



Consumer Fuel  
Buying Trends Report  
Q1 2020

# Introduction

As the travel and navigation app that is used by more North Americans to save money on gas than any other, GasBuddy's **Pay with GasBuddy™** program processes millions of fuel transactions from nearly 750,000 consumers across the United States.

Since its launch, Pay with GasBuddy has captured more than **\$454 million in total purchase volume** and has saved drivers nearly \$13 million at the pumps.

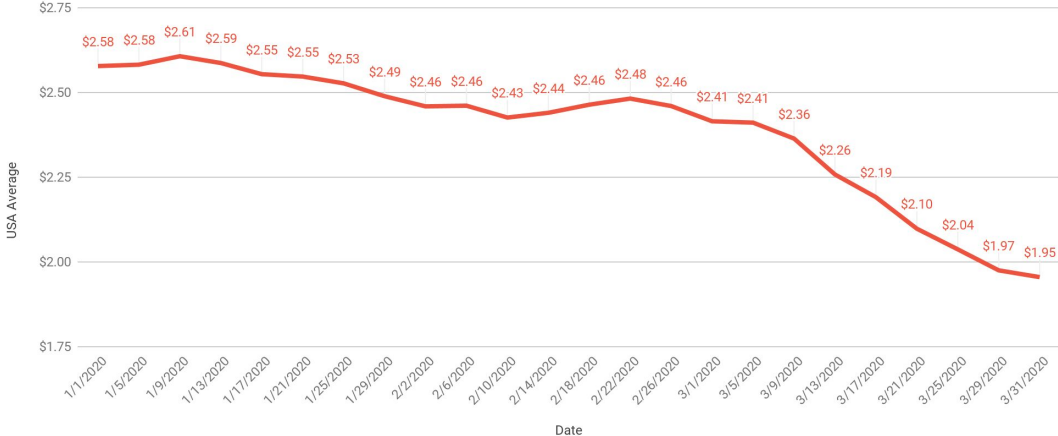
In this report, we examine the fuel purchasing patterns of American drivers throughout the first quarter of 2020.



# Gas Prices Fall in Q1 Due to COVID-19

Gas prices were heavily impacted by unprecedented global events in the first quarter of 2020. On January 15, 2020, a U.S. and China trade deal kept prices up during the first month of the quarter, while the COVID-19 pandemic caused prices to start to buckle in early February, with average prices falling below \$2/gal on March 27, 2020 for the first time in years.

USA Regular Average Gas Prices, Q1 2020

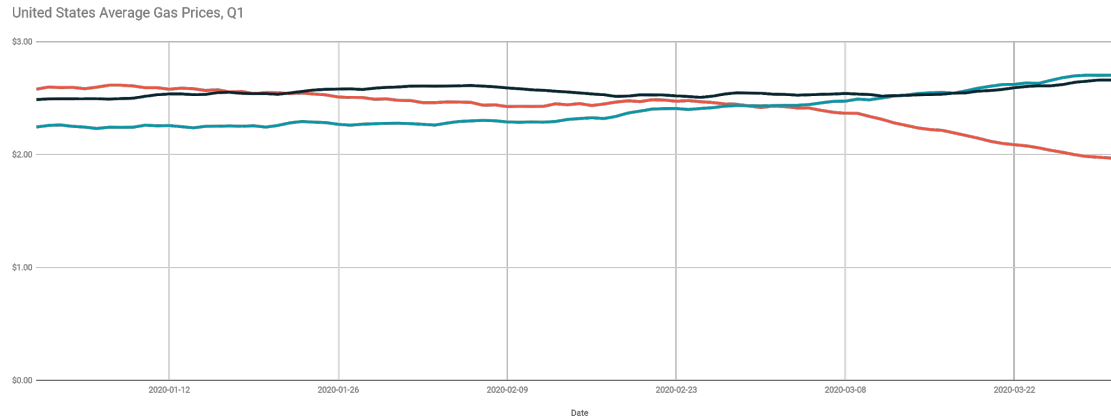


# Gas Prices Fall in Q1 Due to COVID-19 (cont.)

“COVID-19 led to an unprecedented drop never before seen in U.S. gasoline demand, causing prices to sink like a rock in the first quarter compared to prior years.

