



Audi A6 Allroad (2006 - 2011)

Where there is a will, there is an AllRoad

Car review | At the end of last year, Audi proudly presented the new A6 AllRoad. This large estate has Quattro four-wheel drive, a raised chassis and a robust off-road finish. But wait a second; isn't there already an A6 Avant Quattro as well as the basic model Audi Q7 which are both cheaper than the A6 AllRoad. Where is Audi going with this new niche car?

Audi are extremely good on the design front; but they have said that the A6 AllRoad is an isolated design. Yet, the similarities with the normal A6 Avant are so obvious. Both cars share the same dimensions, although the AllRoad is several centimetres higher creating that little extra ground clearance. Emphasising the rugged character are the protection guards which extend just beyond the bumpers and impact strips all around the car. Apart from that the AllRoad differentiates itself further with its grill of vertical strips. In Dakar beige, the A6 AllRoad is a particularly handsome apparition.

Nearly gone

However it is not only the basic shape, but also the engine and the technical specifications of the A6 AllRoad which are similar to those of the A6 Avant. Both are available with four-wheel drive, even though the AllRoad already has the Quattro system as standard. Thus the AllRoad should really be able to go places that A6 wouldn't be able to reach. The purpose

of this test drive is to take on a very large sandpit, where the AllRoad will be able to show us all of its tricks. In any case, the test drive will be covering "all roads".



Audi's MMI (Multi Media Interface) system brings together audio, communication, climate control and navigation in just one monitor and one control unit. This system works just as it should, however its user-friendliness leaves much to be desired. The connection of the mobile telephone to the car via

Bluetooth eventually worked without any problem however configuring it is not that easy. The optional navigational system knows every address in Europe without any problem; however inputting the destination details is laborious. The interior is divided into four climate zones, but again establishing the temperature could be easier.

At last the sat-nav has figured out the route; the mobile is connected to the car; the radio is on your favourite station; and the climate is just as it should be. We can get moving!



Back roads

The first type of road where the AllRoad can prove what it's made of is a back road. The "Adaptive Air Suspension" is set to "comfort". Even in this mode, the worst road surface should feel like a perfectly stretched billiard cloth. However, even though the AllRoad has a strong suspension, the bumps in the road surface are very apparent. Seemingly the Audi is a sports car even in comfort mode. The steering is exceptionally light, which doesn't help the communication between the car and driver.

The A6 AllRoad is meant as an alternative to an SUV; in the city the first advantage does become apparent. In spite of measuring nearly five metres, the AllRoad is rather manageable in the city. This is a roomy, four-wheel drive car, but not an impractically large car. Moreover, the A6 doesn't provoke the same sort of angry looks from bystanders, as is the case with most

SUVs.



The space in front is abundant; on the rear seat, it's average. The luggage space is enormous (to a maximum of 1,660 litres). The weekly shopping would fit in without any problems. You could also get your mountain bike in the back or in fact any other sports equipment. The luggage space is fitted with a movable partition whereby delicate objects can be kept safe from the roll of heavier pieces. Good as it looks; the optional privacy glass in the rear windows does make reverse parking difficult.



Motorway

The test car has a six cylinder 3-litre turbo diesel engine, which is supreme on the motorway (233 hp / 450 Nm). From outside, this 3.0 TDi sounds like a strange engine, somewhere between a petrol engine and an electrical generator. This is nothing like a diesel engine. Inside, this mighty diesel sounds powerful and imposing.

As would be expected of such a car, the A6 AllRoad is considerably faster than all the other traffic on the road. This automatically gives the driver a feeling of superiority. 120 km/hr is strolling speed; mid-accelerations from anywhere above the 120 km/hr are completed with the greatest of easy and supremacy. A traffic light sprint requires a little bit more effort, as the engine in spite of its considerable power is still very dependent on the turbo. From standstill, it first seems as if very little is happening; then as the turbo starts to kick in, the 3.0 TDi is terribly quick in getting away from the lights.

Above 120 km/hr, the pneumatic suspension lowers the chassis several centimetres closer to the tarmac allowing for better road holding and lower fuel consumption. Once again the AllRoad wins hands down over SUVs, because with its low centre of gravity, the road handling is exceptional. With its considerable dimensions, the A6 AllRoad feels like it's glued to the road. To unbalance it you'd have to try some very silly stunts.

The AllRoad is a wonderful road maniac which knows

how to cover enormous distance at a high cruising speed. Given the considerable price, it is only the noise level which could be deemed a dampener. The AllRoad is not completely silent, which is usually the case in a car of this class.

Offroad

Arriving at the edge of a forest, the suspension adjusts itself to the new terrain. Apart from the "AllRoad" mode, there is also a "Lift" mode for serious off-roading. The maximal speed is restricted to 25 km/hr, but the ground clearance reaches 18.5 cm which is comparable with a real off-road vehicle. Due to the considerable protrusions both to the front and rear, the AllRoad scraps the ground very quickly when passing through dips.

Moreover, the character of the engine doesn't lend itself well to off-road driving. Power is released too suddenly, whereby there is a serious chance that the Audi might spontaneously dig in. The standard issue tyres quickly fill with sand. Even the special off-road mode of the electronic stability system and the electronic differential lock do little in these circumstances.

This car thus requires its own off-road driving style: gain speed, maintain speed and most importantly don't stop. On this point, the AllRoad can't beat an SUV. As a tow car or as a super quick winter sports machine, the AllRoad is in its element.



Conclusion

The name says it all: the Audi "AllRoad" should feel at home on every conceivable road. In spite of its robust appearance, the AllRoad feels least comfortable in off-road conditions. The character of the engine, the tyres and the front and rear protrusions ensure that the standard A6 AllRoad doesn't get any further than a little light off-roading. Justifiably snow, ice or even a heavy trailer pose not a single problem.

The AllRoad isn't capable of passing any comparison test with a luxury car. Even though the A6 AllRoad is on all counts a fantastic driving car, the price is terrifyingly high. A car in this price class has to be imposing and pleasurable for every second of every trip; this is not always the case with the A6 AllRoad.

For considerably less money than Audi is asking for the A6 AllRoad, there are various other cars available which offer similar qualities. Yet, they are neither as beautifully designed as the A6 AllRoad nor do they have an Audi logo prominently displayed on the bonnet; for it's its logo which has an almost magical attraction. Customers are prepared to do anything to drive an Audi; where there is a will, there is now also the AllRoad. ■



Specifications

Audi A6 Allroad (2006 - 2011) 3.0 TDI Quattro

Size and weight

Length x width x height	493 x 186 x 152 cm
Wheelbase	283 cm
Kerb weight	1.865 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	1.900 kg
Fuel capacity	80 l
Luggage space	565/1660 l
Tyre size	225/55R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	2967 cc
Cylinders / valves	6/4
Max power	233 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	450 Nm @ 1400 rpm
Drive	four wheel drive
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	7.5 secs
Top speed	231 km/h
Average mileage	8.4 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	INF l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	INF l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	221 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 35,440
Price base model	Â£ 34,020