



## Citroën C4 Picasso

### Especially for everyone

Car review | Space is the most important feature of any MPV (Multi Purpose Vehicle). Which such a practical family vehicle things like luxury or handling come second. Or they're even forgotten entirely. Citroën wants to change all that! The "C4 Picasso" promises to be as spacious and comfortable as its rivals, while at the same time adding good looks and a strong personality to the mix.

The eyes are the mirror of the soul. And when looking into the eyes of the new C4 Picasso, one knows this is a special car. The daytime running lights and regular headlights have been separated. This gives a unique look that sets the tone for the rest of the car.

Seen from the side, the C4 Picasso owes its looks to the line that jumps up from the mirrors to the windows. When the designers reached the rear of the car, apparently they were all out of inspiration. The new C4 Picasso looks decent from behind, but a lot less original than the rest of the car.



## Interior

Take a seat behind the wheel and it becomes definitively clear that this car is different. The front headrests enclose the back of the head so much that it almost feels like wearing a helmet. The windscreen extends all the way into the roof. This adds to a feeling of freedom and makes it easier to see traffic lights. When the sun is low, there's a shade that can be moved down to prevent being temporarily blinded.

The co-driver awaits a real treat: the passenger seat has an extra support for the lower legs, just like with an armchair. Depending on the trim level, the seat can be fitted with a massage function. Don't expect too much of this: it is in fact just an inflatable lower back support that is repeatedly filled with air which is intermittently then released again.



The layout of the cabin is original. Most buttons are located on the steering wheel, while the dashboard is dominated by two huge displays. The upper display is mounted centrally just beneath the windscreen and shows information that is relevant to the driver. The speedometer and fuel gauge are always visible; the driver can decide what other information is shown alongside.

The lower display is a touch screen and is used to operate the radio, sat nav and the interface to the driver's smartphone. The menus and dialogues look great, but user-friendliness leaves much to be desired. The promised "apps" (traffic info, news, stock values,

tourist information) are so slow that they are hardly usable at all. According to Citroën it was the quality of the local 3G network while test driving that was to blame, not the car.



Underneath the centre console there's a huge storage space with several connections (AUX, two USBs, 12 volts and 220 volts) for a phone or MP3 player. The sound quality of the audio system is poor. The high grade JBL system isn't a big improvement: it is too "in your face" and easily distorts at high volumes.

The C4 Picasso can be fitted with "active cruise control". This differs from "adaptive cruise control", as offered by other brands. The "adaptive" version will maintain a set distance from the car in front by both braking and accelerating. Citroën's solution is much simpler: when the set speed cannot be maintained because the car in front slows down, the C4 Picasso switches the cruise control off (by which the speed automatically decreases).



## Space

Despite its good looks, the C4 Picasso offers plenty of space. Thanks to the space-saving electric parking brake, there's a lot of room around the front seats. Headroom and legroom both in the front and back of the vehicle are fine.



Instead of a rear bench, the C4 has three separate rear seats which can be adjusted individually. The rear passengers have their own air vents and airplane style fold-up tables. The driver can keep an eye on the passengers thanks to a second mirror, which can be focussed on the rear seats.

The boot measures 437 litres and that's a fair space for a car of this size. The boot lid is big and wide, making loading and unloading easier. The rear seats

can be folded up in one move (disassembling, taking out or even removing headrests isn't necessary), thereby expanding the luggage space to 1,709 litres. Again a good space, but not class leading.

## Petrol

For this review two versions were driven: the "115 e-HDi" and the "155 THP". The different engines don't just result in different performance, handling differs as well. That's because Citroën didn't bother to alter the suspension to match the weight and performance of the various engines. What both engines have in common is a smooth and quiet run.



With the 1.6 litre THP (Turbo High Pressure) petrol engine, the C4 Picasso feels big and heavy. The engine delivers plenty of power, even at low revs. Although there's nothing wrong with this petrol engine, it isn't half as exciting as the rest of the car.

With the petrol engine under the bonnet, steering is very light. The driver hardly feels what's going on and therefore has little faith in the car. On wet surfaces the C4 Picasso easily understeers and, because of the lack of feedback, the driver never feels it coming. The only solution is to go slow all the time.



## Diesel

With the heavier diesel engine pushing down on the front wheels, the C4 Picasso turns into a wonderful vehicle that seems to be in perfect balance. This time steering is nice and heavy, so the driver always knows exactly what's going on with the mechanics. In fast corners this big MPV handles like a small hatchback!

However, when going for the extremes the C4 Picasso diesel also fails. One sudden move (for example, to avoid a crossing pedestrian) or a crack in the tarmac can disrupt the balance of the car.

On the other hand, the C4 Picasso shines on the open road. It isn't an exaggeration to say that the C4 Picasso is the most comfortable car in its class on long distances. As if carried on air, the car whips away in a perfectly straight line.



## Conclusion

Citroën shows guts with the new C4 Picasso; kudos for that! By being different the C4 Picasso automatically outperforms its rivals in several ways. On other points the C4 Picasso really disappoints or will only be appreciated by a small audience.

The biggest let down is the handling of the petrol powered version. It has very light steering and in critical situations handling is poor. The various electronic gadgets are hard to use and/or don't behave as expected. Compared to other brands, Citroën uses old-fashioned engine mechanics, resulting in both average performance and fuel economy.

When fitted with a diesel engine, the C4 Picasso is a wonderful and well handling car which is a joy to drive. Its daring looks and smart features make it really differ from its competitors. Those who never wanted an MPV because of its dull image, may very well love this exclusive Citroën. ■



# Specifications

## Citroën C4 Picasso e-HDi 115 Exclusive

### Size and weight



Length x width x height	443 x 183 x 161 cm
Wheelbase	279 cm
Kerb weight	1.373 kg
Trailer	685 kg
Trailer - braked	1.600 kg
Fuel capacity	57 l
Luggage space	537/1709 l
Tyre size	205/60R16

### Engine and performance



Capacity	1560 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/2
Max power	112 PS @ 3600 rpm
Max torque	270 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	11.8 secs
Top speed	189 km/h
Average mileage	4 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	4.5 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	3.8 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	105 gr / km

### Price

Price	Â£ 21,555
Price base model	Â£ 17,500