Typically, we see gas prices seasonally rise due to increased demand and the beginning of refining summer fuels. The impact of this global pandemic on gas prices and consumer consumption has made a notable difference on fuel transaction data.”

- Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy



● 2018    ● 2019    ● 2020

# COVID-19: March Fuel Demand Drops Year-Over-Year



**-14%**

Fuel transactions



**-20%**

Gallons pumped



**-28%**

Payment volume

March 2020 saw an unprecedented decline in demand as many Americans followed stay-at-home orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Numbers are compared to March 2019.

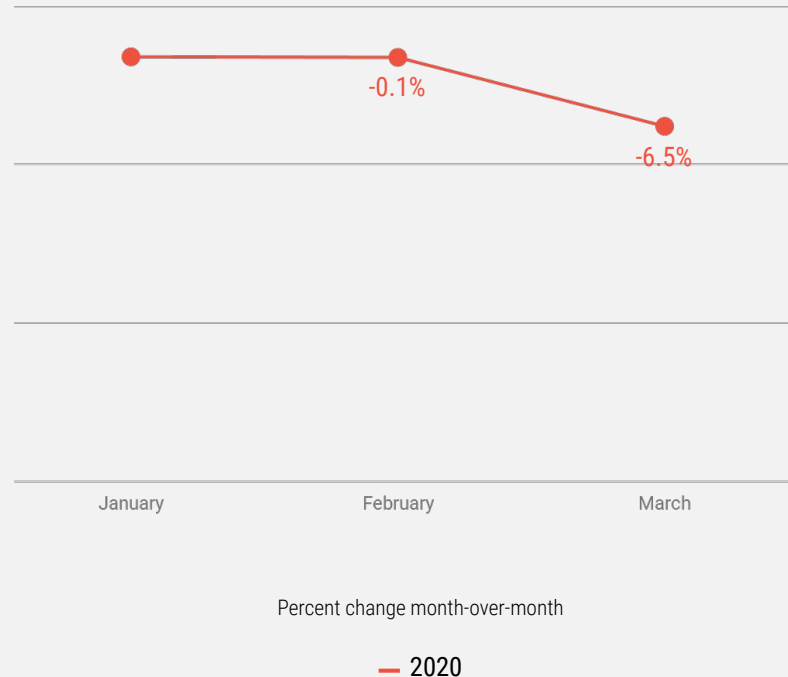
# COVID-19: Fuel Demand Weakens in Q1

## *Examining Number of Transactions*

According to Pay with GasBuddy data, weakened demand from COVID-19 caused the number of monthly transactions to drop 6.6% from January through March 2020.

Nearly the entire drop in monthly transactions happened in March, when many stay-at-home orders were implemented. Examining seasonal demand trends year-over-year, 2019 saw a 17.6% increase in fuel transactions from January through March.

