

Web Watch

Use Tech Tools to Find the Lowest Prices

# Keeping Costs Down While Gassing Up

by Bonnie Biafore

As if the lockdown on mortgage lending isn't enough, now folks have to take out a home equity loan just to fill up their gas tanks. If you absolutely, positively have to get somewhere by car, you'll want to find the cheapest gas around.

More than \$4 a gallon is agonizing, but the websites (and text-message and e-mail services) in this month's column can ease the pain by showing you where to save as much as 30 cents per gallon. Most of these services search by ZIP code, so you might want to keep a list handy of those through which you drive frequently. Driving well out of your way to save a few dollars when you fill up usually isn't worthwhile.

You'll get the most flexibility for finding gas prices at GasBuddy. Here you can search by city, state or ZIP code, and you can seek a specific grade of gasoline or station (see screen capture, top). GasBuddy also has a leaner webpage for searching from Internet-capable mobile phones. And people who prefer messaging can send a text message or e-mail and receive one with prices in return (see the "Gas Prices From the Road" section).

Here's how to find GasBuddy prices:

- In the Search box, type a ZIP code or a city and state.
- Click Search Now. A local version of the website with gas price information will appear.
- Midway down the left side of the page, under Search for Gas Prices, select Regular, Mid, Premium or Diesel to search for the lowest prices for the gas grade you use.

**by GasBuddy.com**  
**DetroitGasPrices.com**

Home Message Forum Price Charts Map Gas Prices Gas Price Temperature Map Fuel Logbook Wireless More  
Master Station List Photo Albums Link To Us What's New Helpful Tips FAQ Contact Us Detroit Classifieds

Report a Price Here  
 Reg  Mid  Prem  Diesel  
 Station (Other): [ ] Area (Other): [ ]  
 Station Address: [ ]  
 Comments: [ ]  
 Time Spotted: 8:11 AM [ ] Add to my Favorite Stations  
 Submit Prices removed after 24 hours

Saves 5%-10% on gas with the Discover card.  
 Looking for more prices in Michigan? Try: Lansing, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Quick Search for Gas Prices  
 Find the lowest gas prices in these areas:  
 Ann Arbor Dearborn Dearborn Heights Detroit Farmington Hills Livonia Madison Heights Pontiac Rochester Hills Roseville Royal Oak Southfield St Clair Shores Sterling Heights Taylor Troy Warren Westland (More Cities)

Search For Gas Prices  
 Regular  Mid  Premium  Diesel

**Average Auto Insurance Cost: \$69/Mo\***  
 Think you pay too much for your auto insurance? The sad news is, you probably do. In fact, you may be paying more than your neighbors even though you have a clean driving record, your commute is the same, and their car looks identical to yours. Why should you pay more?  
 Find out what your lowest monthly payment could be. Click here to get your new payment today or select your vehicle make below.  
 Select Vehicle Make: Acura

**Urgent: Gas Price Spotters Needed: Help Fight High Gas Prices**

Regular Gas	Midgrade	Premium	Diesel Fuel
Lowest Regular Gas Prices in the Last 24 Hours			
3.97	4.89	5.19	4.11
Marathon	1489 E Maple Rd & Stephenson	Troy	Fri 7:35 AM
3.99	4.89	5.19	4.11
BP	2589 Crooks Rd & Big Beaver	Troy	Fri 7:33 AM
3.99	4.89	5.19	4.11
Speedway	880 E Maple Rd & Rochester	Troy	Thu 7:04 PM
4.05	4.89	5.19	4.11
Shell	3990 Rochester Rd & Watties Rd	Troy	Fri 7:35 AM

**Gas Prices for 48084**  
 Every night MSN Autos receives pricing data from over 90,000 gas stations across the nation. Please note that gas prices in your area may change more frequently than we can obtain them.

Change ZIP: 48084 GO

Scroll down to see national prices

Dates below indicate last data update for that price. Data provided in cooperation with OPIS.\*

Prices for 48084	LOWEST PRICE*	AVERAGE PRICE*	HIGHEST PRICE*
	\$3.99	\$4.17	\$4.26

#	Station/Brand	Address	Unleaded	Plus	Premium	Diesel
1	SUNOCO	4738 ROCHESTER RD ROYAL OAK, MI 48073	\$3.999	\$4.199	N/A	N/A
2	BP	30875 WOODWARD AVE ROYAL OAK, MI 48073	\$4.099	N/A	N/A	\$4.899
3	CITGO	4727 COOLIDGE HWY ROYAL OAK, MI 48073	\$4.099	N/A	N/A	\$4.699

- To narrow your search to an area or type of station, below the gas grades choose the area (Denver, Boulder or Wheat Ridge, Colo., for example) and station (such as Safeway, Conoco or Sunoco). To choose more than one entry in a list, hold down the Ctrl key on a PC or the Apple/Command key on a Mac while clicking each choice.
- Click Search Now to repeat your search with the additional criteria. A table will list stations from lowest to highest prices.
- To see the stations on a map, click Map Gas Prices at the top of the page. The map shows prices but not stations; that's why searching by type of station is so helpful.

