



## Mini MINI (2006 - 2014)

### Capital MINI

Car review | BMW showed real guts when it bought Mini and gave new life to an old legend. The engineers succeeded, because the New MINI was instantly loved by the fans of the olden days and adored by the new fashionable clients of today. Now the car maker takes another daring step by completely renewing the car. Has the legendary fun machine kept its character? There's only one way to find out: drive it!

The main attraction of the Mini from the '70s and the New MINI (mind the difference in spelling) is the unique combination of driving pleasure and good looks. A Mini is extravagant, trendy and at the same time modest and above all classes. The driving characteristics are vivid, challenging and playful, yet the car is also comfortable enough for daily use.

Not many car makers would even dare to combine these contradicting qualities, but Mini succeeded like no other. The new model is just as much fun as the previous generation. However, internally the MINI has been completely renewed. The new car is six centimeters longer than the predecessor. That extra space is not used for a roomier interior or a longer wheel base, but was needed to allow the new engine to be fitted.



## Turbo!

At this moment the new generation MINI is only available as "Cooper S", the fastest version. That was previously powered by a 1.6 litre four cylinder engine with a compressor (163 hp). The new power unit has the same displacement, but is assisted by a turbo and puts out 175 hp. The difference is evident, because the newcomer has a bigger bite. Moreover the MINI has one big advantage over other fast cars: the MINI isn't just a fast car, it also feels like a fast car and that is just as important.

Thanks to the "twin scroll" technique the engine does not suffer from any turbo lag. Regardless of the engine speed there's always plenty of torque. That makes the MINI capable of furious accelerations, but also of cruising along quietly. The new MINI is noticeably more silent than the previous generation. A sporty sound is missing and that's a pity for such a sporty car.



## Too light

The engine feeds the power to a six speed gearbox that shifts too lightly. The resistance that avoids

accidentally selecting reverse instead of first gear is not enough, causing risky situations. Also, when driving fast and shifting quickly it is difficult to change from third to second gear.

The power brakes are also too prominent, making it hard to control the car. When breaking for a corner at high speed, the wheels are more likely to block than to just slow down. Of course the ABS will correct the situation and avoid unsafe situations, but an exciting car like this should give more feedback.

The same thing goes for the steering, although the feeling is still there. Just as it should be the steering is direct and little turning of the steering wheel is required to make a sharp turn. Staying true to the tradition the wheels have been placed at the far corners of the car. This, together with the new suspension, makes for sublime road handling.



When putting the car to the limits, the road holding is predictable and neutral. The engine power of the Cooper S is more than enough to force power slides which, thanks to the communicative suspension, are easy to correct or maintain.

Compared to the previous generation MINI the new version is more comfortable. Usually this affects driving pleasure, but the new MINI is fun and almost addictive to drive.

## Inside

Not only the ride quality makes the MINI a pleasurable

car, the interior is just as festive. It is still based on the Mini from the early 70s, but is adapted to today's standards. The interior feels solid, like a BMW product should. However, the test car suffered from water in the side lights and the new headlight construction is fragile and prone to rust. The windscreen is still very much upright. This gives the car its distinguishable look, but also makes the glass sensitive to damage.

The modern MINI offers plenty of space so that even "maxi" drivers fit comfortably. The bucket seats are pleasantly firm and support the body very well. The space on the back seat is small and only usable for either short drives or short people.



Compared to the previous MINI the dash is less unlogical, but clearly the ancient Mini is still the base. The speedometer is in the center of the dash and is bigger than a dinner plate. The thing is vast and now also houses the fuel gauge and a display for the radio and the trip computer.

As a tribute to old times all knobs are toggle switches. These switches can now even be found above the wind screen to control the interior light and the colour of the interior light. That serves no higher purpose, but it is fun. And that's typical for the new MINI: this isn't the best car or the most sensible car, but it's the most fun car.



## Conclusion

Mini has done a remarkable job updating the MINI. It is a good thing that the looks hardly changed at all. But thanks to many changes under the bonnet the car feels more comfortable and more mature, without losing the playful character. The lighter steering, braking and shifting may not be experienced as an improvement by everyone. The road handling and engine are without a doubt better than before.

Is this the time to trade in the current MINI for the new? Those who drive a lot will certainly appreciate the extra luxury and the smoother ride. Those who don't have a MINI have more reason to make a test drive. The new MINI is more than ever a realistic alternative for an every day car, while the price is the same. ■



# Specifications

## Mini MINI (2006 - 2014) Cooper S

### Size and weight

Length x width x height	371 x 168 x 141 cm
Wheelbase	247 cm
Kerb weight	1.130 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	50 l
Luggage space	160/680 l
Tyre size	195/55R16

### Engine and performance



Capacity	1598 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	175 PS @ 5500 rpm
Max torque	240 Nm @ 1600 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	7.1 secs
Top speed	225 km/h
Average mileage	6.9 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	8.9 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.7 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	164 gr / km

### Price

Price	Â£ 15,995
Price base model	Â£ 15,995