Gasoline Demand in Monthly Fuel Transactions Q1, United States



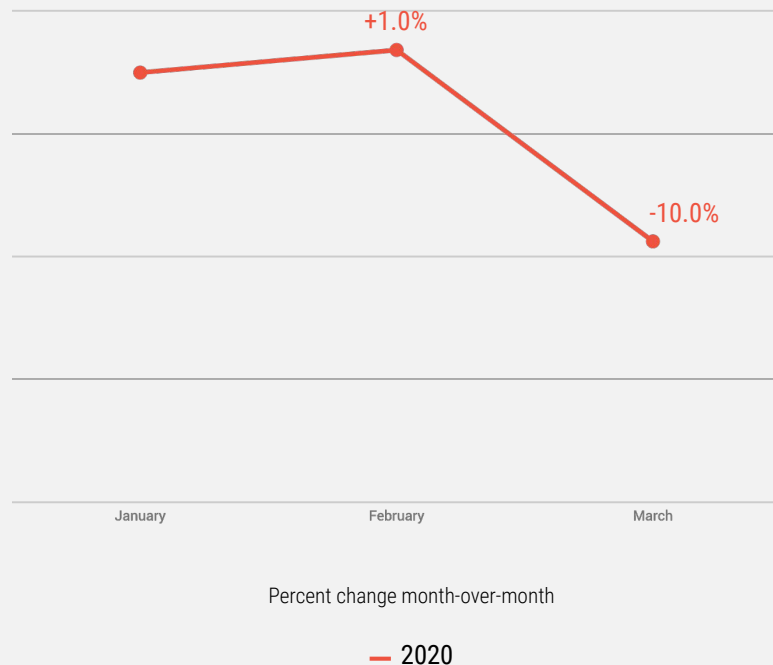
# COVID-19: Fuel Demand Weakens in Q1

## Examining Gallons Purchased

According to Pay with GasBuddy data, weakened demand from COVID-19 caused monthly gallons purchased to **drop 9% during Q1** as consumers shifted to stayed indoors, cars stayed parked and transportation drastically slowed.

The significant decrease in gallons purchased, particularly from February through March (10%), is the opposite of what we've seen from the past two years of transactions. In March 2019, gallons purchased increased 20% from February, while in March 2018 gallons purchased by 25% from the prior month.

Gasoline Demand in Gallons Purchased Q1, United States



# COVID-19: Fuel Demand Weakens in Q1

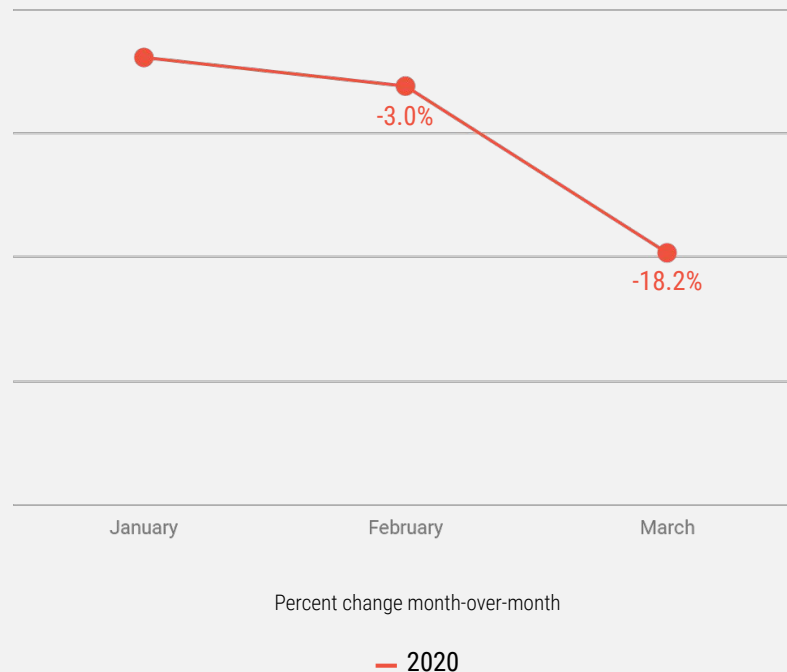
## Examining Total Payment Volume

Monthly total payment volume (TPV) for consumer fuels dropped 21% from January through March of 2020.

The combination of gas prices dropping an average of [47 cents across the country](#) beginning in February as well as decreased fuel demand caused monthly TPV to drop at a higher rate than monthly gallons purchased.

The impact of COVID-19 drastically changed the seasonal trend we have seen in TPV for the past two years. In Q1 of 2019, total payment volume increased 1.65% from January to February and continued to increase by 32% from February to March, and in Q1 of 2018, total payment volume increased by 6% between January and February and continued to increase 26% between February and March.