You can also tell GasBuddy about the prices you see. On the top left side of the local webpage, below the Report a Price Here heading, fill in the information and click Submit.

Note: Google Maps can include GasBuddy prices, but it isn't that helpful. On Google Maps, click the My Maps tab, then click Gas Prices From GasBuddy.com. After you enter your ZIP code, pointers will appear at each station location, but you have to click

a pointer to see the station information and its prices.

## Do a Simple Search on MSN Auto

MSN Auto (see screen capture, bottom) searches only by ZIP code, but its results are very easy to read:

- Click the My Car tab.
- In the navigation bar on the left, click Gas Prices.
- To see what gas prices are in an area, type the ZIP code in the Change ZIP field and click Go.



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The map shows the gas stations in the area. The green gas pump icon indicates the lowest-priced gas, and the red gas pump icon is the highest. Below the map is a list of all the gas stations, their addresses and their prices for unleaded, plus, premium and diesel. Stations appear in order of price, from lowest to highest.

Get Prices From the Road

Most people don't think to look up gas prices before they leave home. If you have a mobile phone, you can receive a text message containing current prices. These services usually search by ZIP code, which is great if you've memorized (or made a list of) all the ZIP code boundaries where you live.

For GasBuddy, send a text message or e-mail to [gas@gasbuddy.com](mailto:gas@gasbuddy.com). In the body of the message, type the city and state or the ZIP code. Text or send an e-mail to [diesel@gasbuddy.com](mailto:diesel@gasbuddy.com) for diesel prices. GasBuddy returns your text message or e-mail with the five lowest prices in that area.

Other options are mobGas (send a text message or e-mail to [sms@mobgas.com](mailto:sms@mobgas.com)) and 411sync (send a text to [sms@411sync.com](mailto:sms@411sync.com) containing the keyword "gas" followed by a ZIP code). You should receive a response within a few seconds, but heavy online traffic could mean longer wait times.

If your mobile phone (and wireless plan) supports Web browsing, you can retrieve results faster with a webpage specifically designed for mobile phones; navigate to GasBuddy's or mobGas' mobile site.

Link of the Month

Is your gas-guzzling 1975 Chrysler Cordoba on its last rims? Then you're probably thinking about getting a more fuel-efficient car. To learn what you need to know before buying, check out "Shopping for a Fuel-Efficient Car" at [Edmunds.com](http://Edmunds.com). The article details which type of gas engine is the most efficient and gives the scoop on hybrids, electric cars and even natural-gas cars. And it includes links to a list of top fuel-efficient cars if you're ready to drive one off the lot. The Toyota Prius seems to take the prize on most lists, but the sporty Mini Cooper can get 40 miles to the gallon in highway driving. **B**

Websites of Interest

**GasBuddy**  
[www.gasbuddy.com](http://www.gasbuddy.com)  
 Mobile: [www.gasbuddytogo.com](http://www.gasbuddytogo.com)

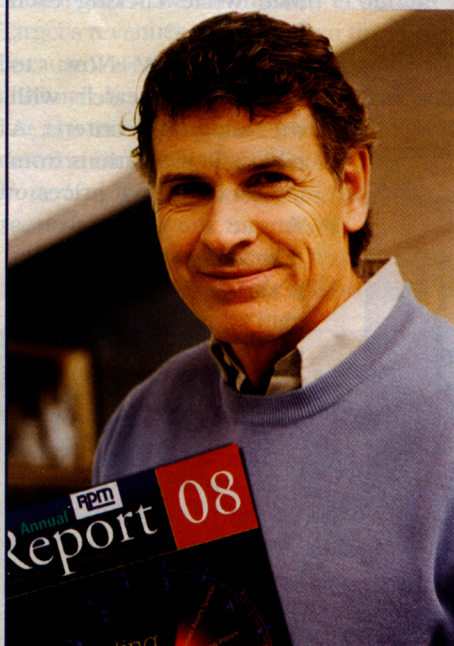
**Google Maps**  
[www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com)

**MSN**  
[www.autos.msn.com](http://www.autos.msn.com)

**mobGas**  
[www.mobgas.com](http://www.mobgas.com)  
 Mobile: [www.mobgas.com/mobile](http://www.mobgas.com/mobile)

**"Shopping for a Fuel-Efficient Car"**  
[www.edmunds.com/advice/fueleconomy/articles/105502/article.html](http://www.edmunds.com/advice/fueleconomy/articles/105502/article.html)

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