



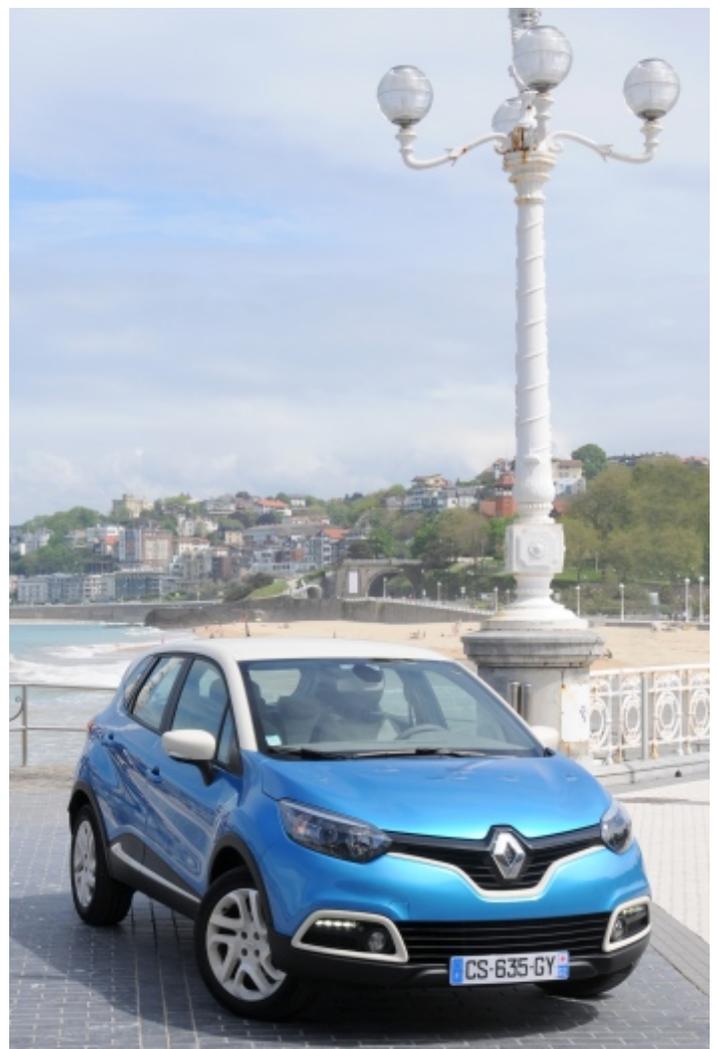
Renault Captur

The best of both worlds

Car review | The engineers at Renault were in doubt. The Modus is Renault's compact MPV and it was badly in need of replacement. On the other hand, compact SUVs are more popular than ever and Renault didn't have one. Since developing a new car is a very costly affair, Renault had to choose. The answer is the "Capture": a combination of both an MPV and an SUV.

Renault has a reputation to maintain when it comes to MPVs, or Multi Purpose Vehicles. In the mid 80s Renault was the first to turn a van into a luxury car, and the MPV was born.

Nowadays, MPVs are considered to be bland family cars, because practical use is more important than looks. With the Captur, the roles have been reversed. This is a car one chooses for its looks first.



MPV

Yet, space hasn't been forgotten! Thanks to the easy entry (10 cm higher than a Clio and about the same height as a Scenic) and high seating position, the Captur feels like a mighty vehicle. The space in the front is ample, although the headrests could have been a bit higher.

The rear seat is mounted on rails, so one can opt for either more legroom or more luggage space depending on the situation. With the rear seat all the way to the back, legroom is fine; even adults sit comfortable in the back of a Captur. To illustrate: the legroom in the rear of the Capture is the same as that of the much larger Laguna Estate.



As it should be with an MPV, the cabin features lots of trays, drawers, storage pockets and other space savers. Do take a look at the "Magic Drawer". Instead of a traditional pivoting glove box, the Captur has a drawer which is much deeper (and thus roomier!) than usual.

To emphasise that the Captur isn't a traditional MPV, its looks can be personalised in many ways. This starts with the two-tone paint, which makes the car look less tall than it actually is. The door sills, mirrors, radiator and tail lights can all be executed in a contrasting colour.



The cabin can be executed in a dark or light tint, after which many elements can once again be painted in contrasting colours. The seat covers are zipped in place, so they can be removed and washed. They can also be replaced, so the cabin will look like new even after many years of wear and tear.