Gasoline Demand in Total Payment Value Q1, United States





# What did Americans pay at the gas pump in Q1 2020?

Americans spent  
an average of

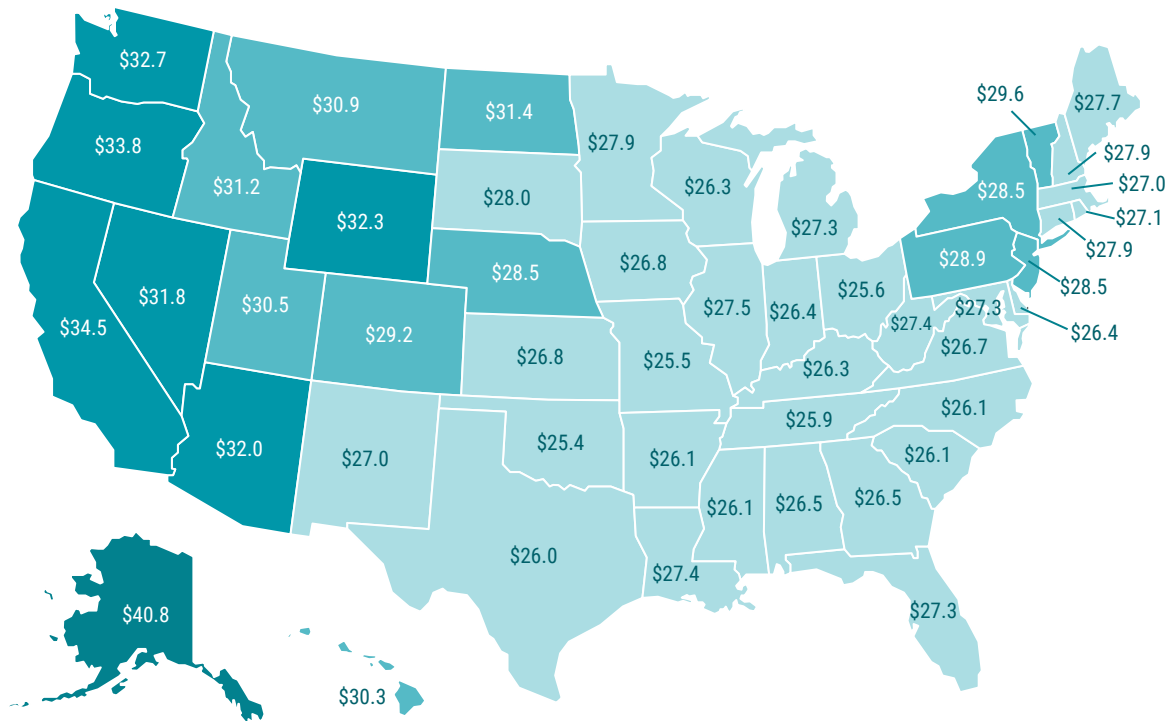
**\$27.53**

per transaction

And pumped  
an average of

**11.7**

gallons per transaction

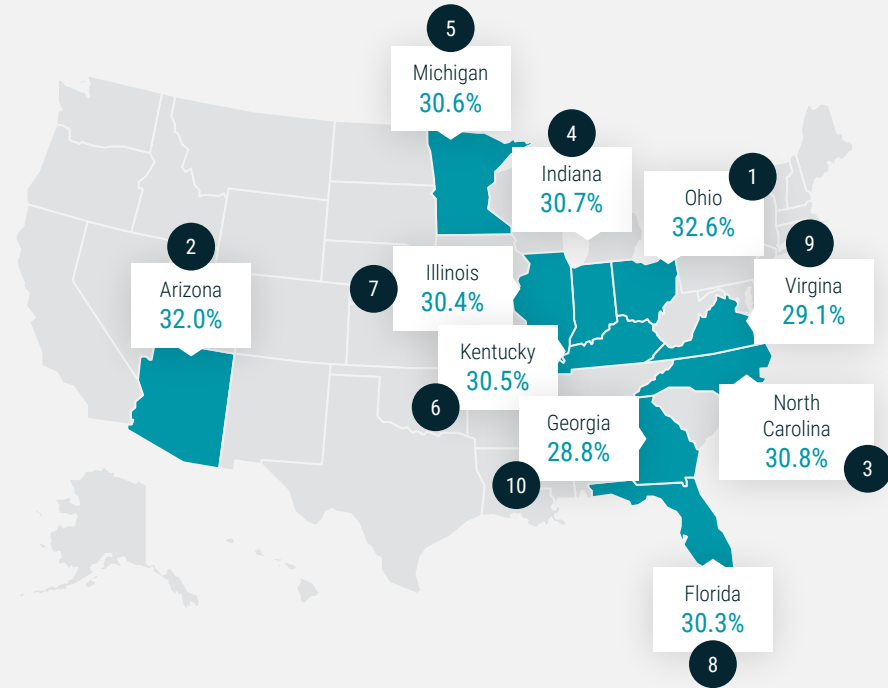


# Ohio, Ariz. and N.C. Have Most Drivers Who Overpay for Gas

In the first quarter of 2020, **28% of Americans** paid more than the average price of gasoline in their area on their fill-up compared to 27% of Americans in Q1 of 2019.

