



Martin Lewis reveals the simple TRICK to AVOID rip-off car hire charges abroad

MARTIN LEWIS revealed how drivers could avoid rip-off car hire charges when driving abroad during an appearance on This Morning.

By **LAUREN O'CALLAGHAN**

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As the summer approaches, many Britons will be heading abroad and hiring cars for their holiday.

So Martin explained exactly how to avoid the fees holidaymakers are often stung with.

He said: "Hire a car and basic insurance is covered with it. Yet when you get to the desk, there's usually a hard sell on extras; I've often heard the person at the desk say, 'Hey señor, you need excess insurance too – if not and there's a problem, you pay €1,000'.

"This 'excess insurance' means that if there's a problem you pay the first £1,000 odd of any claim – and even small things can add up – someone asked me recently about £1,000 they were charged to fix a gear box on car hire abroad.

"Yet the price they charge is commonly exorbitant, often up to £20/day. However before you go, go to comparison site Moneymaxim where you can get a standalone insurance for a fraction of the price.

"Do beware though, even if you have this, the person at the desk will often try and pooh-pooh it. They'll tell you you need to leave a large deposit, usually €1,000 and that you won't be covered for breakdown.

"This is fine, as the way standalone excess policies work is if you have to shell out you then claim it back from them.

"However, you will need a credit card to pay (not a debit or prepaid card) and it has to be in the name of the person who booked. I've seen people who forget their card and offer their partners, but the car hire firms jump on it to say you need to pay the deposit, not them."



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Martin Lewis explained how to avoid rip-off car hire charges on This Morning

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The earlier you hire your car the better. Don't leave it until you're there or just going

Martin Lewis

Martin also revealed whether it is best to book a hire car before you travel or wait until you get there.

He said: "The earlier you hire your car the better. Don't leave it until you're there or just going. For example, walk in during the summer holidays, and if they've got spare cars, you could pay £40+/day.

"Yet book now for August and it can cost as little as £13/day for Malaga or £12/day for Tenerife. To find your cheapest, use as many comparison sites as you've time for including Kayak and Carrentals. Then once booked double check the details with the car firm.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/826776/martin-lewis-car-hire>

“Yet beware of some firms who try and make you pay for a full tank of fuel, then ask you to “return it empty”. And if you haven’t driven much the unused fuel can cost you more than the hire. Most comparison sites let you filter by fuel policy.”

Martin then explained the paperwork needed to drive abroad, including a little known DVLA code.

He said: “When hiring a car in the UK or abroad you need to request a ‘personal code’ from the DVLA, which you then show at the desk when picking up your car.

“This is so it can check for points (as paper licences were scrapped in place for photocard licences issued after 1998).

“In practice though many firms don't seem to ask for this as when I did a twitter poll on this last year only three per cent of 1,700 people said they were asked for the code abroad, and 14 per cent said they were asked in the UK.

“But it's still worth getting one anyway just in case they do ask. You can get it from Gov.uk or call 0300 083 0013, and you must do this up to 21 days before picking up the car.

“If you’re driving in Europe, you can use your UK driving licence – though make sure it’s in date (check section 4b of your licence and if it’s out of date – around 2 million are – you can renew online at Gov.uk for a £14 fee, or by post for £17).

“Yet if driving outside Europe you may need an extra International Driving Permit – around 140 countries require or recommend you to have one including the USA , Thailand and India (a full list is on the AA website).

“The fastest way to get it is at the counter at selected Post Office branches (costs £5.50), or you can get it from RAC (£8) or the AA (£8.50) by post, which could take up to 10 days to arrive.



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Martin Lewis also urged viewers to keep up to date with local driving laws and customs

“You'll need to be 18 or over to get it, and hold a full driving licence (take this with you abroad too). The permit lasts a year, and you can apply up to three months in advance of going away so there's no need to leave it to the last minute.”

Finally, Martin also said people should be aware of driving rules abroad to avoid fines.

He said: “For example if you’re [driving in Paris, Lyon or Grenoble, they've introduced a new 'Crit'Air' scheme](#) which means to help curb pollution if you want to drive through certain areas in these cities at certain times, you now need a sticker on the windscreen to show the levels of pollution it emits.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/826776/martin-lewis-car-hire>

“If not there can be an on the spot fine of around £60. To get this you must apply before you go (can take 30 days) from the French environment ministry's website and it costs €4.80 – don't buy it from elsewhere they're likely to be a shyster site adding an unnecessary extra charge.

“Other rules include; in some countries you can turn right on a red light without waiting, if there's room, and not doing so will get you beeped at, in Spain drivers who wear glasses or contact lenses must carry a spare pair in the car by law, and in some cities, you're only allowed to park your car on the side of the street where house numbers are odd, on odd-numbered days of the month.

“It's also worth checking if there are certain rules for children, and whether they can sit in the front. And unsecured bags in the back and driving with flip flops can be frowned upon.”

For more information on car hire from Martin, click [here](#).