

Fuel Economy Tips for Summer Driving

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Living in Maryland, we have the benefit of experiencing all four seasons, and while Spring and Fall seem to get shorter each year, we at Jones do feel that the joys of summer are often underrated.

Sure, Maryland summers can mean mosquitoes and humidity, but they also mean Orioles baseball, day trips to the beach, and grilling in the park. They mean heading to see your favorite musical act several hours away, spending time working in the garden, and enjoying the additional daylight that helps us enjoy being outdoors as much as possible.

When on your way to beach trip, concert, or trip to the garden center, keep in mind a few handy tips to help maximize your fuel economy when on those longer drives or when you are carrying a heavier than usual load. That way, you can keep more money in your pocket for that concert T-shirt, some Boardwalk fries (we prefer them with extra malt vinegar), and endless bags of mulch.

Plan ahead for your destination. Have you ever gotten almost to your destination only to find that your GPS lost its signal and you end up taking three wrong turns trying to find your way? We're sure you have heard the tip that bundling several errands together into one trip saves on gas; similarly, you can maximize your fuel economy by minimizing wrong turns. Any time you go somewhere new, we recommend printing out a set of paper directions to keep in the car as a backup in case your GPS drops that signal. That way, you can head right to your destination and stop wasting precious gas and time driving in circles.

Cruise Control is your friend. If you haven't gotten in the habit of using your car's cruise control function, let us be the first to share that cruise control is probably the most useful and user friendly feature on your car. Simply get up to your desired speed, and activate the system (specific directions to your vehicle are in your owner's manual). Then, cruise away, and watch your fuel economy soar. Deactivate any time by gently braking. Allowing the car to maintain a steady speed burns fuel more efficiently and saves you money at the pump.

Minimize your load. Any extra weight in your car is directly proportionate to a decrease in fuel economy. In other words, keep your car as lightweight as possible. That can be tricky when you travel with extra passengers or cargo. One way to accommodate those situations is by removing any extra, unnecessary items that were taking up space in your trunk, weighing you down. It's also helpful to make sure that when you return home, you clean out your car rather than drive around for a few more days with that grill in the trunk.

Air conditioning is your friend. While it's true that running the air conditioning draws power from your car which does negatively affect fuel economy, the drag caused by having the windows rolled down can make your car work harder still. To truly maximize your fuel economy, the air conditioner is the better choice on long trips. Of course, there are times when a little fuel economy is worth the trade for the joy of having the wind in your hair while on the open road!

And, of course, the best way to maximize your fuel economy for summer is to have a well-maintained car. Give us a call today to schedule a time for us to check your tire inflation, and to rotate them if necessary, because well-maintained tires are the best way of all to maximize fuel economy anytime of year.



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