

Annual Traffic Index: TomTom unveils data-driven insights from over 700 billion kilometers driven in 2024

TomTom releases its most comprehensive traffic index yet, providing insights on 500 cities across 62 countries.

Access the full report here: www.tomtom.com/TrafficIndex

Amsterdam, Netherlands, 8 January 2025 - TomTom (TOM2), the location technology specialist, today releases the 14th edition of its TomTom Traffic Index, an annual report that provides a unique overview of global traffic trends.

This year's edition features 500 cities across 62 countries on 6 continents, making it the most robust and complete analysis ever made available to any observer. The TomTom Traffic Index uses unified metrics to rank these cities based on their average travel time as well as congestion levels. It gives city-by-city information that can help urban planners and policymakers tackle traffic-related challenges and make informed decisions for a better tomorrow.

Global trends in 2024

In 2024, 379 cities out of 500 (76%) saw their overall average speed decrease compared to 2023. Despite this decrease, average speeds under optimal conditions, characterized by free-flowing traffic, remained stable and even showed slight improvements in most cities. This suggests that the observed deterioration in average speeds is primarily driven by dynamic factors affecting congestion levels rather than changes in road infrastructure.

The differences in travel times (or average speeds) across cities stem from a combination of static and dynamic factors that significantly influence traffic flow and overall driving conditions.

Static factors are fixed aspects of a city's infrastructure and planning that influence travel times. The design of road networks, including highways, arterial roads, and residential streets, impacts traffic flow. Narrow streets, one-way systems, and complex intersections can slow movement, while wider, multi-lane roads support smoother flow. Speed limits, often set for safety, and high-density areas with frequent stops or pedestrian zones also affect driving speeds. Traffic light synchronization, roundabouts, and stop signs further shape navigation efficiency.

Complementing these static factors are **dynamic factors**, which are ever-evolving conditions that impact traffic flow on a daily basis. Traffic congestion during peak hours or seasonal traffic surges leads to higher vehicle density, causing delays. Unexpected obstructions, such as car accidents, construction projects and road closures can create bottlenecks, disrupt normal traffic patterns, and lead to rerouted

traffic. Additionally, rain, snow, or fog can reduce visibility and traction, forcing drivers to adapt their driving styles. The highest levels of congestion are often reached on days when weather conditions are particularly bad.

In 2024, Barranquilla in Colombia was the city with the lowest average speed. The average speed over the year was 16.6 km/h, which means that it takes more than 36 minutes on average to complete a simple 10-kilometer journey. Three Indian cities feature in the top 5 list of slowest cities. London, the first European city in the ranking, is in 5th position, with an average speed of 18 km/h in the city. Yet the English capital is only 150th in the congestion ranking, which measures only the dynamic factors of slow speed.

The level of congestion only takes into account the dynamic factors that lower the average speed in a city. With a congestion rate of 52%, Mexico City is the city in which traffic has the greatest impact on the deterioration of journey times compared with ideal traffic conditions. This means that on all routes surveyed throughout the year across the entire road network, journey times are 52% longer than those recorded in Mexico City when traffic is free flowing.

Because of rush-hour traffic in Lima, Peru, and Dublin, Ireland, motorists in these two cities lost an average of 155 hours in traffic jams (on a typical 10-kilometer journey, made every working day in the morning and evening) - almost a week's worth over the year.

Traffic data to understand how cities move

As urban areas continue to expand, traffic congestion is becoming an increasingly pressing issue that needs to be addressed. "The combination of population and economic growth is putting significant strain on our transportation networks," said Ralf-Peter Schäfer, Vice President of Traffic, TomTom. "Outdated infrastructure and inefficient road planning fail to keep pace with demand. Additionally, the surge in e-commerce has led to a rise in freight traffic, further complicating the situation. Without a shift towards more regulation and sustainable transportation options, we risk worsening congestion that impacts everyone in our cities."

"Urban mobility is the result of the interplay between static factors that determine the potential for efficient travel, and dynamic factors that create variations and disruptions experienced by road users," adds Schäfer. "Our traffic data allows urban planners to understand these factors, for them to design cities that balance mobility, safety, and accessibility."

New year, new methodology

The TomTom Traffic Index utilizes floating car data collected from various sources to enhance our traffic services. For this new edition, TomTom analyzed a representative sample covering 737 billion kilometers driven in 2024, allowing it to track and demonstrate how traffic patterns have changed in cities worldwide.

For the latest edition of the Traffic Index, TomTom has revised its method for defining city centers and metropolitan areas to better reflect actual traffic conditions and enable standardized comparisons between cities. TomTom maps all traffic flows on a hexagonal grid system to identify interconnected areas within the city; the "city center" is defined as the cluster of densest hexagons that account for 20%

of all trips, while the “metropolitan area” encompasses all hexagons representing 80% of all trips within the city.

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