



Ford Ka

KAracter

Car review | For over 12 years the Ford Ka stood its ground. This tower of strength remained ever so popular thanks to its timeless design. Yet the technology did get out of date. Therefore, the time has come for a whole new Ford Ka which is more economical, faster, safer and more comprehensive. Will this new model be just as popular as its predecessor?

Indeed, the new Ford Ka has it all to be just as successful as the previous model. This already becomes evident upon getting into the car. All strong assets of its predecessor are preserved but improved wherever possible.

KinetiKA

This kicks off with the exterior. The new Ka has been designed according to Ford's "Kinetic" design. This house style of Ford comes ever so well to fruition in this small car. Harsh colours suit the Ka particularly well (the test car comes in "Dive" colour).



At no additional expense, the interior can be executed in refreshing, bright shades whereby the varnish colour is used to create contrasting effects. The materials used have a nice feel and are of such a high standard that by no means the Ka can be labelled a low-priced car.

Moreover, thanks to a cunning design this little one

also offers plenty of interior space. The space at the front is fine as is the case with most small cars. The front seats can be pushed far back, thus allowing even tall drivers to sit comfortably. Unfortunately the belts cannot be adjusted in height which might be a nuisance to some.



Naturally, the space at the front goes at the expense of the back-seat space. In order to create space anyhow, a 'chunk' has been taken out of the dashboard in front of the passenger. The dashboard locker is submerged, thus creating extra space at the front. Therefore, the right front seat can be pushed far forward whilst plenty of legroom still remains. This allows for extra space behind the front seat to fit an adult!

On top that, the Ka has been amply fitted with door compartments (which fit a 1 litre bottle), a centre console with racks and the necessary cup holders. An optional USB connection can be found at the bottom of the centre console with a compartment on top that exactly fits an iPod. However, it turns out that this USB connection works with all MP3 players apart from the iPod! Also inconvenient: the rear door can only be opened with a key, which in practice is pretty elaborate and annoying.



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The dynamic character which turned the previous Ka into a hit can also be found in the new arrival. Like no other small car the Ka can be delightfully navigated through the busy urban traffic. Not only is the Ka very responsive, but it even challenges one to navigate through traffic as skilful as possible and thus provides plenty of driving joy. For that reason the previous Ka stood its ground for so long.

From a technical point of view, the Ka is rooted in the Fiat 500, but Ford has adjusted the chassis on several aspects (tuning of the suspension, addition of a torion beam, different tyres). Therefore, the Ka has a more nimble feel than the Fiat.



Besides, its handling is (even) safer, because the Ka

responds very forgivingly to steering errors or a corner which has been steered into too enthusiastically. Ford has consciously opted for a superb road-holding which accounts for more than airbags and crumple zones.



Although Ford has definitely not economised on the latter aspect (a knee-airbag is not available though), it scores no more than average on this item.

Let's get rolling

The Ka is available with a petrol and a diesel engine, the same as used in the Fiat 500. Every Ka is equipped with a 5-gear gearbox which changes gears lightly and accurately.

Up to approx. 60 mph the petrol engine is pleasantly quiet. Its performances are creditable, but do not expect any rapid accelerations of a car with a price tag like this. Fortunately, moderate performance entails moderate consumption. A test drive through a mountainous area with lots of urban traffic came down to 6.4 litre per 100 kilometers which is extremely favourable considering the difficult track.



The new Ka can also be fitted with a diesel engine. This one is a bit more powerful than the petrol engine which transpires in slightly better performances, especially through the mountains. Nevertheless, the diesel engine is not particularly refined. This Ka does not generate a lot of power at each rpm as opposed to the large diesel engines of luxury corporate cars. The Ka diesel needs to be kept explicitly on a certain rpm.

Even with an up tempo driving style, the Ka diesel only used 4.8 litre in order to cover 100 kilometers. The 4.2 litre per 100 kilometers as promised by Ford is definitely attainable through a composed driving style combined with long distances. Handling of the diesel is somewhat less vivacious because the diesel engine weighs 80 kg more than the petrol engine.

Thanks to its silent engines this small car is also perfectly suitable for long distances. This is exactly what distinguishes the Ka from other small vehicles: the Ka is full of life and responsive just like a small car should be. At the same time this baby Ford offers the solid feel, the sophisticated technology and the refined design that comes with a larger car.



is the new tower of strength: preservation of KAracter. ■

Conclusion

Is the new Ford Ka a worthy successor of its predecessor? By all means! Its dynamic, responsive and challenging character remains in tact. Its performances are creditable and its consumption is delightfully low.

Thanks to a cunning design Ford is able to obtain maximum interior space out of minimal exterior dimensions. The car does have a few ergonomic mishaps like belts which are not adjustable in height and a rear door which can only be opened with a key. The promised iPod connection does not work.

The Ford Ka distinguishes itself from the competition by its refined character. The driving characteristics are those of a small car, but the solid feel and refinement (build quality, choice of materials, handling) are those of a large, luxury car. Therefore, the Ford Ka is totally ready for the days to come. This



Specifications

Ford Ka 1.2 Zetec

Size and weight



Length x width x height	362 x 166 x 151 cm
Wheelbase	230 cm
Kerb weight	940 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	35 l
Luggage space	224/747 l
Tyre size	175/65R14

Engine and performance



Capacity	1242 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/2
Max power	69 PS @ 5500 rpm
Max torque	102 Nm @ 3000 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	13.1 secs
Top speed	159 km/h
Average mileage	5.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	6.3 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.4 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	119 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 9,495
Price base model	Â£ 7,995