

CAR RENTAL – A MORE COST-EFFECTIVE OWNERSHIP SOLUTION?

RENTAL **REALITIES**

Is there a realistic solution to car ownership? Well maybe. Could car rental provide the answer?



As most of us know, owning a car and keeping it on the road isn't a cheap thing to do. The RAC reckon that the average annual cost of keeping your wheels moving approaches the £2,500 mark and for many people, it's quite a bit more than that. Is there an alternative? Well, perhaps rental might be one option.

At this point, you might be tempted to turn the page. After all, car rental in this country has for many years been perceived as expensive and inflexible. Certainly it isn't seen as a long term option. People tend to view car rental as suitable only for business use or holidays and renting a car for their own personal daily use has not usually been something that would even be considered.

But perhaps it should be. Rental companies like Europcar have been lately addressing a general trend away from reliance on car ownership with new services such as delivery and collection and hourly rentals. The company is also looking at ways to streamline the rental process to make it much more transparent and easy to use.

It's a timely thing for them to be doing. In a recent survey carried out by You Gov Plc, it was found that 68% of UK drivers have reduced the number of car journeys they're making and 46% have changed the way they drive, all in an effort to cut the cost of their motoring.

Tim Bailey, Fleet Director for Europcar UK Group, sees it like this: "The invention of the car brought us freedom and flexibility but over a third of drivers say motorists feel trapped into car ownership. With respondents from two car households making up 37% of the You Gov Plc survey, the research suggests that, in the pursuit of short-term cost cutting measures, drivers could be missing the bigger picture because they don't have a clear understanding of the true costs of running one or two cars."

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Some motorists have taken to reducing their costs by cutting back on servicing, maintenance and roadside assistance in an attempt to keep their cars on the road. Although the consequence of this can be felt immediately, there can be serious longer term implications that could affect safety, reliability and future re-sale values. Another money-saving tactic that is also having a significant effect on car sales in the UK is that many motorists are choosing not to renew their vehicles and thereby running the risk of driving an older vehicle that is potentially less reliable, less safe and less fuel efficient.

In contrast, motorists on the continent seem more inclined than their UK neighbours to ditch their cars in the face of rising prices. In a separate study carried out by The Europcar Transportation and Mobility Observatory on European drivers, it found that 18% of them were ready to do without their cars and 26% of those surveyed believed travel would cost less if they didn't have a car. On both sides of the Channel, those households with more than one vehicle are particularly affected by the rising cost of motoring. Public transport, championed by some, is clearly not the answer, but car rental could be.

As it becomes easier to rent and the costs become more transparent, it's worth doing some sums and checking out whether this might be a better and more cost effective solution for the way that you're your life works. Perhaps as an alternative to running your second or third car.



Of course, for many people it won't be but for a significant number of others, rental could provide significant savings with the added advantages that they will have access to modern fuel efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles. And all without compromising on either convenience or flexibility. Has to be worth a thought. Doesn't it?