatever the vehicles' ages. The first is the Ferrari Owners' Club Andalucía, which meets at the Monza Bar in Puerto Banús. The members of the association meet every Sunday at 11.30am in front of Toni Dallí's restaurant on the Golden Mile and invite anyone with an interest in Ferraris to go along and look at the cars. The club also organises regular events for vehicle owners and fans where they can meet up to discuss upcoming events, which include lunches, rallies and exhibitions at the Malaga

congress centre.

The Porsche Owners' Club Andalucía is the newest motor club on the Costa, having only been founded in 2014. The founder and former president, Gary Compson, said that the club is designed to bring together Porsche enthusiasts who wish to share their knowledge and expertise, while enjoying the friendly atmosphere created from monthly social gatherings and motoring events.

"The aim of our rally days is to discover the hidden charms of Andalucía, concluding with a lunch at one of the many wonderful local ventas and restaurants. Our future plans include track days as well as Porsche produce launches and many more exciting motoring events," said Gary. Their upcoming events include a club dinner at Café Magna on 9 May and an overnight trip to Úbeda on 19 and 20 May.

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Potential buyers examine a new car at a showroom. :: SUR

sold were diesel, compared with 49 per cent petrol.

In January and February this year, 51.7 per cent and 56.4 per cent of new cars registered in Spain were petrol (no provincial figures are available for these months).

“For many years more diesel cars were sold than petrol ones, but last year that changed and we think even fewer diesel vehicles will be sold this year,” says Carlos Oliva. In fact, his association believes the number of new diesel vehicles registered is likely to drop by about eight per cent.

#### Damaged reputation

The change is partly due to the bad reputation diesel cars have acquired because of scandals such as the one at Volkswagen, who installed software to trick the measurement of emissions in more than 11 million vehicles; or the more recent incident in which several German manufacturers were accused of financing experiments on human beings about the effects of emissions from diesel engines. Behind these controversies lies the same problem: the growing concern by European authorities about atmospheric contamination caused by vehicles.

It is not only the EU that is focusing on diesel cars. Councils are also doing so, such as Madrid and Barcelona, which are considering restricting access to the city centres for vehicles that pollute the most and have already asked the government to cancel the tax incentives for the purchase of diesel fuel.

“Consumers are aware of this and in the end it does influence their decision when buying,” says Oliva.

In addition, there is the fact that petrol cars have become much more efficient in terms of fuel consumption, and over the years the price difference between the two types of fuel has lessened. The Anfac motor manufacturers’ association says the trend actually began to change back in 2012, long before ‘dieselgate’ occurred in 2015.

The decline in diesel is not just a characteristic of the Spanish market; it is occurring all over Europe. In 2014, about 54 per cent of vehi-

#### FACTS AND FIGURES VEHICLE SALES



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## PETROL, THE NEW BESTSELLER

**D**iesel no longer occupies the highest step on the podium of the Spanish car market. The so-called Volkswagen ‘dieselgate’ scandal and the intention of Madrid and Barcelona councils to restrict access to city centres for vehicles that cause the most pollution are among the factors that have caused a massive change in consumers’ decisions when buying a new car.

After decades of dominating the market, cars powered by diesel are now becoming less popular than those which run on petrol. In 2017, for the first time since at least the 1990s, the sales of petrol cars exceeded diesel, not just in Malaga province but in Spain as a whole, and the trend is increasing, says

In 2017, for the first time in decades, more new petrol cars were sold than diesel ones, while hybrids are becoming increasingly popular

Carlos Oliva, the president of AMA-Asomauto, the Association of Vehicle Dealers and Garages in Malaga province.

According to statistics published by the DGT traffic authority, of the 58,010 vehicles registered in Malaga last year (including not only cars but also lorries, vans and motorcycles, among others), 30,025 run on petrol (51.8 per cent) and 27,024 on diesel (46.6 per cent). In the previous year 49.7 per cent of vehicles

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## WHAT CAR SHOULD I BUY?

