










Summer holiday!

Whether you're hitting the road for the festivals, the beach, or the Whitby Gothic Weekend*, here are the essentials for your car (and you), in handy checklist form...



Your car

-  **Water.** It's hot, and your car gets thirsty. If it gets too thirsty, the engine will climb out of the bonnet and catch fire – this is not good. Before you set off fill the water reservoirs (windscreens and coolant bottles) up, and carry a bottle of water with you for emergency top ups.
-  **Oil.** Your car is not bothered about the politically charged question of oil, use of natural resources or climate change. All it's bothered about is that it needs it, as without oil all the parts that move will stop doing so in a big, expensive hurry. Check the levels regularly, and keep a spare bottle in the boot.
-  **Tyres.** Having tyres with proper tread (the grippy bit) is not only vital for your safety, it's also a legal requirement. Having them inflated to the correct pressure is also important, as your car will run more efficiently if they are, and will also grip the road better. Check the pressures at a garage before you set off, and make sure there are no worn/smooth patches on the tyres!
-  **Windscreens.** It's summer. The insect nation will be flinging itself at your windscreen with kamikaze devotion – add some screen wash to your washer bottle to help clear them off, and keep it topped up; not being able to see through the layers of insect dead is never a good look.
-  **Petrol can (with petrol).** This might seem extreme, but you never know when you could find yourself miles from anywhere, having miscalculated how much fuel you have. A little emergency supply could save you a long, annoying, time-consuming trek to the garage (while your car sulks by the side of the road).
-  **Temperature gauge.** Staying still in the heat can make your engine overheat – if the needle's in the red, you need to stop, turn the engine off and let it cool down for an hour or so. You can help your car stay chilled by killing the engine if you're stationary in traffic for more than a few minutes at a time.
-  **Map and directions.** Ah, such a simple thing, and something so easily forgotten. A good AA road atlas is a must, as are directions to where you're going. Tempting as it is to overlook this in your excitement, you'll regret it on the 19th circuit of the faceless, spooky council estate you seem to have got lost in.
-  **Change of clothes and bin bag.** No, not in case you suddenly fancy an impromptu car boot sale. If you've been bounding through the festival mud/surfing/hiking in the woods or whatever for days, chances are you won't be clean. Spare the smell and the car seats by having clean driving clothes that you leave in the car, and a bin bag to put your tatty gladrags into. You'll feel much better when your sleeves don't crackle with dried mud every time you change gear.
-  **Torch and blanket.** Just in case you arrive late, lost, or breakdown somewhere and need to wait in the car at night...it's good to have light, and warmth. Of course, if you get yourself some breakdown cover with the AA, they'll turn up to rescue you and save you all that shivering, so it's worth looking into – see www.theaa.com or call **0800 60 70 80** for more!

In association with

AA driving school

***Seriously: a bunch of pale people by the sea, muttering about Dracula. We would never lie to you.**

You

Snackage. Your car needs fuel. So do you. Pack a car picnic and things to munch along the way, it's better (and cheaper) than sweaty service station food. Make sure you stop to eat though, it's illegal to do it while driving...

Water. Although you won't start emitting steam like your car will if you dehydrate, you will feel sluggish and be less alert behind the wheel. Drink the lovely clear stuff!

Gum. A little minty happiness can help your concentration when you're rolling along, which is a helpful thing when surrounded by rushing lumps of metal on the M1...

Queue toys. Going to Glastonbury? Driving? The queues can go nowhere for a long, long time. (We know, believe us.) Take things to amuse yourselves, and get out of the car if it's really hot – **etc.** played Frisbee for a long while one year waiting for the traffic to move...

Tunes. They'll keep you alert, and singing along is one of the best things about road trips. However you deliver your music – iTrip, CDs, tapes (it's all about the Old School here)...give yourself something more than the radio. It gets annoying on the third rotation of the same playlist.

Sunglasses. Seems obvious, but you need them if you're driving in full sun to reduce glare from the road, and from other traffic. Being able to see is a handy thing when driving.

Sleep. Get some. Don't try to drive home after an entire weekend spent awake pounding your brain to mush with the PA in the dance tent, it won't end well. If you're tired, stop, and have a nap – better to arrive a bit late, but safe.

GET HELP FROM THE AA

The AA's new website, www.AA-Attitude.co.uk, is full of excellent info for new drivers – there are sections on safety, motorway driving, route planning, and much more. For lots of helpful advice and planning tips, turn on your computer before your engine.

MANUAL LABOUR

Tyre pressures? Water bottles? Oil fill cap? If you can't remember what you learned for the 'Show Me/Tell Me' element of your driving test, your car's manual will tell you where everything is, and what to put where. Water, oil and air are usually available at petrol stations and motorway services (as well as little wooden skulls in boxes, as a recent team **etc.** road trip demonstrated. Curious country we live in).

TOP THREE MOTORWAY

DRIVING TIPS!

1. Leave a two-second gap between you and the car in front
2. When changing lanes, look quickly over your right shoulder to check your blind spot
3. Make sure you stop every 100 miles or two hours, to stretch and relax

More motorway tips are at www.theaa.com/aattitude/driving-truths/safety/motorway-driving-tips.jsp