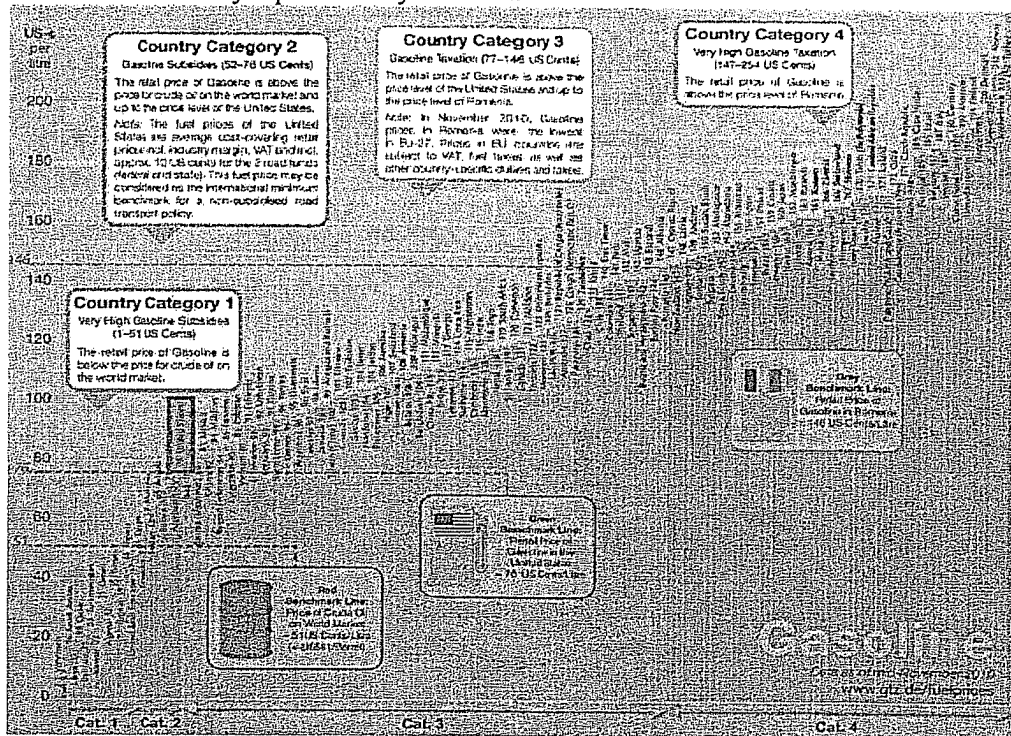


## America's Low Gas Prices: A Global Perspective

Posted on Wednesday April 20th by Eric Jaffe



*If you can read this chart, your glasses are too strong.*





















Last week, with gas prices already hovering around \$4 per gallon, the Maryland General Assembly refused to raise the state gasoline tax. Local legislator Joseph “Sonny” Minnick said exactly what all legislators, regardless of rank or nickname, are supposed to say in this situation:

“With the economy the way it is, gas prices what they are, voting for a gas tax increase would be political suicide.”

That politicians are fearful of confronting Keyser Soze, despite the potential benefits of doing so, is nothing new to readers of this space. The question is why such a relatively low increase on the cost of such a desired good has become such an outlandish request. Our good friends at Good put the cost of gasoline into everyday perspective: Even at \$4, gasoline costs a bit less per gallon than milk or orange juice, way less than shampoo or lattes, and way way less than other essentials like nail polish or Guinness:

## GALLON TO GALLON

As Cash For and others complain about \$4-a-gallon gasoline, we can't help but wonder what the hell is about. Pound for pound, people pay for more than \$4-a-gallon for lots of their favorite things at the time.

 CLOROX BLEACH \$2.56 gallon	 PURDIE WINE (AMERICAN 11 1/2 BOTTLES) \$25.60 gallon
 COKE \$3.84 gallon	 SCHLITZ (16 BOTTLES) \$25.60 gallon
 REGULAR GASOLINE (15 GAL PER GALLON) \$3.96 gallon	 RED BULL \$28.16 gallon
 MILK \$6.04 gallon	 CLARET WINE (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$32.00 gallon
 ORANGE JUICE \$7.68 gallon	 GUINNESS (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$40.96 gallon
 FILTERED WATER \$10.24 gallon	 RALPHS BEER (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$60.16 gallon
 CHARLES HEIDSIECK WINE \$10.24 gallon	 GUINNESS (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$64.00 gallon
 TOILET PAPER \$12.80 gallon	 GUINNESS (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$128.00 gallon
 TIDE \$19.20 gallon	 GUINNESS (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$755.20 gallon
 HEINZ KETCHUP (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$25.52 gallon	 GUINNESS (16 1/2 BOTTLES) \$1,024 gallon

