

# The Secret Behind Norway's Electric Car Revolution

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*Yui Mok/PA Archive*

**The tiny Nordic country is beating the world in the switch.**

By [Alexander C. Kaufman](#)

Norway is speeding past other countries in the electric car race.

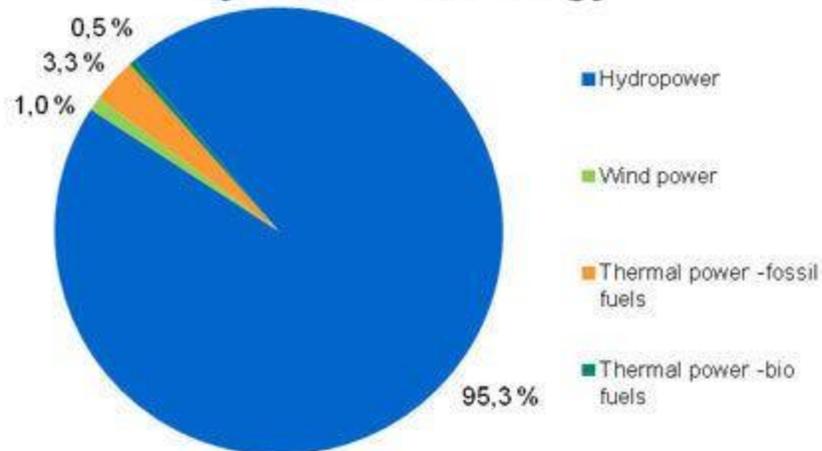
The trick, it seems, is setting high vehicle taxes and offering generous exemptions.

By stripping electric cars of a 25 percent sales tax and a registration tax that averages more than \$12,000 depending on a vehicle's weight and polluting fossil fuel emissions, the Nordic country has zoomed past its original projections for swapping out its gas-burning fleet for electrics, according to a [report published Friday](#) in The New York Times.

Norway expected 50,000 of the country's [2.5 million registered](#) private vehicles to run on electricity by 2017. Instead, it hit 66,000 last month, in addition to 8,000 gasoline-electric hybrids.

But what's most impressive is how Norway powers those electric vehicles: gushing rivers. Over 95 percent of the country's electricity is produced by hydropower, according to [2011 data](#) from the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate, a government agency.

## Production in Norway 2011 - by source of energy



*Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate*

As David Jolly wrote in the Times:

“That makes Norway’s electricity cleaner and relatively cheap — a further impetus for adopting e-cars. (A country where much of the electricity is generated by coal-fired power plants would not see as many environmental benefits from switching to electric vehicles.)”

And all that despite the fact that fossil fuels have enriched Norway. The country — which is not part of the European Union and uses its own currency, the krone — is the world’s seventh-largest producer of oil and third-biggest natural gas exporter.

The issue with electric cars in the United States is they suck energy from a grid powered by burning fossil fuels. That increases their carbon footprint. Considering electric cars are meant to reduce global emissions and combat climate change, that’s a problem.

In contrast with Norway, hydropower made up just 6 percent of U.S. electricity production last year, according to the [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#). Coal accounted for 39 percent, and natural gas hit 27 percent.

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