

Overview

With gas prices still far above \$3 a gallon nationwide, some lawmakers have called for a dramatic expansion in domestic drilling to bring down prices and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. But given America's current thirst for oil, just to "drill, baby, drill," won't be a silver bullet.

How much oil do Americans consume?

A little more than a third of America's energy comes from oil. In 2010, Americans used an average of 19.1 million barrels of oil *per day*, or about 1 in every 5 barrels used worldwide. (China, in contrast, consumes about 8.3 million barrels a day.) Almost three-fourths of the oil we use goes toward transportation, including keeping 249 million vehicles on the road. Nearly half our oil becomes gasoline, while the rest becomes diesel, jet fuel, liquefied petroleum gas, kerosene, propane, home heating oil and other products.

Where does our oil come from?

In November 2011, we imported an average of 11.2 million barrels of foreign oil a day—more than half of our total consumption. Our top foreign suppliers in 2011:

• Canada	28%
• Saudi Arabia	13%
• Mexico	10%
• Venezuela	9%
• Russia	5%

Oil accounts for about a fifth of all our imports. Absent these imports, our trade deficit with the rest of the world could shrink by as much as 60%.

What about domestic production?

While 31 states produce crude oil, about half comes from just five states: Texas, Alaska, California, North Dakota and Louisiana. In January 2011, Alaska produced 593,000 barrels of oil a day—equal to 11% of our domestic production but just 3% of our daily consumption.

How much oil do we have left?

Hard to say. While an estimated 1.1 trillion to 1.3 trillion barrels of oil are in "proven," easily recoverable, reserves, there's potentially much more that's undiscovered or locked up in unconventional forms such as shale. The U.S. Geological Survey, for example, estimates the Arctic, including Arctic Alaska, could hold up to 90 billion barrels of oil. Exploration, however, is expensive, as is the technology to convert shale and other forms of oil. The International Energy Agency predicts we could reach "peak oil"—or the maximum amount of oil we can produce before supplies begin to decline, given known reserves—sometime between 2020 and 2035.

Key Facts

- Average American oil consumption per day (2011): **18.83 million barrels**
- Average imports of foreign oil per day (July 2013): **10.2 million barrels**
- Percentage of oil used for transportation: **72%**
- Average number of gallons of gas used per day (January 2012): **367 million**
- Number of vehicles now on the road: **249 million**
- Current U.S. population: **315 million**
- Top five gasoline-consuming states:
Gallons used per day, 2011
 - Texas 5.6 million
 - California 5.4 million
 - Florida 3.1 million
 - Ohio 2.9 million
 - New York 2.7 million

Other Resources

- U.S. Energy Information Administration – [Energy Explained](#)
- U.S. Energy Information Administration – [Monthly Energy Review](#)
- U.S. Energy Information Administration – [Weekly Retail Gasoline and Diesel Prices](#)
- U.S. Census Bureau – [U.S. Imports of Petroleum](#)
- U.S. Geological Survey – [World Petroleum Assessment](#)
- International Energy Agency – [World Energy Outlook](#)

Links to Other Resources

- U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration – Energy Explained
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/energyexplained/index.cfm>
- U.S. Energy Information Administration – Monthly Energy Review
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/totalenergy/data/monthly/>
- U.S. Energy Information Administration – Average Retail Gas Prices
http://www.eia.doe.gov/oil_gas/petroleum/data_publications/wrgp/mogas_home_page.html
- U.S. Census Bureau – U.S. Imports of Petroleum
<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/graphs/PetroleumImports.html#graph2>
- U.S. Geological Survey – World Petroleum Assessment
<http://certmapper.cr.usgs.gov/rooms/we/index.jsp>
- International Energy Agency – World Energy Outlook
<http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/>