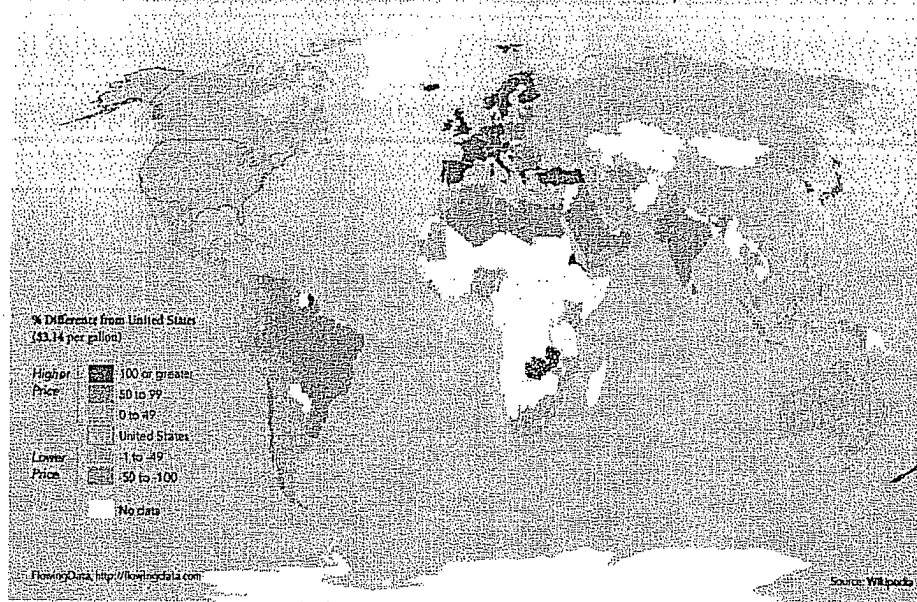
*[Click here for a larger version.](#)*

In case that comparison is a bit too gasoline-to-Guinness for you, let us introduce our new friends at [FlowingData](#), who have created a map of the world that compares America's gas prices to those around the rest of the world. It turns out people in the United States pay a bit less than people in Russia and China, way less than people in India, Japan, and Eastern Europe, and way way less than people in Western Europe:

[SButtonZ button="digg"]

### United States vs. World Gas Prices

The average cost of a gallon of gas at the pump is going up in the United States, but compared to the rest of the world, that cost is still relatively low. In Europe, for example, the average price can be more than \$9 per gallon for RON95 petrol, while in the United States it is currently \$3.14.



*Petrol costs Brits at least twice more than what gasoline costs Americans.*

Lest readers join me in worrying about that little "Source: Wikipedia" hidden in the corner of this map, the data appear to harmonize with the [latest international fuel prices study \(pdf\)](#)\* performed by GIZ. The graphic at the top of this post comes from this study, and I have tried to highlight America's position with the ~~only image-rendering box~~ feature of iPhoto. As anyone with 20/5 vision can clearly see, the United States stands firmly at the left of a graphic in which gas prices increase to the right.

