



Ask the experts

Frozen versus fresh

I find it more cost-effective to buy frozen veg and canned fruit, but are they as good for me as fresh produce?

MARK REVELS, BEDFORDSHIRE

Yes – frozen and canned fruit and veg are just as beneficial as fresh. Produce is either flash-frozen or canned soon after harvest – when nutrient concentrations are highest, so many vitamins and minerals are retained. And whether fresh, frozen, canned or dried, they all count towards your five a day.

For canned produce, go for fruit in natural juice not syrup, and veg in plain water not salt water.

Buying this produce can also cut down on waste as you don't throw out lots of fruit and veg that's past its best-before date.

Scratched software

I bought a version of Microsoft



Mark wants to know if frozen veg is as good as fresh

Office for £160 online, but one of the discs is scratched. The website says that it can't exchange opened software because of licensing laws. Is this correct?

NEIL STEVENSON, ROCHDALE

No – you're covered by the Sale of Goods Act 1979 as you are with

most other products. Under this, the software should be of satisfactory quality and fit for purpose, so you're entitled to ask for a replacement or refund as the disc is scratched.

The licensing agreement is a separate contract between you and Microsoft that dictates what you can and can't do with the software. This

does not affect your right to return faulty goods.

To protect against copying, however, you can't return opened software bought online if it's not faulty.

Recording Sky

I'm thinking about upgrading to Sky+, but I've heard that the personal video recorder (PVR) is unreliable. Is it possible to record Sky with, say, the Which?

Best Buy Humax PVR instead?

JOHN GORDON, AYLESFORD

You can't record Sky programmes on to the Humax or any other Freeview PVR, so Sky+ is the only way of recording Sky on hard disk.

We've scored Sky+ highly for ease of use, but it came out below average in our annual reliability survey.

You could invest in a DVD

Which? focus on Holiday surcharges

Be prepared for some unexpected holiday costs this summer

Late-notice fees

What are these fees?

Late-notice fees can be charged after you've paid for a package holiday if travel operators' costs rise unexpectedly. This might be due to currency fluctuations or tax increases. For example, the euro's increasing strength against the pound (see June, p4) has left smaller tour operators short of cash.

You can only be charged up to 10% of the original price – any more and you must be offered the choice of a refund. You must also be notified about the fees at least 30 days before departure.

Fuel surcharges

Why is the price of 'taxes, fees and charges' on flights so high?

This amount often includes fuel surcharges – several airlines have increased these recently, blaming rising oil prices.

For instance, British Airways has raised fuel surcharges on long-haul flights of more than nine hours from £64 to £79.

Excess baggage

What can I expect to pay for excess baggage?

Hold baggage allowances vary greatly: 15kg for Ryanair; 20kg for EasyJet, Monarch and Thomsonfly; and 23kg for British

Airways and Virgin Atlantic. If you exceed these allowances, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic charge from £25 a bag, while others charge £6 to £8 a kilogram.

Budget airlines, including Ryanair, charge for each bag checked in (whether you exceed your allowance or not). This is often between £3 and £6 when

booking a flight online and between £7 and £12 if booking bags in at the airport.

Additional flight fees

What else will I pay for on flights?

British Airways is the only major airline to provide free food and drink on short-haul trips of more than one hour. Prices for meals on other airlines are often around £6. Airlines must provide free water.

Many budget airlines charge for seat reservations, and Ryanair also charges for using check-in desks, so consider online check-in if you have hand luggage only.



Your consumer questions answered by our experts, plus the most popular topics among Which? members

recorder – such as the Best Buy Sony RDRGX350 – that could record Sky programmes to blank DVDs.

Or you might want to see whether Freeview or BBC/ITV freesat have the channels that you want to record. There's no PVR available with freesat yet, but one is expected later this year.

Car insurance

I took my Mazda MX-5 off the road over the winter and my insurer refused to cover me for fire and theft during this period as the car was worth more than £4,000. I had to leave it uninsured and, when I tried to reinsure it to drive again, my insurer refused because the car had been off the road. Is this common practice?

IAN ETTRIDGE, WORCESTERSHIRE

This is unusual. Fire and theft cover is essential at any time so your



Other costs

What other costs might I face?

Credit and debit cards can be cheaper for overseas spending if you choose a Best Buy (see 'Make your money go further', June, p18). But beware of fees on other cards. Also avoid the airport when buying currency.

When abroad, you pay when someone calls your mobile, and calls home and texts from your phone cost more. But texts might still be cheaper than calls.

Ask your questions

Send us your questions or ideas for 'Which? focus' to asktheexperts@which.co.uk or write to Ask the experts, PO Box 44, Hertford X SG14 1SH.

insurer should have offered this regardless of your car's value. And your car being off the road should have no bearing on whether or not you can reinsure it.

The Mazda MX-5 owners club – at www.mx5oc.co.uk – gives useful advice on these sorts of queries, and it offers a car insurance scheme and discounts on servicing, parts and accessories. Membership costs £27.50 a year plus a one-off £5.50 administration fee.

Online charges

When paying by card online, is it legal for airlines to charge a card fee for each individual ticket instead of one per transaction?

PETER HODGSON, LEICESTER

There are no legal restrictions to prevent airlines from charging a fee for each ticket rather than per transaction – and many of them do this.

This isn't all profit for them, however. Apacs, the UK's card payments processing body, charges companies for handling credit and debit card transactions – typically 3% of the total fee.

We feel that it would be fairer to

pass on this fixed charge to the customer rather than charging a seemingly arbitrary fee per ticket.

Personal details

Parking companies state on tickets that if you ignore a fine they'll retrieve your name and address from the DVLA. Is this allowed under the Data Protection Act?

RICK MERRALL, GRIMSBY

Yes it is. The Data Protection Act 1998 allows personal information to be released on a case-by-case basis when it helps to prosecute offenders.

Under the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations, the DVLA is required to release such details if it believes that the applicant has a 'reasonable cause' to investigate a parking offence.

Parking companies must provide details of business activities, including evidence of a parking charge scheme and that drivers are aware of it.

Visit www.which.co.uk/parkingfines for more information on your rights concerning parking law.



Peter asks us why card payments for tickets attract fees per person

Top reads

Each month, we ask you which articles you read in Which?. Here are the most popular reports from our May issue

- 1 Car running costs
- 2 Food fraud
- 3 Mobile phones
- 4 Lawnmowers
- 5 Outdoor cleaners
- 6 Shredders
- =7 MP3 and MP4 players
- =7 Cookers
- 9 Universal remotes
- 10 Buying a house



Top clicks

The 20 most visited topics on www.which.co.uk between 23 April and 23 May

- 1 LCD and plasma TVs
- 2 Digital cameras
- 3 Washing machines
- 4 Satnavs
- 5 Vacuum cleaners
- 6 Lawnmowers
- 7 Child car seats
- 8 Pushchairs
- 9 Printers
- 10 Camcorders
- 11 Broadband
- 12 Boilers
- 13 Mobile phones
- 14 Laptops
- 15 Fridge-freezers
- 16 Dishwashers
- 17 MP3 players
- 18 Digital SLRs
- 19 Steam irons
- 20 Cordless phones



Lawnmowers was the sixth most popular topic