States like Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois see frequent price volatility, an area with high competition that frequently sees price cycling all year round. This makes paying for gas a high-stakes game, where multiple factors can cause drivers to overpay including the time of day, day of the week and what station drops or raises their prices first.

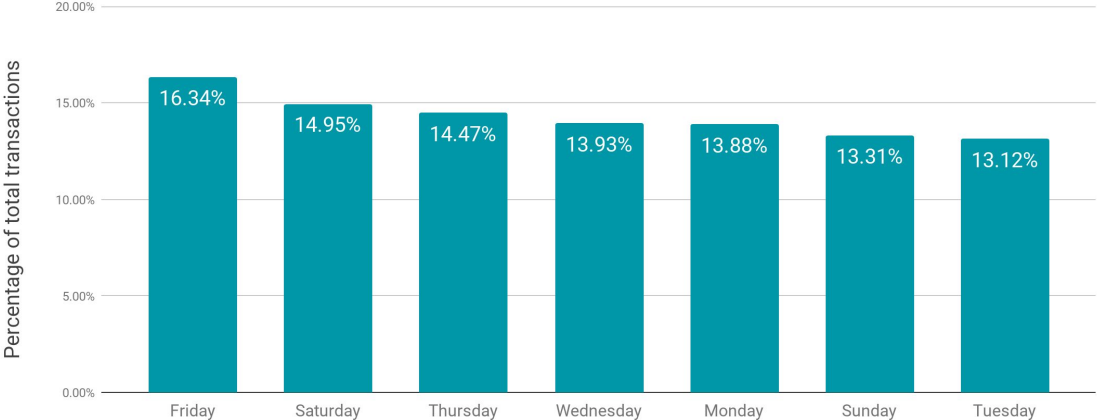
With price drops across the country in February and March, additional states saw many gas stations drop in price faster than others, increasing the chances for consumers to pay more than the average price for their fill-up during the quarter.



