



Ford Focus ECOnetic Eco-fun

Car review | Why does anyone buy a Ford Focus? Of course, the car looks good, offers ample space and has a fair price. But the Focus mainly differs from its rivals with its handling. Even though the current generation has been on the market since 2004, when it comes to roadholding the Focus is still top in its class. Now the Focus also comes as an extra clean, extra efficient "ECOnetic" version. That sounds like a promising combination.

There has been another Focus ECOnetic before. However, technological innovation never stops and Ford found a way to make a new and even more economic version.

The car maker also seems to have listened to criticism on the previous generation. Earlier ECOnetic cars felt more like an obligation than a chance. So far Ford has tried to change as little as possible to offer an eco-model.



ECOnetic

For this second generation of the Focus ECOnetic things are completely different. Of course, aerodynamics have again been improved by a closed grille and lowered suspension. And yet again the tyres have a lower rolling resistance and instead of light alloy wheels Ford chose hub caps which allow for

better airflow.

The engine management of the 1.6 litre four-cylinder diesel engine has been tuned to save fuel, rather than to improve performance. The first and second gear are equal to those of any other Focus, so the car comes quickly off the line. The higher gears now have longer ratios. In that way the car feels more pleasant at low revs and the driver will alter their driving style automatically. During this test it was hardly ever needed to do more than 2,000 revs per minute! The downside of these altered gear ratios is that accelerating when already at speed is noticeably slower.



Micro Hybrid

The big news of the second generation of the Focus EONetic is called "micro hybrid". This means that energy that would normally go to waste while braking or releasing the throttle, is now converted into electricity. This free electricity is stored to later power various electrical parts and thus relieve the engine.

The Focus EONetic has also been fitted with a start/stop-system. When the car comes to a stop and the gear lever is put into neutral position, the engine is turned off. As soon as the clutch is depressed, the engine starts automatically using the "free" power generated earlier. This takes up so little time (0.3 seconds) that it is never disturbing and doesn't require any special skills or actions from the driver. Ford installed a second battery, which prevents the radio

from stalling or the headlights from flashing while repeatedly starting and stopping the engine. The air conditioning is a mechanical part, so it will stop working when the engine does.



Fuel economy

Thanks to all these alterations the Focus EONetic is completely up to date and offers all eco-friendly technology the competition also offers in their green cars. The Focus goes one step beyond by actively encouraging the driver to save fuel.



That starts with a shift indicator that shows the most economical moment to engage the next gear. Regretably this indicator doesn't hint when it is time to shift down and that's a real miss, because sometimes it is more economical to drive in a lower gear.

The on-board computer shows the current and average fuel consumption, but also keeps score of the driving style! Three flowers in the display show how well the driver anticipates, shifts gears and maintains a constant speed. The more efficient the driver, the more petals grow on the flowers.

In real life this isn't belittling at all, but a nice incentive. Thanks to the encouragement of the computer, during this test a fuel average of 4.0 litres per 100 km (70 mpg) was realized.



Performance

Driving that economically does require a lot of self control, because just like any other Ford Focus this EcoNetic is a joy to drive. Even this eco-car feels right at home on the demanding roads in the south of France.

The 1.6 litre diesel engine develops 109 PS / 240 Nm and that is more than enough for fair performance. There's even a lot of reserve power to fully enjoy a twisty, mountain route! When giving in to the seduction of the roads, the fuel consumption can temporarily increase to 8 litres per 100 km (35 mpg). Even after a full day of enjoying the "Route de Coursegoules", the average trip computer displayed a modest 5.6 litre per 100 km (50 mpg).



The eco-tyres do not affect roadholding. Just like any other Focus this EcoNetic offers an excellent balance between comfort and handling. And that is what makes this Focus EcoNetic a special car. This green car isn't just friendly to the environment, it is also a joy to drive.

Conclusion

Until recently a Ford "EcoNetic" model felt more like an obligation than a chance to improve the world or save the environment. Ford changed as little as possible to make an existing car more fuel efficient and slapped an "EcoNetic" label on it without any real effort. But this second generation proves Ford can do much better. The electronics actively encourage the driver to save fuel. This is why this car isn't just frugal on paper, but also in real life.

Also, the technology is much more advanced than before, making the Focus significantly more efficient. All changes do not affect the Focus's performance or handling. This is why the Ford Focus EcoNetic doesn't merely offer fun to drive, but even eco-fun! ■



Specifications

Ford Focus EOnetic 1.6 TDCi EOnetic

Size and weight

Length x width x height	434 x 184 x 145 cm
Wheelbase	264 cm
Kerb weight	1.357 kg
Trailer	675 kg
Trailer - braked	1.300 kg
Fuel capacity	55 l
Luggage space	396/1258 l
Tyre size	195/65R15

Engine and performance



Capacity	1560 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	109 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	240 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.9 secs
Top speed	191 km/h
Average mileage	3.8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	4.5 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	3.4 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	99 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 19,995
Price base model	Â£ 11,510