

At the wheel of a car fuelled with CNG

## Seven false myths about compressed natural gas cars

- / **They are more economical and just as safe and powerful; the expert on CNG at SEAT debunks some of the misconceptions about these vehicles**
- / **These models can be driven up to 1,300 kilometres without having to refuel thanks to their dual gas and petrol tanks**
- / **As they are sustainable, they are allowed to drive during traffic restrictions imposed by pollution levels**

**Martorell, 01/02/2017.**– They are cheaper to run and equally safe and powerful as cars fuelled with petrol or diesel. Either through lack of awareness or due to their novelty, there are several myths surrounding vehicles that run on compressed natural gas (CNG). The head of CNG Product at SEAT, Andrew Shepherd, dispels these false beliefs and explains how these sustainable vehicles work:

**1) The same feeling at the wheel? Yes.** The idea that driving a CNG car is different from conventional vehicles is wrong. In fact, **“the feeling while driving is exactly the same, as the performance of gas engines is identical to that of diesel or petrol engines with the same power output”**, the expert affirms.

**2) Is a gas tank just as safe? “Absolutely yes. Gas tanks are designed, made and certified according to the highest industry standards”**, Shepherd points out, adding that these gas tanks **“are equipped with a safety valve, and in the unlikely event of a fire, would release the gas to the outside air in a controlled manner, preventing anything from happening to the vehicle”**. In addition, the components have been tested to endure **“extreme conditions: the tank reaches a maximum pressure of about 200 bars, but it is designed to withstand more than twice as much”**. Furthermore, Shepherd highlights that the myth that gas can freeze under conditions of use is **“impossible”** because **“in order for natural gas to liquefy, the outside temperature would have to be colder than 160 degrees below zero”**.

**3) Can you drive when pollution levels are critical? Yes.** These cars are classified with the ‘ECO’ label, so they can be driven when pollution levels restrict access to city centres. In addition, this distinction gives certain benefits to owners of these models, such as a tax reduction and incentives in some countries, including Spain, Italy or France.

**4) Can you keep driving when the gas runs out? Yes.** When the gas in the tank is consumed, the car automatically switches over to petrol. **“The driver can continue without having to stop, and an indicator is displayed on the instrument panel that the car is running on petrol”**, explains Andrew Shepherd. In fact, the driving range without having to refuel thanks to this dual powered technology by SEAT is 1,300 kilometres, the distance between Barcelona and Frankfurt. Refuelling with gas is possible in European countries with a gas station network because **“the system uses a universal nozzle”**.

**5) Can I drive exclusively on gas? Yes.** CNG vehicles run on gas by default and you can drive without ever having to switch over to the other tank. Despite this, you should always have a minimum amount of petrol when starting the engine in very cold temperatures or immediately after refuelling with natural gas. This amount of petrol should be consumed within about six months.

**6) Do they cost about the same as traditional vehicles? Yes.** The sales price of these cars is similar to diesel and petrol cars, not to mention their long term benefits. In this sense, Andrew points out that **“it only costs about 13 euros to fill the tank”** so CNG cars **“allow you to save 30% compared to diesel and 55% compared to petrol fuelled vehicles.”**

**7) Do they require similar maintenance? Yes.** The mechanical operation of gas vehicles is the same as traditional cars. **“It’s false that spark plugs or filters have to be changed more often”**, refutes the SEAT expert to counter the myths that suggest that CNG engines overheat and are more expensive to maintain. The only thing that differs is that **“the tightness of the gas system must be certified prior to each MOT inspection, and the condition of the tanks has to be checked visually every four years at a specialist garage”**. These revisions are proof of the highest safety standards surrounding cars fuelled with natural gas.

For Andrew Shepherd, there is every indication that this fuel will play a key role in future mobility, sales of SEAT's CNG vehicles went up by 18% in Europe.

SEAT is the only company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets cars in Spain. A member of the Volkswagen Group, the multinational has its headquarters in Martorell (Barcelona), exporting 80% of its vehicles, and is present in over 80 countries through a network of 1,700 dealerships. In 2017, SEAT achieved worldwide sales of nearly 470,000 vehicles.

The SEAT Group employs close to 14,700 professionals at its three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the highly successful Ibiza, Leon and Arona. Additionally, the company produces the Ateca and the Toledo in the Czech Republic, the Alhambra in Portugal and the Mii in Slovakia.

The multinational has a Technical Centre, which operates as a knowledge hub that brings together 1,000 engineers who are focussed on developing innovation for Spain’s largest industrial investor in R&D. SEAT already features the latest connectivity technology in its vehicle range and is currently engaged in the company’s global digitalisation process to promote the mobility of the future.

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