# Filling Up on Fridays

## Majority of fuel purchases happen on Fridays and Saturdays

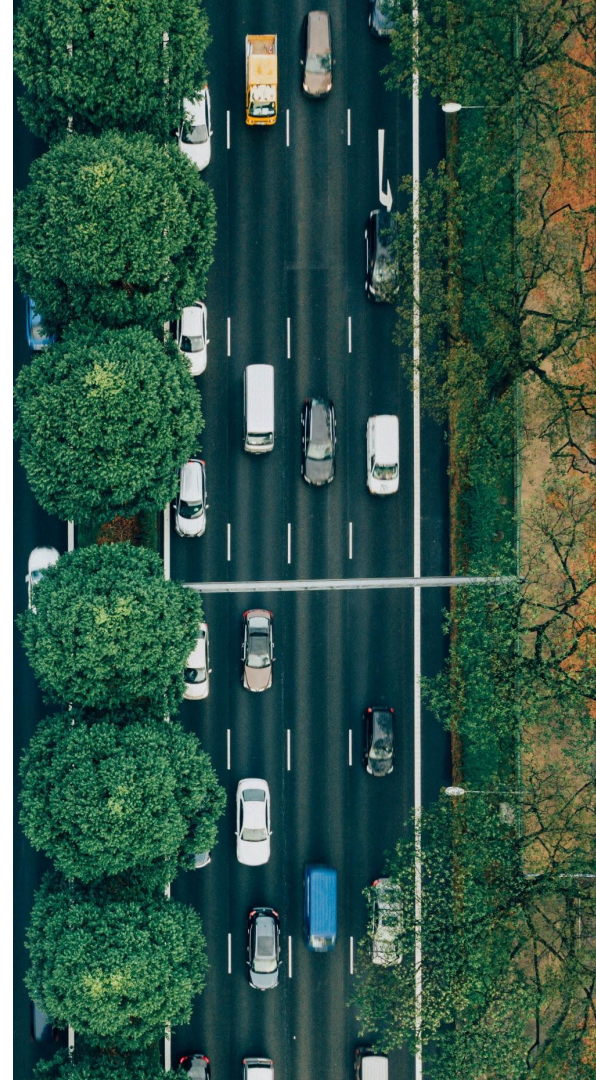
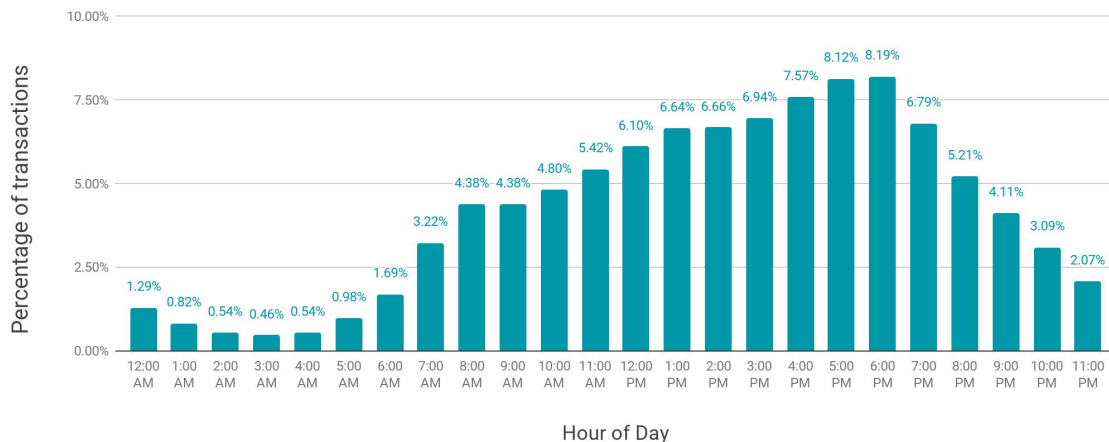
Fridays had the highest volume of transactions in the first quarter of 2020. Even with the drop in fuel demand in February and March, Friday was still the leader in highest volume of fuel transactions followed by Saturdays, Thursdays and Wednesdays. These findings are similar to [our previous foot traffic reports](#) for the fuel and convenience industry in 2019.



# Buying Gas on the Way Home

## **Majority of fuel purchases happen between 4 and 7pm**

The majority of fill-ups in Q1 happened between 4pm and 7pm, consistent with our [previous foot traffic findings](#) for the fuel and convenience industry in 2019. This trend was still reflected in March, even with the numerous stay-at-home orders across the United States amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Gas Buyers Not Necessarily Brand Loyal

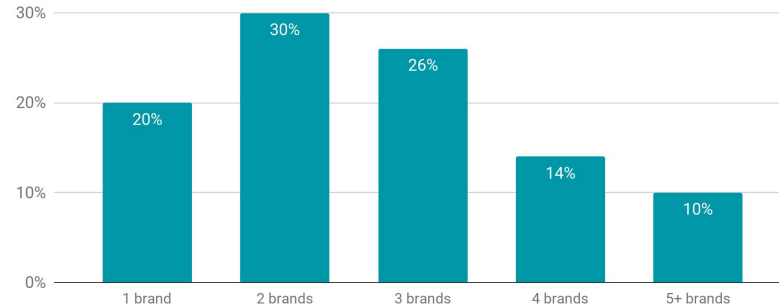
More than half (55%) of consumers filled up at multiple gas station brands in Q1



Fifty five percent of Pay with GasBuddy drivers filled up at more than one gas station brand per month in the first quarter of 2020.

This “brand loyalty” has decreased 3% from Q1 of 2019, when 58% of Pay with GasBuddy drivers filled up at more than one gas station brand.

Number of gas station brands drivers filled up at who transacted 4+ times



Forty four percent of Pay with GasBuddy cardholders transacted four or more times per month, or at least once per week at the fuel pump.

