# Oslo leads the world with a complete car ban to boost sustainability and wellbeing



The Norwegian capital, Oslo, has made a pioneering move in urban sustainability by becoming the first city in the world to implement a complete ban on all cars within its limits. This groundbreaking decision aims to tackle urban environmental challenges while enhancing the quality of life for its residents through a slower, more active urban lifestyle.

The initiative, announced several years ago and fully implemented by 2019, focuses on encouraging the use of bicycles as the primary mode of transport. In support of this transition, the city invested heavily in infrastructure, constructing over 56 kilometres of exclusive bicycle lanes, creating a more accessible and reliable transport network that has fundamentally altered how citizens navigate the city.

Oslo's strategy stems from the pressing need to reduce extreme traffic congestion and the associated pollution caused by motor vehicles. By promoting cycling and enforcing a total car ban, the city aims to significantly lower carbon dioxide emissions and the overall carbon footprint. Beyond environmental benefits, this shift also champions physical, mental and emotional well-being by encouraging an active lifestyle among its population.

Further advancing its commitment to reducing emissions, Oslo has introduced new regulations targeting the taxi industry. As of 1 November 2024, all taxis operating within the city must be free of emissions from combustion engines, effectively mandating a full switch to electric taxis. Exceptions will be made only for taxi journeys extending beyond Oslo’s borders. Despite appeals from the taxi sector for a delay until 2027, due to concerns about insufficient charging infrastructure, city authorities have maintained the original deadline. Remarkably, by 2023, 90% of new taxis registered in Oslo were already electric.

Oslo’s efforts place it firmly among the world’s top 25 cities noted for a high quality of life. The city is celebrated for its abundant public spaces that foster community interaction and its efficient public transportation system. Its innovative approach to transportation and urban living sets an influential example in the global push for sustainable city development.

The results of Oslo’s bold policies have gone beyond environmental improvement. The World Happiness Report, published by the United Nations, ranks Oslo as one of the happiest places worldwide, due to factors including strong social safety nets, high levels of personal freedom and trust, and effective governance.

Oslo’s transition away from traditional car dependency has generated significant interest internationally, showcasing the potential for a major city to redefine urban living in favour of sustainability and human well-being. Its progressive road regulations and investment in non-polluting transport mark it as a global leader in the fight against pollution and a model for future urban development initiatives.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.transportenvironment.org/articles/oslo-ban-cars-2019> - Provides context on Oslo's efforts to reduce private cars in the city center, although it does not mention a complete ban on all cars. The city aimed to reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable practices.
* <https://sustainablesolutions.emilykirchner.bergbuilds.domains/car-free-streets-in-oslo-norway/> - Describes Oslo's implementation of car-free streets, focusing on bike lanes and public spaces. It highlights efforts to reduce car traffic and enhance urban sustainability.
* <https://citychangers.org/how-oslo-hit-reverse-on-its-city-street-parking/> - Explains how Oslo removed parking spaces to reduce car traffic. It discusses the impact of this policy on urban life and traffic patterns.
* <https://www.witpress.com/Secure/elibrary/papers/SDP17/SDP17001FU1.pdf> - Examines the implications of Oslo's car-free city center within Ring 1, affecting various stakeholders like commuters, residents, and businesses.
* <https://www.ecoportal.net/en/first-ban-100-oslo-cars-evs-include/5750/> - Incorrectly claims Oslo banned all cars, including electric vehicles. However, it reflects the general interest in Oslo's car-reduction strategies.