



Volkswagen Polo (2009 - 2017)

Young at heart

Review | Growing up means getting wiser and more responsible. But that also makes a person less spontaneous and energetic. The same goes for cars, especially compact cars become ever larger and more comfortable than their predecessors. Sadly in that process the dynamic qualities often get lost. The new Volkswagen Polo is much roomier, safer, more economical and more sensible than the previous generation. At the same time the new Volkswagen Polo is more spirited and dynamic than ever before. Find out how VW broke the rule.

Just like every other new car, the Polo has grown considerably compared to its predecessor. The car is longer (+5 cm), wider (+4 cm) and taller (+1 cm). Next to the extravagant designs of its main rivals, the Polo distinguishes itself with simple, clear lines. The sheer size and almost minimalistic design give the Polo a confident look.

The Polo notably differs from other compact cars thanks to its immaculate build quality. The panelgaps are smaller and the doors close with a solid bang as if this were an armoured car.



In the interior the high quality materials (especially on the higher trim levels) give the feeling that this vehicle will last till the end of time. It all gives the feeling that the new Polo is a compact and mature car, rather than a small and cheap runabout.

The cabin space is average for a car this size. Regrettably the front seats are a bit smaller than average, which affects the feeling of this being a compact yet mature car. The lower legs aren't fully supported by the seats and the headrests are barely tall enough to really add to the safety of the car. The space in the back is, like most cars this size, poor.



Roadholding

As stated in the introduction, more comfort in a car often means less driving pleasure. This isn't the case with the Polo. As it should be, the new Polo is noticeably more solid and stable than its predecessor. This makes the car more suitable for driving long distances; again making the car feel more mature.

But at the same time the Polo is a dynamic and even fun car! This is thanks to its low weight, because this fifth generation Polo weighs less than the fourth. The Polo therefore feels strong yet agile.

Roadholding is excellent, which doesn't just contribute to the driving fun but also to safety. If the driver does ever overestimate him/herself, ESP (Electronic Stability Programme) is standard on every Polo to save the day. On top of that the Polo brakes very well.

1.2 TSI

The most important news is the all new 1.2 litre engine with "TSI" (= Turbo Stratified Injection) technology. This makes an engine more powerful and more fuel

efficient at the same time. Volkswagen has already used this technology with great success on larger engines for several years now. The 1.2 litre Polo engine is the first small engine to benefit from TSI.

The result is even more noticeable than with the larger TSI engines. The 1.2 litre turbo engine is lively and seems to challenge the driver continuously. This small four-cylinder engine is very eager and accelerates so well that it takes a lot of self control not to put the full capacity of 102 bhp / 175 Nm to use at every opportunity.



At the same time the 1.2 TSI is very fuel efficient. When driving calmly and promptly following the advice of the shift-indicator, the 1.2 TSI uses exactly 6 litres of premium petrol per 100 km (VW promises 5,5 litres per 100 km). When seduced by this spirited engine (which is very likely) the car consumes an average of 7.5 litres per 100 km, which is still less than many other cars in this segment!

No matter what engine is under the bonnet, the Polo is a remarkably quiet car. For a car in this class the noises of the engine, tyres and wind are minimal. However, this does make other sounds more noticeable. Especially the six-speed gearbox makes audible noises, yet its five-speed gearbox cannot be heard.



Diesel

Combined with a diesel engine the Polo is a completely different car, especially compared to the 1.2 TSI. It turns the Polo into a somewhat boring company car. Because the diesel engine puts more weight on the front wheels, the Polo-diesel is less agile than the Polo 1.2 and doesn't seduce the driver at all.

For the first time Volkswagen uses state of the art "common rail" technology for its smallest diesel engines as well. The result is that even these perform very well and still use very little fuel. First the 1.6 litre four-cylinder diesel (75 bhp / 195 Nm) was driven. This entry level engine packs enough power to easily keep up with the flow of traffic, while enough extra power is available to quickly overtake. Even at low revs the engine has a lot of torque, making shifting gears almost optional.



On a very demanding route with mainly twisting

mountain roads (and the air conditioning working at peak power) the diesel used 4.5 litres of fuel per 100 km. Volkswagen promises the car will use 4.2 litres / 100 km on highway traffic.

BlueMotion

For those wanting to drive even more economically, the same engine can be combined with the "BlueMotion" package. Then the 1.6 TDI will be fitted with a system to regenerate energy (kinetic energy that would normally go to waste while braking will now be converted into electricity), a stop/start system (engine turns off when coming to a full stop and automatically starts when pressing the accelerator again) and tyres with lower rolling resistance.

The Polo BlueMotion performs just as well as the normal 1.6 litre diesel, but the eco-tyres make some extra noises. After driving exactly the same route under exactly the same conditions as the normal diesel, this BlueMotion used 3.9 litres per 100 km. Even when driving fast this eco-engine never uses more than 5 litres per 100 km.



performance. But even then Volkswagen breaks the rules, because thanks to "TSI" technology the Polo is still a very economical car. The 1.2 TSI is so strong and so efficient that this engine alone is enough reason to choose a Polo. In short: the Volkswagen Polo has matured, but is still young at heart. ■

Conclusion

Volkswagen breaks the rules. Next to its extravagant competitors Volkswagen introduces the simple yet elegantly designed new Polo. As it should be, the new Polo is roomier, safer and more comfortable than its predecessor. But against all rules the Polo is at the same time more dynamic.

However, this does depend on the engine. With a diesel engine the Polo is a compact but mature company car. Roadholding is still excellent, but this business-like Polo is more safe than fun to drive. On the plus side: it makes the driver automatically save fuel and that's a good thing with a company car.

Fitted with the 1.2 TSI engine the Polo is a highly pleasurable drive with agile handling and excellent



Specifications

Volkswagen Polo (2009 - 2017) 1.2 TSI SEL

Size and weight



Length x width x height	397 x 169 x 146 cm
Wheelbase	247 cm
Kerb weight	993 kg
Trailer	530 kg
Trailer - braked	800 kg
Fuel capacity	45 l
Luggage space	280/952 l
Tyre size	185/60R15

Engine and performance



Capacity	1198 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	105 PS @ 5000 rpm
Max torque	175 Nm @ 1500 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	9.7 secs
Top speed	190 km/h
Average mileage	5.5 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	INF l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	INF l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	129 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 13,935
Price base model	Â£ 10,035