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Electrify Your Road Trip With a Rental EV



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A new way to make summer vacation a little more sustainable is emerging in the rental car market. Whether you drive an old beater or zip around town in a Tesla when you're at home, it's getting easier to drive an electric vehicle when you travel. EV rental cars are already common in Europe, and now Hertz is making strides to electrify its rental fleet in the United States. An electric rental fleet has the potential to do more than just cut vacationers' travel emissions. People who drive an EV while on vacation may be more likely to choose an EV when it's time to replace their own car, which for most Americans is the biggest [component](#) of their carbon footprint.

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Hertz EV

The global rental car company Hertz is investing in electric in a big way. [Hertz Electrifies](#) is a public-private partnership between Hertz and select American cities that they claim will result in the largest rental EV fleet in North America. Hertz has [ordered hundreds of thousands](#) of EVs in the last year. This year Denver alone will see 5,200 new rental EVs. Rental offerings will include Tesla, Polestar, and GM vehicles. They will be available to airport travelers as well as rideshare drivers, who will pay special weekly rates.

As part of the project, Hertz also partnered with Bp [to develop](#) a national EV charging network using Bp Pulse, the oil company's EV charging division. Through this partnership, Hertz is installing charging infrastructure at key locations in [Denver and Houston](#), and at the [Los Angeles](#) and [Tampa](#) airports, among other places around the country. The "Hertz Charging Opportunity Index" will share anonymous, aggregated data from its fleet of connected cars with partner cities to help inform the buildout of additional charging infrastructure. You can encourage Hertz to add your city to its electrification program by emailing hertzelectrifies@hertz.com.

European Vacation

Although Hertz is a global company with rental cars available from [Argentina to Zimbabwe](#), for now the Hertz Electrifies partnership program is limited to cities in the United States. But that doesn't mean you're stuck renting combustion engine cars abroad. In Europe, both Hertz and Sixt (which has a larger European fleet) offer a choice of electric vehicles for rent.

EVs are much more common in Europe than the U.S. They make up more than 10% of new car sales in France, and they make up the majority of new cars in [Norway](#). About 20% of available [rental cars in Europe](#) are electric, often through promotional lower rates. Given the higher price of gas in Europe, renting an EV is often cheaper, even when the rental is not subject to promotional discounts.



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In Iceland, where more than [a quarter million Americans](#) traveled in 2021, the government has [plans to subsidize](#) electric car rentals to the tune of ISK 1 billion (roughly 7.25 million USD) and has already abolished VAT on electric cars. Since

driving the ring road around the entire island nation is ^{CLOSE} top activity for foreign tourists, this move has the potential to make a big impact, if the charging infrastructure is put in place outside of the urbanized capital area.

Charging Challenge

Charging infrastructure continues to make long-distance travel in an EV a [challenge](#). Many EVs need to charge more often than a combustion engine vehicle would need to fill up with gas.

Different types of EVs can have different types of charging plugs, and finding the right kind of station can be a challenge. (You might be able to rent a car with a plug adapter to expand the number of stations where you can charge.) For an American road trip, you have to [plan ahead](#) to map a route with charging stations at the necessary intervals. [European charging stations](#) may be readily available, but you can't pay with a credit card as you would at a gas station. You usually need to create an account with an EV charging company through an app, which may be different in each country. You also need to schedule extra time in your itinerary for charging, which can cut into your vacation.

For most destinations, these challenges are not insurmountable. Renting an EV can be a cost-effective way to make your city break or even road trip into a more sustainable vacation. Just be forewarned that the greener choice still takes more effort than the conventional one.

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By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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