

What you wished you knew about car rental!

**Before You Booked!**



[www.car-rental-deals.com](http://www.car-rental-deals.com)

## **Book Early!**

Yes, it is true, in car rental the early bird does indeed get the worm or in this case the car! Because unlike flights, where you can often pick up a bargain if a flight is half empty, car hire doesn't work that way. It's a matter of supply and demand, think about it like this. At any given location there are several suppliers who will compete against each other. However, they have certain costs that must be met depending on how busy they are.

As an example. All cars must be checked in, examined, cleaned and then reserved for the next renter. When a location is busy its costs go up because they must have adequate numbers of staff to ensure that the cars are cleaned and ready to go out again. So, leaving it to the last minute to book can very often sting you in that most tender of places – your wallet!

This is especially true if there is a special event going on. During the football world cup held in Germany, prices went from 150 Euros to 1500 Euros the week before kick off. Those who'd booked and pre-paid for their hire cars were laughing at those who'd left it too late and many people could not even get a car, no matter how much they were prepared to pay!

## **Check The Car**

This is as important as booking early, because missing this can also cause a great deal of pain to that very tender area - your wallet! How? I hear you ask.

Simple say I. When you pick up your hire car you sign a contract. Part of that contract details any damages to the car, small dents and scratches mostly. Any damage already recorded on your contract leaves you clear of liability but, if you don't check and you don't insist that they record, any further damage you may have found BEFORE you drive away, then you

may find yourself liable for any repairs they decide are necessary. Because they have 'swiped' your cc details they can take the money direct without any knowledge on your part.



You should also check the INSIDE of the car as well and make sure that any damage is recorded. Don't be put off with assurances that it won't matter, even though for the most part it's true. Do you really want to be the one paying for someone else's carelessness?

## **Windscreen – Tires – Exhausts – Undercarriage**

Be aware that even where you have purchased fully comprehensive cover, the windscreen, tires, exhaust and undercarriage are usually NOT included in the cover. Even if you buy an excess waiver insurance so that you do not have any excess/deductible to pay, you need to check whether these things are covered and if not, STAY ON THE ROADS and do not drive over ground that could cause damage to the underside of the car.

In some countries you can buy additional insurance to cover this liability (e.g. Spain). You buy this cover at the rental desk when you pick up the car.

### **4x4's are not for Off Roding**

You may think that it's a good idea to hire an off road 4x4 when on holiday so you can go where you want. Read the contract unless you specifically have permission to off road in the vehicle you will void your insurance and will be liable for ALL damage caused.

### **Border Crossing**

In many places it is easy to cross borders without thinking about it too much, especially in Europe. Unless you have specified this at the time you pick up the car, you may once again find yourself without insurance, even if you just 'popped' across for an hour.

### **Check The Fuel Policy**

Some companies insist you pay for a full tank of fuel, you then bring the car back as empty as you can manage whilst still getting back! Other companies provide a full tank of fuel and insist that you bring it back full, any lack is charged to your cc and can be twice what you'd pay at the fuel station.

Check the contract for the 'Fuel Policy' and if you have to bring it back full make sure you find the nearest station to your car rental location that you can on your way out, not on your way back!

### **Legal Requirements**

As you are driving the car, you will be responsible for ensuring that the vehicle carries all the things it should by law. These can include reflective jackets and warning triangles as well as first aid kits, spare

bulbs and flashlights. Because you are responsible, you must check with your car rental company at the time you pick up the car, what is required and ensure the car has them.



Some rental companies will not supply these things because they lose so many and are not willing to bear the cost of replacement (it would push the price of the rental up too). You can usually purchase the kits from motoring Associations so check well in advance whether you need to buy them.

If you are traveling with children then you should check the legal requirements in the country to which you are going. It differs from country to country but generally any child under 12 may need a booster seat or child seat. Certain baby seats are not allowed either, especially forward facing in the front seat. In some countries there is a height restriction, regardless of age for front seat passengers so please check.



### **Driver Age**

Whilst in most countries the legal age to drive is 17 (UK) or 18 there are very few car rental companies who will rent a car to drivers under 21 and even then, between the ages of 21 and 24 they charge a stiff daily rate for 'underage' drivers. This is based on statistics which show drivers under 25 have the most accidents. This is not something that they will make a 'special exception' on, no matter how clean your driving record.

Some suppliers in some countries have an upper age limit too, once again this is not something they will alter on a 'special case' basis no matter how clean your license.

### **Drop Box**

A drop box is sometimes used for drivers to return keys and car when the office is closed. You are still liable for the car however until the office opens, so any damage occurring will be your responsibility. Although many, many people use this facility without mishap, you should be aware of your responsibility in this.

### **Mileage Restrictions**

There are occasions where, even though you have paid for 'fully inclusive' car rental there may still be a mileage restriction (e.g. Australia in the 'outback') so to be sure, you need to see 'unlimited mileage' specified on your voucher.

### **What is 'Fully Inclusive Insurance'?**

Although it can differ depending on the supplier, generally it means that Collision and Theft waiver, as well as Third Party Liability is included. It also usually means that unlimited mileage is included (though not always – see Mileage Restrictions above). Unless stated it does not cover things for which you pay locally, such as child seats, extra drivers etc. Many suppliers promote their rentals as 'fully inclusive' with no more to pay but this does not and cannot include any taxes or insurances collected locally e.g. airport tax or environment tax.

Always check your voucher and query anything that looks as if you have to pay locally, not to avoid it (because you can't and the car rental company has no control over it) but so you are prepared.

### **Act Of God**

Last but no means least we have 'Act of God'. You need to check on this with the supplier, especially if you're going anywhere that has 'strong' weather! I know at least one couple who rented a car to drive to Boulder, Colorado. They had fully inclusive cover but not it seems when hailstones the size of marbles descended from the skies!

The rental car was covered in thousands of small 'dings' and looked a bit like orange peel, the car rental company said hail was an 'Act of God' and therefore not covered. The couple ended up having to pay \$1000 to have the entire bodywork 'buffed' – you have been warned!



We hope you have found these tips useful, check back often as we will update this as things within the industry change. Drive safe!