► **Diesel.** They are more expensive than the equivalent petrol models and maintenance is also more expensive, but drivers who do more than 20,000 kilometres a year, mostly on motorways and main roads, are compensated by fuel savings. These vehicles do, however, produce more pollution.

► **Petrol.** This type of engine is recommended if you don't use the car very much (less than 20,000 kilometres a year) and drive in towns as well as on main roads. These cars are more economical and their fuel consumption has reduced considerably in recent years.

► **Hybrids.** If you nearly always drive in towns this is the most economical option, although this type of car is more expensive to buy than conventional models.

### The trend began to change in 2012, but 'dieselgate' and other scandals have accentuated the shift

cles sold in Europe were diesel, but in 2016 the percentages changed to 49 per cent diesel and around 46 per cent petrol. In 2017 diesel sales accounted for the lowest market share in ten years: 43.7 per cent, compared with over 50 per cent petrol.

#### Irrational decisions

The president of AMA admits that for many years diesel was "fashionable" because many purchasers "came with the intention of buying a diesel car, and it made no difference how much the dealer recommended that a petrol car would be better for their type of use". Now, he says, dealers are starting to see the opposite: clients are determined not to buy a diesel car because they are afraid that in future

they will not be allowed to drive in city centres or they will end up paying higher tax on fuel.

Professionals in the sector say it is best not to have preconceived ideas when buying a car, and to realistically analyse your driving habits in order to choose the ideal vehicle. People who do a great many kilometres a year and drive mostly on main roads will still find diesel the best option, while those who drive under 20,000 kilometres a year, on main roads and in towns, would do better with petrol. Carlos Oliva points out that if a car is not used very much, those with a diesel engine are more likely to suffer mechanical problems.

Nor should the third option be forgotten, and it is becoming more popular: hybrid cars, the sale of which doubled in Malaga last year, to 1,690. For those who do nearly all their driving in towns, these are the best option: you only have to look at the number of taxi drivers who are using hybrid vehicles nowadays. "By 2025 vehicle sales are expected to be equal among the three different types, diesel, petrol and hybrids, and by 2030 hybrids will be dominating the market," says Oliva.

The same cannot be said for cars which are 100 per cent electric: last year only 101 were sold in Malaga province. In January this year alone, 156 hybrid vehicles were sold.

The association recommends that anyone planning to buy a new car should keep an open mind and be prepared to be advised by the dealer.

"It depends on the type of driving you do, the number of kilometres you travel, the type of roads you use. Based on that information, the professionals can recommend the type of car which will suit you best. It isn't always a good idea to take notice of what your neighbour might say," says Oliva.

## The best-selling cars in Malaga in 2017

1. Dacia Sandero



2. Seat Ibiza



3. Seat León



	Make	Model	Sales
1	DACIA	SANDERO	1,090
2	SEAT	IBIZA	948
3	SEAT	LEON	670
4	NISSAN	QASHQAI	657
5	RENAULT	CLIO	643
6	HYUNDAI	TUCSON	613
7	TOYOTA	YARIS	590
8	OPEL	CORSA	557
9	VOLKSWAGEN	GOLF	550
10	KIA	SPORTAGE	547
11	RENAULT	CAPTUR	532
12	SEAT	ATECA	521
13	VOLKSWAGEN	TIGUAN	516
14	CITROEN	C3	501
15	RENAULT	MEGANE	497
16	PEUGEOT	2008	485
17	TOYOTA	AURIS	476
18	PEUGEOT	208	449
19	BMW	X1	430
20	PEUGEOT	3008	412
21	HYUNDAI	I20	347
22	TOYOTA	C-HR	344
23	PEUGEOT	308	340
24	RENAULT	KADJAR	335
25	DACIA	DUSTER	332
26	NISSAN	JUKE	328
27	MERCEDES	CLASE - GLA	309
28	FIAT	TIPO	306
29	VOLKSWAGEN	POLO	292
30	KIA	CARENS	285

Source: Malaga Motoring Association

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RACING  
FORMULA 1F1 BATTLE HEATS UP AS FERRARI'S  
IMPROVEMENT CONTINUES

The Italian team go into the Azerbaijan GP this weekend just one point behind last year's champions Mercedes

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months to iron out some of the "divaness", as it had been described by Lewis Hamilton, in their new car, the W09.

