



## How much is too much for gasoline?

Posted by [Yankee](#) on October 17, 2005 - 10:11am

Topic: [Sociology/Psychology](#)

Tags: [energy](#), [gas prices](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Over the weekend, AP-Ipsos released a poll of drivers in the US and several European countries which asked the question "How much is too much for gasoline?" [The answers are probably expected:](#)

Americans angrily grit their teeth as they pump \$3-per-gallon gas. They think \$2 is about right. In Britain, \$3 sounds fanciful - people there pay about \$6.40 a gallon and think \$5 would be fair.

Spaniards would like to see gasoline for just over \$3 a gallon. People in France, Italy, Germany and South Korea put the fair market price \$4 or a little more. Australians and Canadians would like to see it just under \$3 a gallon.

Granted, this particular article about the poll comes from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, which I'm guessing is a pretty lefty paper, but the writer seems rather critical of the American lifestyle, as evidenced by his commentary and choice of quotes:

In much of Europe and elsewhere, gas taxes account for two-thirds or more of the price of gasoline. People in those countries look for high-mileage cars. Public transportation is well-developed.

In the U.S., taxes vary by state but amount to about 20 percent of gas prices. Fuel is cheaper in this country than in most parts of the world, investment in mass transit is minimal, gas-guzzling SUVs and trucks zoom along highways and politicians talk about increasing gas taxes - or any taxes - at their own risk.

"We do have a sense of entitlement here in the United States," said Steve Yetiv, a political scientist at Old Dominion University in Virginia who has studied the impact of energy prices.

Of course, the people polled don't necessarily see the reason for high gas prices. Interestingly, though, that sense of entitlement may not be uniquely American (except to the extent that we want gas at \$2/gal while others would be content with \$4/gal):

A majority of people in most of the nations polled said they think their government can

act to limit increases in the price of gasoline. In many of those countries, unhappy consumers have been pushing for more government action.

[Another article](#) about the same poll focused on some of the other questions, namely, which concerns are most troubling right now? For the first time in a long time, domestic issues outweigh Iraq and terrorism:

Homegrown problems -- including worries about fuel costs and political leadership -- now rank about even with overseas concerns such as the terror threat and war. Public concerns about Iraq remain high.

People have said many times before on TOD that's it's going to take actual shortages before the American public really wakes up to the critical role of energy in their lives, but maybe here we're already seeing a trend toward awareness.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).