

Most drivers do not do this. Airplane pilots are required to use logbooks for flying, and therefore know the value of keeping a good logbook. It is a skill and a habit that can also be very useful for driving cars, especially older ones.

Any sort of bound (or ring-binder) small notebook will do. I find it very useful to record on the front page pertinent data about the vehicle: VIN number, year model, engine type, date purchased, etc. It is also useful to extract from the owner's manual other useful items such as fuel tank capacity, oil sump capacity and type (or types) of oil, the other fluid types, how often to change the oil, tire sizes and pressures, etc.

The second page can contain a list of the most common replacement part numbers, using the numbers from your favorite auto parts store. These could include things like oil filters, spark plug types (with appropriate electrode gap), air filters, belts, hoses, brake pads, etc. This page is also a good place to record useful data like wrench sizes for your oil drain plug, etc.

On about the third page you start keeping a log of "important things". I find a record of fuel fill-ups, oil changes, plus other maintenance and repairs, to be quite useful. I can go back and figure out fuel mileage and oil consumption rates, if I record the data correctly and completely.

FILL-UPS –

At a minimum, record odometer reading and gallons-to-fill. I record these plus the date, the place, the cost per gallon, and the total cost, and I leave a space for fuel mileage (computed later). Recording place-purchased and unit price helps you choose a station with the cheapest good-quality gasoline (or diesel). If you experience erratic running, look at the last place you filled up, and suspect dirt or water in their fuel. If your fuel consumption suddenly increases to something out of line with previous experiences, something is going wrong. You may need a tune-up or repair.

OIL CHANGES –

At a minimum, record odometer and whether or not you changed the filter. I record these plus date, place, and cost. You can check back later to see which oil change place gives you the better deal, or which place forgot to tighten something, if you develop a dripping oil leak. (Most places will stand behind their work.)

OIL ADDITIONS –

Some of you will need to add oil between changes. If you record odometer, date, and how much you added, you can still keep track of oil consumption rates, if you desire. If the consumption rate suddenly jumps, you may need to see your mechanic, because something somewhere went wrong.

Typical fuel mileage:

OPERATIONS SINCE PURCHASE:

- PURCHASE w/ FUEL TANK 6-1-99 15,560
- FUEL 10.89 gal Show 87 @ 10.88 @ 99.94/gal
- 6-7-99 15.86 gal Show 87 @ 99.94/gal
- FUEL 6/14/99 16/96 @ 97.9
- \$ 8.85 9.04 gal @ 97.9 333.2
- FUEL 6/16/99 16/334 @ 97.9
- \$ 5.92 6.048 gal (M. 1.5) @ 97.9 139.9
- FUEL 6/25/99 16/333 @ 97.9
- \$ 9.78 9.98 gal (296) @ 97.9 107.1

Typical oil additions and changes:

Add Oil 9-29-02 68,292

Cr. 5 qt SAE 20W50 SJ +
to 1/3 from below low mark
about 500 miles to oil change

OIL CHANGE 10-6-02 68,542

- filled to fill 3.5 qt SAE 20W50 SL
- Canoco brand 3 qt each, on 7/6/11
- was 1/2 quart drain added new oil
- was NAPA 21361 5.1 qt plus
- general fluids cks 5.0-4.0 plus

Typical of maintenance items:

Tire Replacement 6-14-00 33425 @ RTB
 4 gal 9F Saeedly P1361 SR14 "B" +13"
 342.57 fuel load, align; 12-26-00
 (oil change, perhaps a bit of cables wear, maybe)

Typical of repair items:

Fuel 12-5-00 42565 @ 1299
 8726 gal 811.34 (7.17 w/8)
 Arranged repairs 12-17-00 142,706 "next start"
 inspect inside disk OK
 sparkplugs/wires 1 12K2 2' 6K2/F
 2 11E2 19" 6.2 K2/F
 3 85K2 14" 6.4 K2/F
 4 70K2 1' 7 K2/F
 Replaced plugs NICE 0K2E-11 @ .040 - 5h/11h's
 (old plug sets 03 03 03 05)
 0 0 pin-air plug sep spark test slows spark OK
 0 No bleeder hoses - just use fire! old plugs
 lead fuel on term.