



Volkswagen Tiguan (2007 - 2016)

No risk adventure

Car review | Volkswagen distinguishes itself from other brands with its sense of trust and familiarity. For years and years, the Golf has been unprecedentedly popular with the general public; and the Passat the defacto choice for the business man. Now there is a Volkswagen for the adventurer: the Tiguan combines all the known qualities of a Volkswagen in a luxury off-road vehicle.

"It's a small Touareg", says one. "A large Golf", says the other. In either case, the Tiguan is instantly recognizable as a Volkswagen. Moreover the car doesn't provoke any of the usual negative reactions that come with an SUV, only positive ones.

The Tiguan does radiate a certain modesty. The car is neither too small, neither too large. The Tiguan is 23 cm longer and 5 cm wider than a Golf which means that this SUV is just as manageable as your average private car.

It's appearance is dependent on the model chosen. The test-driven "Escape" is the toughest version with a high bonnet and a very visible under-body protection. Other versions are geared less to the adventurous life and are targeted more towards the city life. The "Sport" has for example a more streamlined front with a sporty front spoiler.



Equipment

All the Tiguans offer more space than the exterior measurements would lead you to believe. As is the case with SUVs, the Tiguan is high and offers great visibility over the rest of the traffic. What is missing behind the wheel of this civilised VW, is that all mighty feeling that other SUV's provide.

Even with the large (optional) panoramic roof the Tiguan has more than enough head space. Also the space in the back is better than in similar SUV's. This is partly due to the back seat being on rails. It is thus possible to choose between either more leg space in the back or more luggage space. Even with the back seat in its furthest position, the luggage space is very large (470 litres).

The equipment highlights the Tiguan's position as the first of a new generation Volkswagen. Some of the knobs and paddles are recognizable from other Volkswagens (there is that sense of familiarity again!), but the Tiguan introduces several new elements.



The most important of which is the combined audio, mobile and navigation system (”RNS 510”). It brings together all the contemporary technology (Bluetooth, MP3, audio from SD-cards, an internal hard drive, etc.), has pleasingly clear graphics and is easy to use. This system can be upgraded to use with a reversing camera thus making parking very easy (a must have!). Adaptive headlights and an electric parking brake are all part of the equipment.

Many of these options were until recently not available in this segment, making the Tiguan a real innovator! Unfortunately the price of all these extras is very substantial; the on road price of the test car is equal to that of a BMW X3!

Engine

One objection against SUVs is their considerable consumption and thereby the resulting impact on the environment. Volkswagen has taken such criticisms to heart and has consequently delivered the Tiguan with two types of modern, intelligent engines.

The price list is topped by the ”1.4 TSI”. This relatively small engine is assisted by a turbo and a compressor, which results in a considerable capacity but a modest consumption.

For this test drive, the 2.0 TDI was chosen. This is a diesel engine from the newest generation. After a cold start, the engine immediately runs nicely offering the Tiguan an abundance of torque. Over the entire range of revolutions, there is enough power. The performance is very good with consumption remain pleasantly low. With a relaxed driving style, the promised consumption of 7.2 litres per 100 km is easily achievable. The test ride, which consisted of many motorway miles and of course the necessary off-road driving, ended up at a neat and tidy 6.8 litre per 100 km.



Volkswagen's famous DSG gear box isn't terribly suitable for off-roading (it can't predict the driver's behaviour). For this reason, the Tiguan is optionally provided with a traditional automatic six gear. This does the job perfectly.



Open road

The problem with designing an SUV is finding the correct ratio between its qualities on the open road and off road. A pure off-road vehicle performs moderately on tarmac, and vice versa. The Tiguan is meant as an everyday car which is used a couple of times per year off-road.

The chassis is consequently very firm (in other words: hard), resulting in little inclining and a good communication with the driver. After a sudden swerve, the car highlights that good old trusted Volkswagen feeling.

In spite of the good road handling, Volkswagen has not tried to turn the Tiguan into a sports car. The Tiguan commands instantaneously a relaxed driving style and is ideal for driving long distances. The Tiguan is very quiet, but over 100 km/hr the sounds of the engine and wind do suddenly increase.

Familiar ground

In spite of the exemplary behaviour on the asphalt road, the capacities off the levelled road are not to be forgotten. Volkswagen isn't promising a pure off-road vehicle and all the associated technology (low gearing and lockable mid differentials) is consequently missing. As compensation, the Tiguan offers the necessary electronic requirements.

In the central console there is an "off-road" button which adapts the character of the car. Normally it is front wheel drive. The rear wheels only kick into action when required. Consequently, the mechanics are operated as little as possible resulting in a low consumption. In the "off-road" mode, all four wheels are driven permanently.

At the same time the response to the accelerator is less direct, which makes it easier to give the correct amount of throttle. To make it easier to go through valleys and steepes, the computer ensures that the car never rolls backwards unwittingly or descends too quickly. The automatic gearbox adapts the gear changing behaviour.

The Tiguan is be able to prove itself on a sandy beach and through muddy paths. With the hard chassis the Tiguan lurches more than other off-road vehicles, thus making off-roading very exhausting. The engine is sufficiently strong and the tires have sufficient grip for light to medium level off-roading. The most important restriction is the small ground clearance (20 cm). In spite of this restriction, the Tiguan gets surprisingly far off-road. In short: the Tiguan trustingly looks forward to every adventure!



Conclusion

As one of the last large brands, Volkswagen has now introduced a compact SUV. The Tiguan is a real Volkswagen with that familiar Volkswagen feeling and well-known immaculate Volkswagen finish. However the Tiguan offers a lot more than just trustworthiness, since Volkswagen has used the time to learn from its competitors' mistakes.

Many of the usual SUV problems the Tiguan has been able to overcome. Thanks to efficient engines, the Tiguan performs very well, while the consumption remains low. Thanks to the solid chassis the road handling is well above average. Pure off-road technology is lacking, but with electronic substitutes the Tiguan is capable of redeeming itself sufficiently in off-road situations.

Finally, the Tiguan introduces luxury that was previously unavailable in this segment. Rightly so Volkswagen has complete trust in the Tiguan becoming a success! ■



Specifications

Volkswagen Tiguan (2007 - 2016) 2.0 TDI 4Motion Escape autom

Size and weight



Length x width x height	443 x 181 x 169 cm
Wheelbase	260 cm
Kerb weight	1.604 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	2.200 kg
Fuel capacity	64 l
Luggage space	505/1510 l
Tyre size	215/65

Engine and performance



Capacity	1968 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	140 PS @ 4200 rpm
Max torque	320 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	four wheel drive
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.7 secs
Top speed	182 km/h
Average mileage	7.5 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	9.7 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	6.3 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	199 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 23,300
Price base model	Â£ 19,370