Charging port for electric car

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Every EV has a J1772 port, which is good for Level 1 and Level 2 charging speeds. Most but not all charging stations have J1772 chargers. Not all stations will have high-speed, Level 3 charging. For Level 3...

Charging an electric vehicle sounds simple in theory, right? Park up, plug in and recharge your battery. Job done. The reality is a little bit different, as anyone who owns or has driven an EV will doubtless agree. It’s certainly not quite as straightforward as pulling into a gas station and filling up, which can all happen within the space of a few minutes.

This is because electric vehicle charging is still evolving. Our gas and diesel refuelling infrastructure has been around for years and much of the basic setup hasn’t changed all that much. Pumps are slightly more advanced than they used to be and paying for your gas is certainly more straightforward.Then again it"s possible to recharge an EV for free, despite some recent opposition to that concept.

Part of this is down to the different ways in which electric vehicles get charged. Depending on the model of car you’ve got, the port used to plug in and recharge varies. It’s a bit like the different plug sockets you get around the globe.

Thankfully, anyone heading off on vacation simply needs to pack a multi-headed travel plug, which allows them to plug in and charge their phone, shaver or hairdryer using a plug that suits the socket. Unfortunately, it’s not possible to do this with an electric vehicle.

Tesla has done a great job in developing its own proprietary system, which lets you quickly and easily access the arguably superior Supercharger network. These Superchargers can be found across the US, Europe and many other parts of the world, with over 30,000 individual chargers and counting.

The rapidly expanding network is also supplemented by Tesla’s Destination Chargers, found in hotel parking lots and other popular tourist locations. These are slow, but use the same plug and socket mechanism as the rapid-power Superchargers.

Following behind is everyone else. EV ports and the chargers that connect to Non-Tesla vehicles come in several variants across the U.S. You also get different levels of charging: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. The higher the number, the more powerful (and faster) the charging should be.

Which one you can use depends on the type of EV you want to charge and its ability to accept the power supply. The good news on that front is the car will be able to figure this out for you, so you won’t inadvertently fry your battery when you plug in.

Level 1, 120 Volt AC charging is the ‘entry-level’ option, and much slower as a result. The bonus is if you don’t mind adding a miserly 3 to 5 miles of range per hour is that it allows you to plug in and charge at home without having to install any specialist charging equipment. Overnight makes the most sense and lets you avoid the public charger scenario altogether.

Level 2, which is 208 Volts to 240 Volts AC, is speedier and your options are greater, although there are still limitations. You might get up to 80 miles from an hour’s charge, though this could drop down to just over 10 in other cases. EV chargers that offer Level 2 charging are becoming more commonplace, however, and can often be the ones to look for at locations like fast food outlets, shopping mall complexes and hotels.

Level 3 DC rapid charging is the most appealing in terms of speed and efficiency. The 400 Volts to 900 Volts DC rapid charge and Supercharging options can deliver up to 20 miles per minute thanks to that direct current supply and higher voltage rating.Tesla owners get to enjoy this via the Supercharger network, while other makes and models don’t always get that luxury.

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