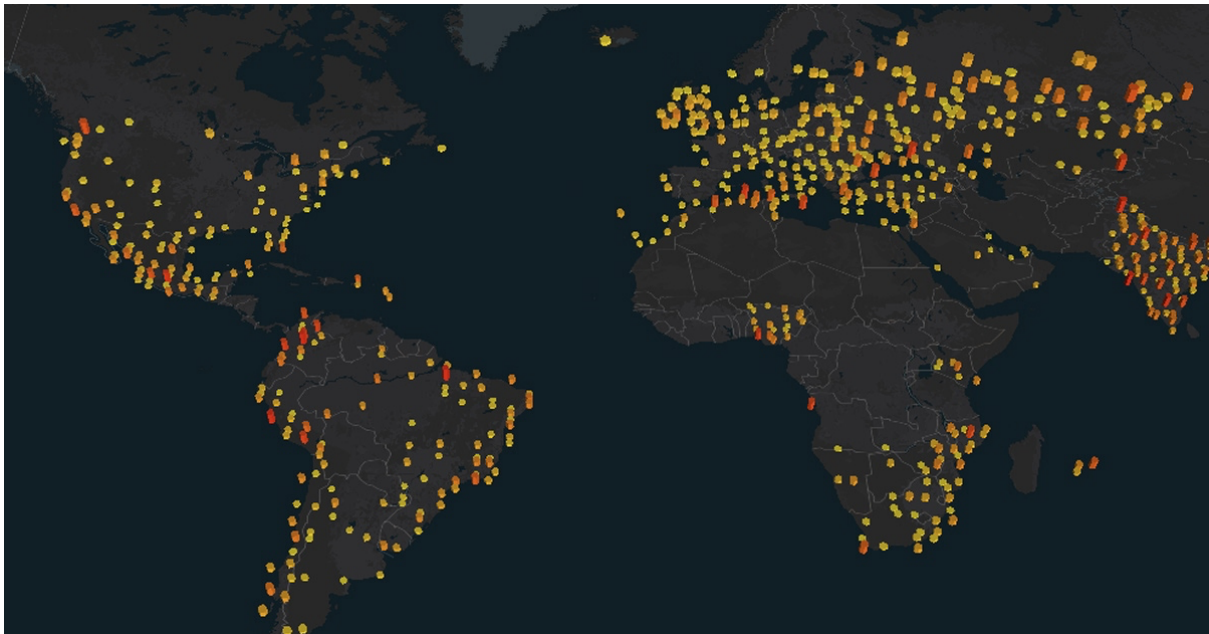




Annual TomTom Traffic Index

London Ranks as the World's Slowest Capital City for Travel Time for Third Year Running

