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rac road map route planner

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Introduction

When you're planning a road trip, a detour, or simply navigating a new city, the right route planner can make all the difference. In the United Kingdom, one of the most trusted names in travel assistance is the RAC. Their **RAC Road Map Route Planner**offers real time traffic updates, toll information, and detailed turn by turn directions, ensuring you reach your destination safely and efficiently. This guide dives deep into what the RAC route planner is, how it works, its standout features, and why it remains a top choice for motorists across the country.

What Is the RAC Road Map Route Planner?

The RAC, short for the Royal Automobile Club, has been a staple of British motoring since 1897. Their online tool, the **RAC Road Map Route Planner**, is a web based application that lets users input departure and arrival points to generate the best possible route. Unlike generic map services, the RAC planner integrates live traffic data, roadworks alerts, and motorway toll information, providing a comprehensive travel experience tailored specifically for UK roads.

Key Functions

- Real time traffic and incident updates
- Multiple routing options (fastest, shortest, scenic)
- Motorway toll cost estimation
- Roadwork and closure alerts
- Turn by turn voice guidance (when paired with the mobile app)
- Integration with GPS devices and navigation apps

Why Use the RAC Road Map Route Planner?

Choosing a route planner isn't just about finding a way from point A to point B; it's about optimizing the journey for safety, time, and cost. Here's why the RAC tool stands out:

1. Local Expertise – The RAC has in depth knowledge of UK roads, including seasonal closures, construction schedules, and local events that may affect traffic.
2. Live Traffic Data – The planner pulls data from the Department for Transport and partner providers to reflect real time congestion, accidents, and roadworks.
3. Cost Awareness – By estimating motorway tolls and offering alternative routes, drivers can avoid surprise charges.
4. Safety First – Alerts about hazardous conditions, such as icy roads or high winds, help drivers plan safer routes.
5. Customer Support – The RAC offers 24/7 assistance via phone, chat, or the app, ensuring help is always within reach.

How the RAC Route Planner Works

At its core, the planner uses a combination of GIS mapping technology, real time traffic feeds, and predictive

algorithms to suggest optimal routes. Here's a step by step breakdown of the process:

Step 1: Enter Your Journey Details

Start by entering your departure location and destination. The interface supports addresses, postcodes, or points on the map. For added precision, you can also specify waypoints or avoid specific roads.

Step 2: Choose Your Preferences

Once the planner generates initial routes, you'll see options such as "Fastest," "Shortest," or "Scenic." If you're concerned about cost, toggle the toll filter to view routes that avoid or include toll roads.

Step 3: Review Real Time Updates

The planner overlays live traffic information, showing congestion levels in color codes (green for free flow, yellow for moderate, red for heavy). Incidents like accidents or roadworks are marked with icons and brief descriptions.

Step 4: Finalise and Export

After selecting your preferred route, you can export the directions to a PDF, copy the link, or sync them with a GPS device. If you're using the RAC mobile app, you can also activate voice navigation.

Features of the RAC Road Map Route Planner

Below is a deeper look at the features that make the RAC planner a reliable tool for everyday drivers and long distance travellers alike.

Live Traffic and Incident Reporting

The planner pulls data from a network of sources, including the UK's Department for Transport, local councils, and partner traffic information providers. This means you'll see up to date congestion reports, accident alerts, and roadworks notifications.

Toll Cost Estimation

Motorway tolls can add up quickly, especially on long journeys. The RAC planner calculates estimated toll costs for each route, allowing you to choose the most economical path or prepare for the expense.

Roadworks and Closure Alerts

Construction can significantly impact travel time. The planner flags ongoing or upcoming roadworks, giving you a heads up to adjust your departure time or choose an alternative route.

Multiple Routing Options

Whether you're in a hurry, want to save fuel, or simply enjoy scenic drives, the planner offers multiple route choices. Each option includes estimated travel time, distance, and cost.

Integration with Other Navigation Tools

Export your route in a format compatible with popular GPS devices (e.g., Garmin, TomTom) and smartphone navigation apps (Google Maps, Waze). This flexibility ensures you can use the planner's recommendations across devices.

Accessibility Features

For drivers with visual impairments or those who prefer audio cues, the RAC mobile app provides voice guidance that syncs with the planner's directions.

Step by Step Guide to Using the RAC Planner

Here's a practical walkthrough, from accessing the tool to completing a journey.

