

# Fresno gas prices rising, and California average tops nation

By Bethany  
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A truck driver waits for the light at Chestnut and Central avenues between two gas stations posting their latest prices. Gas prices have risen 52 cents in one month in the area. JOHN WALKER — THE FRESNO BEE |[Buy Photo](#)

- *Average gallon of unleaded costs \$3.61 in Fresno*
- *Rising crude prices, motorists driving more and refinery problems push costs up at the pump*
- *Prices shouldn't get much higher before Memorial Day*

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A spike in gas prices has pushed California prices to the highest in the nation, with the average price in Fresno climbing 52 cents in the last month.

Prices in Fresno now average \$3.61 for a gallon of unleaded, according to [AAA of Northern California](#). Prices in the Visalia-Tulare-Porterville area rose 48 cents in the last month to an average \$3.55.

AAA released its monthly gas price report Tuesday.

Statewide, California prices climbed to \$3.73 — well above the national average of \$2.66.

The most expensive place to buy gas in California on Tuesday was San Diego, where a gallon cost \$3.82.

California prices have been pushed up in recent weeks by rising crude oil prices and the typical uptick in consumption as more people hit the roads in the approach to Memorial Day, said AAA spokeswoman Cynthia Harris.

But refinery issues in the state have been a big factor in rising prices in recent weeks, she added.

An explosion at ExxonMobil's refinery in Torrance and a temporary shutdown at Tesoro's Martinez refinery during a labor dispute contributed. Those issues have been resolved, but there's still a lag in getting the refineries operating at full speed, which would ease pressure on prices, Harris said.

The good news is gas prices shouldn't get much higher between now and Memorial Day, she said.

"There shouldn't be any significant increase," Harris said. "It should remain at these levels barring any unforeseen event."

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