Given the speed of the W08, not a lot of modifications were necessary, except those to comply with

the new regulations (including the new "halo" which team boss Toto Wolff said he would cut off "with a chainsaw" if he could). What they did do, though, was to make some key suspension changes and some aerodynamic upgrades to make performance much more reliable across slower tracks with low-grip surfaces.

Wolff said: "We've tried to stay true to our design philosophy and develop an already solid base.

"We all like divas. But sometimes she was a bit difficult to understand and this is the area where we worked the most, trying to understand and preserve the speed in the car and find more driveability."

This is key if the team are to hold off the challenge of Ferrari who, over the past year, have got back into world title contention and are now breathing down Mercedes' neck.

At the launch earlier in the year, Ferrari's technical director Mattia Binotto said of the new car: "It is an evolution of last year's car which was already a good project."

He explained that they had tried to maintain the car's strengths, including its ability to work well on low-speed circuits, adding that aerodynamic development meant that it would be more competitive on high-speed circuits - until now one of Mercedes' strengths.

The Italian team also took a step in their rival's direction by lengthening the wheelbase in an attempt to produce more downforce.

Ferrari's number one driver Sebastian Vettel said: "This is a big step from last year's car." And so it has proven. Vettel flew out the traps



Hamilton uses the new "halo" to get into the W09. :: AFP

with victories in the first two Grand Prix of the year in Australia and Bahrain, respectively. Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo claimed the third in China.

Though Mercedes still lead by a single point after their drivers came second place in all three (Valtteri Bottas in the latter two and Lewis Hamilton in the first), panic is starting to settle in. Former world champion Damon Hill likened the team's performance in China to "the end of an empire".

Hamilton labelled it "a disaster" after his fourth-place finish left him nine points behind Vettel and Mercedes failed to win three consecutive races for the first time since 2014.

The Brit said following the race that he feared Mercedes had slipped behind Ferrari, admitting, "It is clear that we are not the quickest."

He showed resilience, however: "We have some improving to do but

that's not impossible. I think what this team has shown over the years that we are great at staying united and continuing to power on and keep working."

Hamilton is still the favourite to top the World Drivers' Championship standings at the end of the year and has an opportunity to set things right over the course of this weekend at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix - a track which has produced some unexpected results.

However, if Ricciardo repeats last year's win on this circuit, suddenly the World Championship could turn into a three-horse race thanks to his win in China.

Though it's still early days, this year looks set to be one of the most competitive championships in years. Ferrari's car has come on in leaps and bounds and with Vettel and Kimi Räikkönen in fine form, will they make Mercedes pay for trying to tame "the diva".



Vettel celebrates his second win of the season in Bahrain. :: AFP

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If you're planning a holiday sometime soon and you'll be driving to your destination, or if you're just not sure when the tyres, oil, brake pads or windscreen wipers on your vehicle should be changed, you will find this quick guide useful.

People tend to take their cars for granted, but they are machines so they need maintenance and to be checked regularly. It's not enough to just fill a car with fuel and hope for the best.

When going on a long journey, experts recommend doing a quick check first, of the liquid levels, tyre pressures, fan belt, windscreen wipers, brakes and the spare tyre. A garage should charge about 30 euros for a minimal check, but a more extensive one will cost more, just as people pay more for extra private medical check-ups.

Miguel Escamilla is a partner in the 'Neumáticos Jesús Palma' company in Marbella; he says most people forget about their spare tyre, which spends its life inside the boot unless they have a puncture and need to use it.