1. Access the Planner

Open your web browser and navigate to RAC's Route Planner. If you're on a mobile device, download the RAC app from your app store for the best experience.

2. Sign In or Continue as Guest

While you can use the planner without an account, signing in gives you additional benefits, such as saving favourite routes, accessing premium services, and receiving personalized alerts.

3. Enter Departure and Destination

Type your starting point and destination into the fields. As you type, the planner will auto complete addresses and suggest nearby locations.

4. Add Waypoints or Avoid Roads

If you need to pass through a particular town or avoid a congested highway, use the "Add Waypoints" or "Avoid" features. This helps tailor the route to your exact needs.

5. Select Route Preferences

Choose from the default options (Fastest, Shortest, Scenic) or click on "Advanced Options" to toggle tolls, avoid motorways, or prioritize scenic routes.

6. Review Route Details

After the planner generates options, you'll see a map overlay with color coded traffic. Click on each route to view the estimated travel time, distance, toll cost, and any live incident alerts.

7. Export or Activate Navigation

- Export – Click "Export" to download a PDF or CSV file of the directions.
- Sync with GPS – Use the "Send to GPS" option to transfer the route to your device.
- Activate Voice Navigation – If you're using the RAC app, tap "Start Navigation" to begin voice guided driving.

Tips & Tricks for Maximising the RAC Planner

Even the best tools can be used more effectively with a few smart tricks. Here are some insider tips to get the most out of the RAC Road Map Route Planner.

Plan Ahead for Peak Traffic Times

Use the planner's "Traffic Forecast" feature (available in the mobile app) to view expected congestion during specific times of day. This allows you to adjust departure times and avoid rush hour delays.

Use the "Avoid" Function to Skip Toll Roads

If you're on a tight budget, toggling the "Avoid Motorways" option will generate routes that bypass toll roads, often saving you money and time.

Check for Roadworks Before You Leave

Even if you're not on a motorway, local roadworks can cause significant delays. The planner's incident overlay will highlight any construction zones ahead.

Save Frequent Routes

For commuters, saving your daily routes can save time. The RAC app lets you bookmark routes and automatically updates them with live traffic data each time you open the app.

Use the “Route History” Feature

Track how your travel times change over weeks or months. This can help you identify patterns, such as which days of the week are consistently slower.

Combine with Other Navigation Apps

For added confidence, cross check the RAC planner’s recommendations with Google Maps or Waze. If all three agree, you’re likely on a solid route.

Alternatives to the RAC Planner

While the RAC is a trusted choice, other route planners may suit different preferences. Below is a quick comparison.

Google Maps

- Free, widely used
- Global coverage
- Limited toll cost estimation for UK roads
- Excellent real time traffic data

Waze

- Community driven traffic updates
- Real time incident reporting
- No toll cost estimation
- Good for local navigation

TomTom Roadside Assistance

- High quality mapping data
- Advanced route optimization features
- Requires subscription for full functionality
- Strong integration with in car navigation systems

HERE WeGo

- Free, multi platform
- Offline maps available
- Basic traffic information
- Limited UK specific data

Why Choose the RAC Over Competitors?

Choosing a route planner depends on your priorities. If you’re a UK driver who values local expertise, live traffic updates, and toll cost information, the RAC offers a unique combination of features that other global services often lack. Its partnership with the Department for Transport ensures highly accurate traffic and incident data, while its customer support network provides peace of mind for long journeys.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the RAC Route Planner Free?

Yes, basic route planning is free. Premium features, such as advanced incident alerts and dedicated customer support, may be available through a subscription or as part of an RAC membership.

Can I Use the Planner on My Phone?

Absolutely. The RAC offers a dedicated mobile app for iOS and Android, which provides the same functionality as the web version, plus voice navigation.

Does the Planner Provide Weather Updates?

While the planner focuses on traffic and road conditions, the RAC app often integrates weather alerts that could impact your journey, especially during winter months.

How Accurate Are the Toll Cost Estimates?

The toll estimates are calculated using official toll rates and current traffic conditions. They are generally accurate but can vary slightly based on actual toll collection methods.

Can I Share My Route With Others?

Yes, you can export the route as a PDF or share the link via email or social media. This is handy for coordinating group trips or informing family members of your travel plans.

Conclusion

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