



Hyundai Tucson (2004 - 2010)

Cheap in wolf's clothing?

Review | Ask your average SUV driver why he's driving a "Sports Utility Vehicle" and the predictable answer is: looks. Now matter how spacious, no matter the enormous amount of torque, the answer is: looks. Its high price and ditto fuel consumption are simply taken for granted. For these reasons Hyundai now offers an alternative: the Tucson. This relatively small SUV matches the looks of an off-roader, without the complexity of a real off-reader. Why pay for something you're not going to use anyhow?

Though dressed like a wolf, the Hyundai Tucson is really a very well thought through response to the demand for tough looks without the associated price tag. Comparing the Tucson to a sheep would be unfair. But cheap it certainly is!

Problem solver

An all-terrain vehicle often is a solution for a non-existing problem. The problem should be muddy terrain, steep slopes and deep waters. Our roads, however, are all but muddy and steep, and rarely flooded. To use your high-priced solution you need to look for forest roads, construction sites or specially designed off-road playgrounds. These are probably the only places your expensive 4WD is used to its full potential. The other 99.9% of the time you'll just be making (good) friends at your local gas station and garage.

The no-frills edition of the Tucson has to do without any the 4WD gadgetry. The exterior, however, tells you the driver is ready to take on the world. The Tucson only just fits in a regular parking spot and sticks out above most other vehicles. At the same time you don't

need a ladder to climb into your Tucson; our test driver can almost walk straight in. Once inside, it shows once again how the Tucson is the perfect in-between vehicle. It's unmistakably large, but not as intimidating as some of today's true all-terrain vehicles.



size, headroom is excellent. Luggage capacity is impressive, though not as astonishingly huge as that of comparable SUV's. The rear door opening up in two parts is a nice extra.

Handling

Our test vehicle was equipped with a basic 2-litre gasoline engine. Other options Hyundai offers on the Tucson are a 2.7-litre V6 gasoline engine and a 2-litre diesel. And just as the engines, the Tucson also handles like a regular vehicle. The power curve doesn't match the power curve of an all-terrain vehicle. Instead it is tuned for the motorway and trips to the supermarket.

The "small" SUV standing tall at 173 cm (5'8") and weighing in at 1,437 kg (3,161 lbs) is just what the 141 bhp 4-cylinder engine can take. The Tucson is never first at the traffic lights, but won't fall behind either. When overtaking at narrower roads you may want to keep your distance and change down.

Interior

The interior design strengthens the in-between character. It looks rather basic, yet very elegant, even though the colours and materials are a bit on the conservative side. The oval gauges behind the steering wheel give a frivolous look. The centre console is done nicely in dark shiny materials, containing the most important controls. The lack of a 4WD lever again shows that this is not really an all-terrain vehicle. You can have 4WD on your Tucson, but this is all electronically controlled so even then you won't find that 4WD lever. The version of Hyundai's least expensive SUV we drove was logically the least expensive version only having front-wheel drive.

Both the finish and trim are similar to that of a regular vehicle. Air-conditioning, cruise-control, remote central door locking, on-board computer, and electric front and rear windows come as standard. Hyundai leaves the choice of audio to the consumer. Just considering the standard trim level the Hyundai should already be a hit at £ 15,000. The huge bonus of the Tucson is in the looks and the interior space of an all-terrain vehicle. In the back there is enough room even for two full-sized adults. As can be expected for a vehicle this



About changing gear: this is one of the few true minuses of the Tucson. Especially when changing up from second to third gear there is a serious risk of accidentally changing to first or fifth gear. When calmly changing gear there are no problems, but even then the feeling of uncertainty remains. Despite our calm driving style we found it hard to match the factory supplied fuel consumption of 35 mpg. The lack of 4WD should make for a better fuel economy, but for day-to-day use even 28 mpg proved to be a challenge.

The all-terrain vehicle's elevated driving position enables the driver to look farther ahead in traffic, making the ride less tiresome. The elevated driving position, however, also comes with an elevated centre of gravity. More often than not this makes a vehicle less stable and less safe. True all-terrain vehicles may make this up with 4WD... which our test vehicle didn't have.

Despite this, our front-wheel drive Tucson handled extremely well and this Hyundai SUV quickly wins the driver's confidence. There is no need to adapt your driving style to the limitations of the Tucson, as the Tucson handles just like a regular large saloon. Even under extreme circumstances the Tucson handles predictably and remains easy to control. This makes that the Tucson really only gives you the looks and space of an all-terrain vehicle. This may seem like hot air, but for many this may be just what they are looking for: all the benefits of an all-terrain vehicle, but without the price tag.

Until now those who only wanted the looks of an all-terrain vehicle, but didn't want to pay for the related complexity they would never use had to resort to much smaller all-terrain vehicles. The Tucson can give you all the looks and space with a reasonable price tag. It is definitely not a case of "all looks, no brains", but more of modesty and giving the customer just what he want: "Cheap" in wolf's clothing. ■



Conclusion

The Hyundai Tucson comes with 4WD and everything that makes a vehicle suitable for rough terrain, mountains or a sizeable trailer (up to 3,500 lbs). We think, however, that the no-frills edition we drove truly fills a gap in the market with its comfort and handling comparable to a regular saloon. The only drawbacks are a less than perfect gearbox and a poor fuel economy.



Specifications

Hyundai Tucson (2004 - 2010) 2.0i CVVT GSI 2wd

Size and weight



Length x width x height	433 x 183 x 173 cm
Wheelbase	263 cm
Kerb weight	1.437 kg
Trailer	500 kg
Trailer - braked	1.400 kg
Fuel capacity	58 l
Luggage space	644/1856 l
Tyre size	

Engine and performance



Capacity	1975 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	141 PS @ 6000 rpm
Max torque	184 Nm @ 4500 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.4 secs
Top speed	180 km/h
Average mileage	8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	10.4 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	6.6 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	190 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 14,820
Price base model	Â£ 14,820