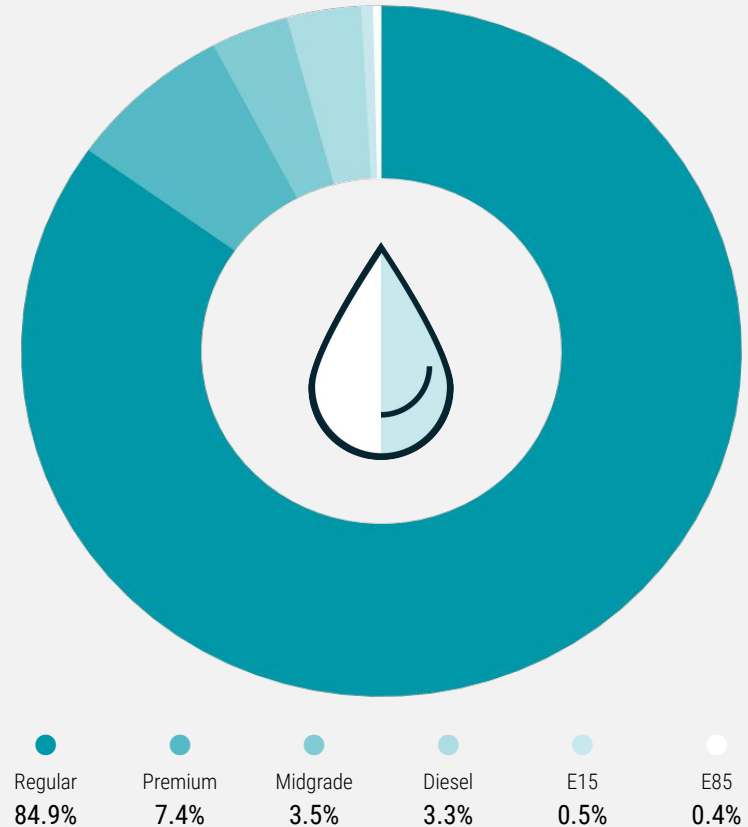
Focusing on these “high mileage” pumpers, we see that most of these drivers (56%) fill up at between 2-3 different brands per month.

# 85% of Drivers Fill Up with Regular Grade Fuel

The majority of passenger vehicles in the United States are made to run on regular grade fuel. A few select models are made to run on premium grade fuel.

While the trucking industry primarily consumes diesel fuel, diesel passenger vehicles [make up 2.9%](#) of all registered passenger vehicles in the United States.

Pay with GasBuddy fuel grade data from the first quarter of 2020 remained fairly consistent with the previous year. In the first quarter of 2019, 85.7% of Pay with GasBuddy purchased regular grade fuel, followed by 3.6% purchasing midgrade, 6.7% purchasing premium, 3.1% purchasing diesel, 0.6% purchasing E85 and 0.4% purchasing E15.





## Report Methodology

GasBuddy analyzed Pay with GasBuddy™ transaction data from January 1 through March 31, 2020 for its Q1 Consumer Fuel Buying Trends Report. Pay with GasBuddy is the first-of-its-kind fuel savings program that gives drivers a discount on virtually every gallon of gas they will ever pump. The program has helped drivers collectively save nearly \$13 million in fuel purchases since its launch in 2017.

For more information about Pay with GasBuddy, visit [www.gasbuddy.com/pay](http://www.gasbuddy.com/pay).

## About GasBuddy

For budget-minded drivers, GasBuddy is the travel and navigation app that is used by more North American drivers to save money on gas than any other. Unlike fuel retailer apps, as well as newer apps focused on fuel savings, GasBuddy covers 150,000+ gas stations in North America, giving drivers 27 ways to save on fuel. That's why GasBuddy has been downloaded nearly 90mm times – more than any other travel and navigation app focused on gas savings. GasBuddy's publishing and software businesses enable the world's leading fuel, convenience, QSR and CPG companies to shorten the distance between the North American fueling public and their brands. For more information, [www.gasbuddy.com](http://www.gasbuddy.com).

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