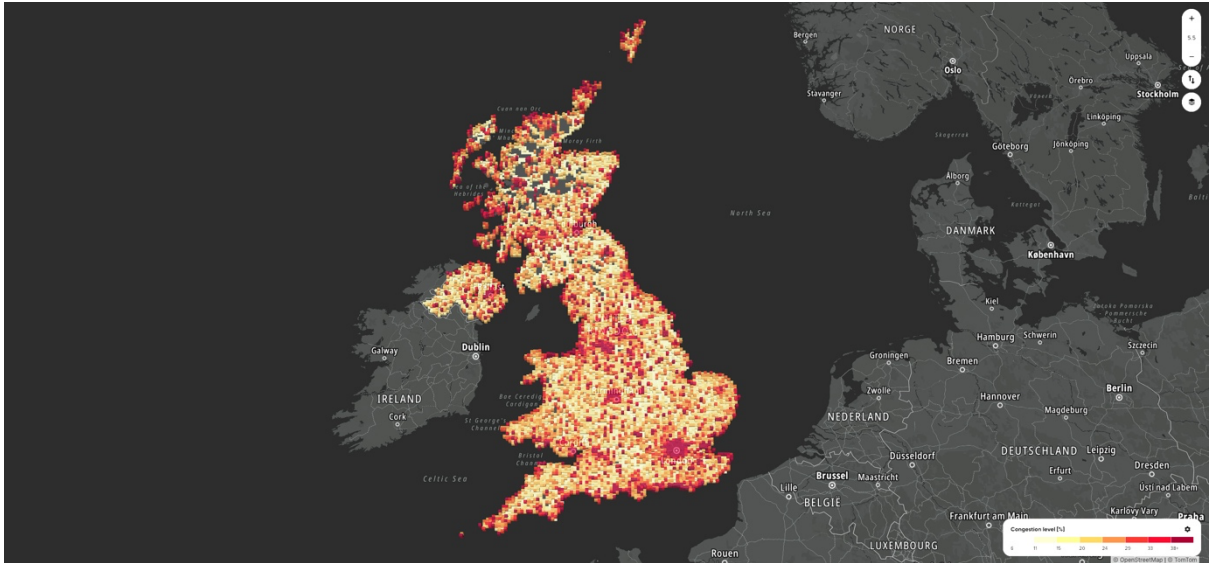


- *London ranks as the world's slowest capital city for travel time for the third year running*
- *The average London driver lost 136 hours – equivalent to nearly six days – stuck in rush hour traffic in 2025**
- *With September 10th dubbed 'Jam Wednesday' as Tube strikes saw congestion levels up 91% on an average day in the capital*
- *Belfast is the UK's most congested city, with our Northern Irish and Scottish capitals also ranked as some of the world's top 40 most congested global cities*
- *Full ranking and interactive report at [TomTom Traffic Index](#)*

London, UK, 21 January 2026 – TomTom ([TOM2](#)), the specialist in mapping and location technology, today releases the 15th edition of its TomTom Traffic Index, an annual report that provides a unique overview on global traffic trends.

For the third year running, the capital has been named the world's slowest capital city for average travel time per kilometre. The UK capital ranks only behind Barranquilla in Colombia as the second slowest city overall, and ahead of developing Indian cities Bengaluru and Kolkata.

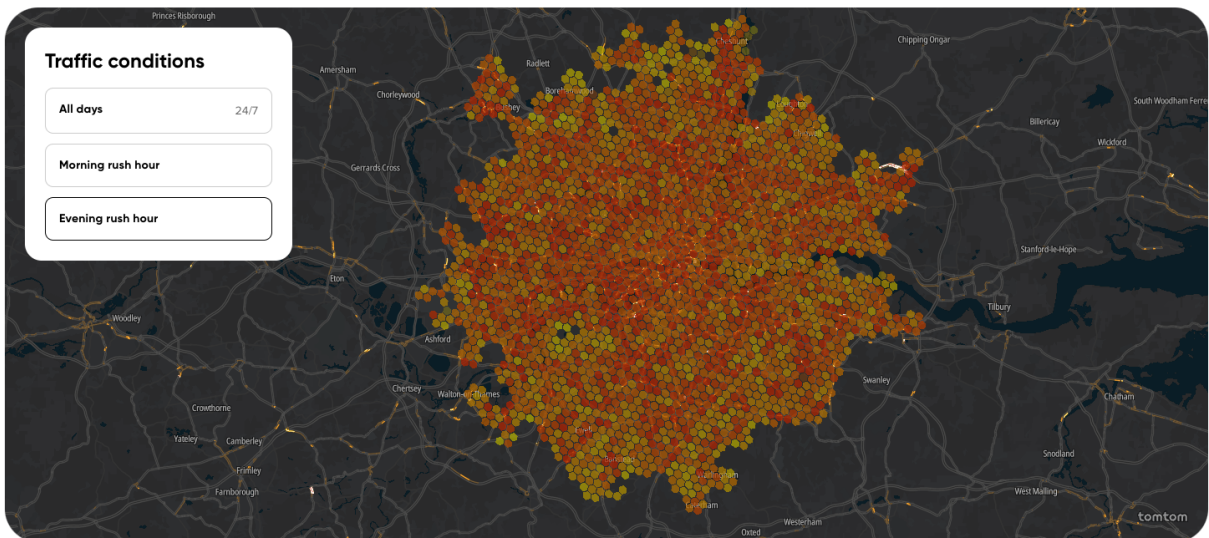
*Average time spent driving a 6-mile trip twice a day at peak hours (working days).