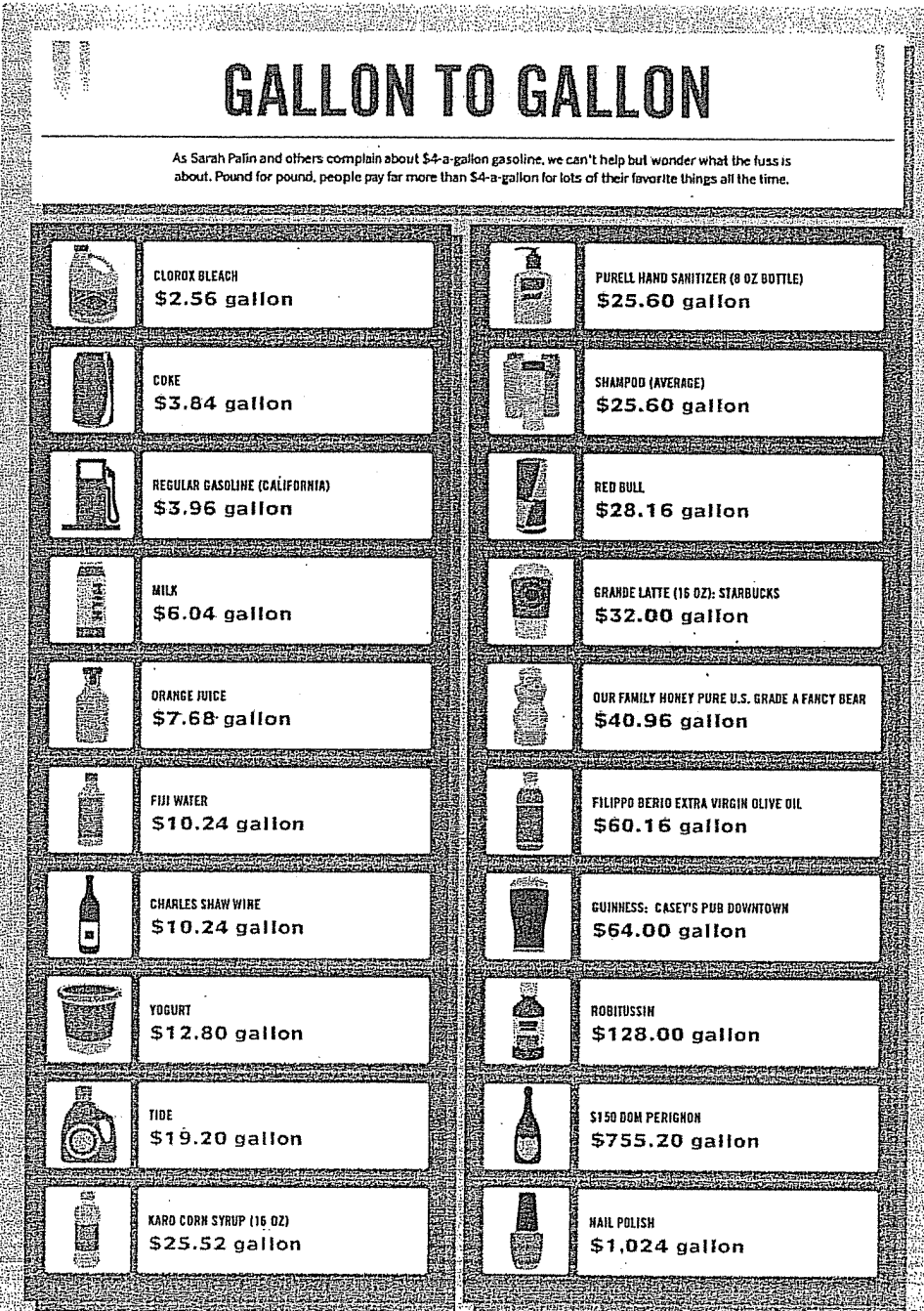
So Americans pay just a touch more at the pump than what is paid in Azerbaijan, and just a tad less than what is paid in Iraq. The pump situation is much worse in OMG socialism countries like Sweden or the Netherlands. Of course, things could always be better. You could live in Venezuela, where, for whatever reason, gasoline is not so much paid for as given away. Or you could live in Libya, where it is probably best to avoid too much carefree driving right now, low gas prices or not.

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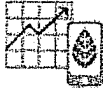


SOURCE: peapod.com; Casey's Pub in downtown Los Angeles  
 A collaboration between GOOD, Dylan C. Lathrop and Sara Sardi.

August 24, 2011, 3:07 pm

## Gas Is Cheaper, but We're Still Driving Less

By CLIFFORD KRAUSS



**Business**

Driving less? Perhaps stubbornly high gasoline prices are getting you down. All the bad economic news may be holding you back from shopping or eating out as much. Or maybe you don't have a job to drive to in the morning.

Obviously, you are not alone. MasterCard SpendingPulse put out its weekly gasoline report Tuesday, and demand for gasoline is going south fast. For the week ending Aug. 19, demand for gasoline at gas stations across the country was down by 4.2 percent compared to the same week a year ago. In week-to-week terms, it's down 0.8 percent, despite the fact that gasoline prices have been edging down lately. In fact, the average price for a gallon of regular was down 4 cents from the week before, but still nearly a third higher than a year ago.

The four-week moving average in gasoline consumption is down 3.8 percent from last year, so the one-week drop is not an aberration.

If you care about pollution and energy usage, this is good news, of course. The country is consuming at least two million barrels of gasoline a week less this summer than last. But as an economic indicator, less gasoline pumped means fewer miles driven and less economic activity. That might be gloomy enough to make more people want to stay at home.