"It is a mistake to forget about it. You have to bear in mind that a car has five wheels, and every time you check the pressure of the four which are on the wheels, you should also check the spare one," he advises.

#### Tyres

Manufacturers recommend changing the tyres on a car every 40,000 kilometres or five years, but there are several warning signs which indicate that a tyre needs to be replaced sooner.

For example, the depth of the tread must be 1.6 millimetres. You don't need anything to measure it with: the wheels have a 'wear indicator', which is a small step in the groove. When that is at the same level as the groove, it's time to change the tyre.

Tyres do not show their expiry date, but they do indicate their date of manufacture. This is shown as four digits indicating the week and year of production. For example, '2314' would mean the 23rd week of 2014. From that, you can count five years and work out what the expiry date will be.

Tyres also have labels and, just like



### MOTOR MAINTENANCE

# GETTING READY FOR THE ROAD

Many drivers wait until a problem occurs with their vehicle before taking action, but regular checks save time and money :: CHARO MÁRQUEZ

domestic electrical appliances, category A is the best quality and most efficient. The label gives information about the type of tyre adhesion, the decibels of noise it causes and the fuel consumption.

Now, let's look at prices. There are three categories of tyre: Premium (Michelin, Hankook, Pirelli); Quality (Firestone, Kleber, Nexen) and Low Cost or Own Brands. The prices vary according to quality, but a basic tyre costs between 50 and 70 euros.

Escamilla warns that "there are no bargains" in this sector, although you often see advertisements which seem

to indicate that this is the case. These are just a way of increasing sales. Some companies promote offers that only show the price of the tyre and do not include the other services which are needed, such as fitting, valves, balancing and what is known in Spain as NFU ('neumático fuera de uso'). The cost of every tyre includes a fee for its later recycling, which ranges from one euro for motorcycles to 24 euros for lorry wheels, which of course can cost up to 600 euros each.

#### Oil

There are two types of motor oil: generic and specific. Some makes of en-

gine will only take the specific ones, and of course these are the most expensive: they cost around 90 euros and should be changed between 15,000 and 25,000 kilometres.

The generic types cost around 40 euros and should be changed every 10,000 kilometres.

Escamilla explains that both types of oil will need topping up, although this will have to be done more frequently in the case of the specific types because they are finer and consumption is higher.

#### Brake pads

A car's brake pads usually last between

30,000 and 50,000 kilometres and they are not sold by brand but by the model of the vehicle. However, there can still be various types for each model. For a Seat Ibiza, for example, there are about a dozen types of brake pad. The prices range from 50 to 100 euros, labour included. The pads deteriorate and wear over time and through over-heating.

#### Battery

The type of battery depends on its amps. They range from 45 amps which usually cost about 50 euros, to 90, which cost 120 euros. Escamilla says the duration of a battery is never exact, but by law they have a two-year guarantee. That doesn't, however, mean that if the battery fails after six months they will change it free of charge.

"It has to be sent to the factory so they can check whether it is defective. It means you have to buy another one, but once they have confirmed the problem you can ask them to refund the cost of the new one," he explains.

#### Windscreen wipers

There are two types of windscreen wiper: metal ones, which cost from 10 euros, and rubber ones which are more effective but more expensive and can cost up to 60 euros.

Although all these checks should be carried out on a regular basis, Escamilla says most people change their tyres and windscreen wipers in the autumn, "because it is only when it starts to rain that they realise the tyres have lost grip and the wipers aren't working".

In the summer more brake pads are sold, because they overheat in the hot weather. Batteries also tend to be changed with the change of season, because the difference in temperature affects them.

Responsible motorists will make a note to remind them to carry out checks on their vehicle and change equipment if needed, but it is a fact that many people don't. They only do so when their car won't start, or it slides on the road when they brake, or when the windscreen wipers make an annoying scraping noise against the glass, all problems which could be prevented with a little forward-thinking.

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