Drivers in London now spend on average 35 minutes and 7 seconds for a 6 mile drive – 38 seconds more than last year. The city also sits among the world’s top 25 capital cities for congestion, with the average level now at 51.6% (+1pp higher than in 2024).










Indeed, Londoners lost an average of 136 hours* stuck in rush hour traffic in 2025 – equivalent to nearly six days across the year – putting London among the top 20 cities globally for time lost in traffic.

London, United Kingdom 🇬🇧



*Average time spent driving a 6-mile trip twice a day at peak hours (working days).

Ranking: Top 10 global cities with the slowest travel times

Rank	City	Average travel time (6 mi drive)	Change from 2024	Average Congestion	Average speed	Time lost during rush hour per year*
1	 Barranquilla, CO	35 min 20 s	↑ 13 s	62.8%	10.2 mph	156 hours
2	 London, UK	35 min 7 s	↑ 38 s	51.6%	10.3 mph	136 hours
3	 Bengaluru, IN	34 min 54 s	↑ 1 min 59 s	74.4%	10.3 mph	162 hours
4	 Kolkata, IN	34 min 5 s	↑ 24 s	58.9%	10.6 mph	145 hours
5	 Lima, PE	33 min 41 s	↑ 1 min 19 s	69.3%	10.7 mph	188 hours
6	 Mexico City, MX	33 min 18 s	↑ 56 s	75.9%	10.8 mph	177 hours
7	 Dublin, IE	33 min 18 s	↑ 56 s	72.9%	10.8 mph	185 hours
8	 Davao City, PH	33 min 6 s	↑ 22 s	66.2%	10.9 mph	162 hours
9	 Kyoto, JP	33 min 6 s	↑ 22 s	52.7%	10.9 mph	112 hours
10	 Trujillo, PE	32 min 44 s	↑ 33 s	47%	11 mph	125 hours

How Tube strikes brought London to a standstill

The worst day for congestion was September 10th, when Tube strikes forced commuters to find alternative routes, sending congestion soaring to 138% at 5pm. That day, Londoners turned to bikes in record numbers, with e-bike operator Lime revealing an increase of more than [75% in trips](#) during rush hour traffic. A record [2 million bike trips](#) were logged on the first day of strike action alone (up from the usual 1.4 million). Dockless e-bikes now account for one in ten journeys, reflecting a [12.7% surge](#) in cycling over the past year.

Yet the capital's congestion remains a challenge despite policy changes

Despite this change in commuter behaviour, London congestion is up 1pp and remains a persistent challenge as the capital's traffic landscape undergoes significant transformation.

*Average time spent driving a 6-mile trip twice a day at peak hours (working days).

Despite the 2023 Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) expansion encouraging Londoners to cycle or walk instead, the number of vehicles – both compliant and non-compliant – has been increasing.

Regional picture: congestion bites and eases across the UK

Yet London isn't alone in facing traffic woes. Belfast and Edinburgh surpass the capital for congestion, with London ranking eighth among UK cities, behind Cambridge, Exeter, Brighton & Hove, Norwich and Kingston upon Hull, but ahead of Bristol and Southampton.

Some cities are seeing progress, however. Exeter and Southampton both saw congestion shrink compared to 2024. Oxford's congestion fell to 46,7, 2.2pp lower than 2024, with the introduction of the congestion charge from the 29th of October taking effect. Oxford County Council published data in December showing "improving city centre traffic," although further commuter feedback and data will be needed for conclusive evidence. It's an early sign that targeted policy changes may be starting to make a difference.

Conversely, Ipswich saw the UK's sharpest rise in traffic, with a congestion level of 48,5%, up +4,1pp year-on-year. Swansea (47.2%, +3,7pp), Norwich (52,4%, +3.1pp), Bristol (51,3%, +3pp), Glasgow (45%, +3pp) also recorded significant increases.





Edinburgh, Manchester, Leicester and Liverpool join London to round out the top five UK cities for slowest travel times. All four experienced their worst days for congestion due to major road traffic collisions.

In terms of time lost during rush hours per year*, London (136) leads the UK, followed by Edinburgh (123), Manchester (122), Cambridge (118), Bristol and Leicester (114).

