

Southampton researchers find that UK rail travel is often cheaper than the car

August 6 2010

With thousands of British families embarking on their summer holidays, new research by the University of Southampton has found that travelling by train rather than car could provide a more cost-effective travel solution.

The research, carried out by the University's Transportation Research Group, found that around four out of five trips on a sample selection of routes work out cheaper by rail than by car. For individual business travellers, rail travel also has a large and significant cost advantage over car travel when departing after the morning peak time.

Simon Blainey, from the University of Southampton, who led the study says: "Travelling by rail is sometimes perceived as being an expensive choice, but this research shows that in many cases it is far more economical than driving, even before the costs of car purchase are taken into account. At a time when many families are coming under increasing financial pressure, these findings may make people rethink some of their travel choices."

The research tested 208 travel scenarios on 32 typical business and leisure routes with journeys planned on the day and then three, 10 and 45 days in advance. The research considered the full cost of car travel including petrol, tyres, maintenance and parking costs and used two methods to work out the cost - one recommended by the AA and one, known as WebTAG, recommended by the Government.

Using the AA method, the research found that rail travel works out cheaper in 164 cases (78.8 per cent). Using the WebTAG method, it found that 185 journeys (88.9 per cent) work out cheaper by rail.

For the routes identified, the research found that when booking train tickets in advance, car travel is on average up to:

- * twice as expensive as rail travel for a family of four with a Family and Friends Railcard;
- * 60 per cent more expensive for two leisure travellers;
- * three times more expensive for a businessman or woman travelling alone.

Even for train tickets bought on the day, on the routes selected car travel worked out on average:

- * 40 per cent more expensive than rail travel for a family of four with a Railcard;
- * largely similar for two leisure travellers;
- * up to twice as expensive for a businessman or woman travelling alone.

Provided by University of Southampton

Citation: Southampton researchers find that UK rail travel is often cheaper than the car (2010, August 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-southampton-uk-rail-cheaper-car.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.