Underneath, the Captur is based on the Renault Clio. The only visible parts shared by both models are some buttons, levers and displays in the cabin. Just like the Clio, the Capture can be fitted with "R-Link": Renault's audio, communication and satnav system. R-Link is easy, quick and intuitive to use. The handy home screen shows the most important information at a glance. TomTom contributed to the satnav, so its maps and planning are excellent.



Driving

As stated before, from a technical point of view the Captur is based on the Renault Clio. In city and on the open road this is an advantage. Compared to other SUVs the Captur is less intimidating and more agile. However, the Captur isn't sporty or exciting to drive. Manoeuvring in a crowded street or parking in a narrow garage is no problem (and the optional rear-view camera makes this even easier).



The suspension is firmer than average and that's why the Captur hardly tilts over in the corners. It's only in long and shallow bends that the Captur obviously has a higher centre of gravity than the Clio.

The Captur has a ground clearance of 20 cm and that's about all that can be said about its off-road

capabilities. The Captur doesn't feature four-wheel drive, hill descent control or any off-road technology whatsoever. The maximum allowable towing weight is also less than with the more adventurous SUVs from other brands.

Diesel

The Captur distinguishes itself from its rivals by offering more space and more efficiency. To achieve this, weight has been saved where ever possible. The result is clear: the Captur weighs hardly more than the average compact car. Of course its tallness makes it less streamlined. To compensate for this, the grille shuts and opens depending on the need to cool the engine.



First, the 1.5 litre diesel engine was tested. It develops 90 PS / 220 Nm and that's exactly enough. Renault found an excellent compromise between performance and efficiency. It's only when trying to accelerate from 60 to 80 km/h that the diesel engine lacks power. Shifting down a notch is enough to compensate for this. In all other situations the Captur is truly frugal.

The manual gearbox has just five gears. These have been chosen so noise levels are minimal, even on the open road. The gear ratios are less favourable in city traffic. At 50 km/h the engine speed is so low that one intuitively speeds up.

Beneath the (digital!) speedometer and rev counter a large indicator can be found. By lighting up green, orange or red it judges the driver's behaviour. During

this test the green light was on most of the time and, despite the highly demanding route, the average fuel consumption was a modest 4.7 litres per 100 km. That isn't just a fair value for an SUV, it is even a good score for most traditional cars!



Petrol

The only available petrol engine can be combined with a dual-clutch six-speed automatic transmission. Regrettably it isn't as sophisticated and well behaved as the ones from the German carmakers. It is obvious when the "EDC" (Efficient Dual Clutch) changes gears, and it doesn't always do so at the right moment.

On mountain roads the computer deliberately sticks with a lower gear to make it an easier ascent (or descent using engine braking). This doesn't always work out as well as Renault planned. As an alternative the driver can shift sequentially, but that's not why one chooses an automatic gearbox. To make matters worse: when driving with a cold engine, many mechanical noises can be heard.



The petrol engine performs as well as the diesel and is frugal as well. The petrol-powered Captur also covered a highly demanding route with lots of city traffic and steep mountain roads. Yet the average fuel consumption was just 6.1 litres per 100 km. That's a lot more than the label says, but still a lot less than many other compact SUVs.

Conclusion

Renault combines the space of an MPV with the looks of an SUV and names the result "Captur". This combination works out in many ways. When it comes to space and practical use, the Captur is as good as most compact MPVs.

However, the Captur looks more exciting than the average "mini van" thanks to its SUV genes and the many ways to personalise the car. The easy entry cabin and the extra ground clearance make daily life with the Captur easier. For those in doubt between an MPV and an SUV: the Captur truly offers the best of both worlds. ■



Specifications

Renault Captur dCi 90 Dynamique S

Size and weight



Length x width x height	412 x 178 x 157 cm
Wheelbase	261 cm
Kerb weight	1.145 kg
Trailer	620 kg
Trailer - braked	1.200 kg
Fuel capacity	45 l
Luggage space	377/1235 l
Tyre size	205/55R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	1461 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/2
Max power	90 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	220 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	13.1 secs
Top speed	171 km/h
Average mileage	3.7 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	4.2 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	3.4 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	95 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 17,895
Price base model	Â£ 14,495