Meanwhile, the least congested UK cities are Middlesbrough (31.2), Coventry (34.3), Leeds (34.4, notably 1.3 percentage points less than in 2024), Stoke (35.8), and Inverness (37).

*Average time spent driving a 6-mile trip twice a day at peak hours (working days).

Ranking: Top 10 UK cities with the highest congestion levels (including hours lost and worst day for congestion)

Rank	City	Average Congestion	Change from 2024	Average speed	Time lost during rush hour per year*	Worst day date	Worst day (Avg Congestion level)
1	 Belfast, UK	58.4%	↑ +1.0 pp	17.4 mph	98 hours	November 13	89%
2	 Edinburgh, UK	57.9%	↑ +0.7 pp	11.6 mph	123 hours	August 21	78%
3	 Cambridge, UK	54.1%	↑ +1.6 pp	14 mph	118 hours	November 14	95%
4	 Exeter, UK	53.7%	↓ -1 pp	16.4 mph	92 hours	October 15	122%
5	 Brighton and Hove, UK	52.5%	↑ +2.3 pp	14.7 mph	96 hours	January 8	90%
6	 Norwich, UK	52.4%	↑ +3.1 pp	16.4 mph	97 hours	March 18	77%
7	 Kingston upon Hull, UK	52%	↑ +1.9 pp	16.7 mph	101 hours	March 8	79%
8	 London, UK	51.6%	↑ +1 pp	10.3 mph	136 hours	September 10	91%
9	 Bristol, UK	51.3%	↑ +3 pp	14 mph	114 hours	December 1	73%
10	 Southampton, UK	50.1%	↓ -1 pp	15.4mph	85 hours	December 2	84%

“London’s place as the slowest capital city in the Traffic Index really highlights the strain on the city’s roads,” said Andy Marchant, Traffic Expert, TomTom. “Many of these streets were built in the Middle Ages and expanded in the Georgian era, but they simply weren’t built for the volume and variety of traffic we see today. We’re seeing the effects of more people heading back to the office (with many major employers returning to four or five-day office working), as well as the impact of ongoing Tube strikes. At the same time, there’s a growing shift towards cycling and alternative ways of getting around. Changes like the 20mph speed limits are starting to shape how people move and how safe those journeys are. It’s not just London. Congestion is rising in cities like Belfast, Edinburgh and Manchester, too.”

“2026 spells an interesting time for urban mobility. Trials of autonomous vehicles will be rolled out across 20 London boroughs, giving local authorities and city planners a real opportunity to rethink how cities manage congestion and keep people moving. TomTom remains committed to providing valuable insights that help cities rethink traffic flow, invest in smarter infrastructure and create urban environments that work better for everyone.”

For more information or to access the full TomTom Traffic Index report, visit www.tomtom.com/Traffic-Index.

*Average time spent driving a 6-mile trip twice a day at peak hours (working days).

END

Notes to Editors:

About the TomTom Traffic Index:

The 15th edition of the TomTom Traffic Index is our most robust and complete analysis ever. The Index benchmarks cities on their congestion levels, travel times and speeds, based on worldwide trip data spanning more than 3.65 trillion km, providing access to traffic information city by city. TomTom Traffic Index insights help state, regional and federal governments, DoTs, city planners and decision makers tackle traffic challenges and develop future-shaping strategies.

For the first time, all data from the cities included in the Traffic Index (and more) can now be accessed through the new TomTom Area Analytics tool, launched last month. Users can select any city or define a custom area and analyse traffic across specific days, months or years with detailed hourly breakdowns. From neighborhoods to entire countries, the tool quickly delivers detailed insights into congestion levels, travel speeds and free-flow conditions, helping users better understand how mobility evolves over time while providing one of the world's most comprehensive views of road and traffic performance.

About TomTom:

Billions of data points. Millions of sources. Hundreds of communities.

We are the mapmaker bringing it all together to build the world's smartest map. We provide location data and technology to drivers, carmakers, businesses, and developers. Our application-ready maps, routing, real-time traffic, APIs, and SDKs enable the dreamers and doers to shape the future of mobility.

www.tomtom.com

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*Average time spent driving a 6-mile trip twice a day at peak hours (working days).