



Nissan Juke

No joke

Review | "All cars look alike". If you think so, you really should take a look at the next generation of Nissans. The Murano is a mixture of an off-road vehicle and luxury car. The Quasqai is what happens when off-roader and hatchback meet. And now the most daring crossbreed is added to this range: the "Juke" is a cross between an off-roader and a sports coupé. Is the Nissan Juke more than a joke?

Why all those crosses between different kinds of cars? Because it combines the best of both worlds and it looks special. That is, if it is done right.

As to the looks, the designers of the Juke certainly did do their very best. The lines are extravagant and even go into extremes. For example, the wheel arches seem to bump almost through the bonnet, making the wheels seem even larger than they actually are. The door handles of the rear doors are hidden in the pillars, so the Juke has the appearance of a two-door coupé.

Details like the boomerang-shaped tail lights, the sharp headlights and the huge fog lights make the Juke a real head-turner. Whoever drives this car wants to stand out from the crowd and will succeed in doing so without a doubt.



Interior

When the designers started working on the interior, they still hadn't run out of inspiration. They also they didn't forget about the unique concept of the car. The Juke is meant to be the sportiest of the family of Nissan "crossovers". The seating position in the Juke is high up, so the driver has a good view over traffic. Yet the seats are deep and the metal of the doors reaches all the way to the shoulders: this gives the safe and cosy feeling of a sports coupé.



The head and legroom in the front is good. Because of the sloping roofline, the space on the back seat is poor. The boot is fair (extendable to 830 litres by folding the back seat). The Juke doesn't have a sliding back seat or any other space-saving trickery, all efforts went into making the cabin look good.

The "Nissan Dynamic Control System" (NDCS) deserves a special note. With just a few buttons, both the air conditioning and the character of the car (normal, sporty or comfortable) can be adjusted. Thanks to very bright projection from the rear of the buttons, the print on the buttons seems to change depending on the context. This works easily and logically, but unfortunately when the sun is shining the little display that comes with NDCS is hardly readable at all.



In eco mode information about the fuel consumption can be shown in a bar graph, or the driver can be rewarded for driving economically by being shown stars (more stars means better fuel economy). In sports mode a G-force gauge is shown which really makes the driver want to get the most out of the Juke!

Performance and fuel economy

What the "most" actually is, strongly depends on the chosen power train. The test car is fitted with the well-known 1.5 litre diesel engine, which can also be found in many other cars from Nissan and Renault. It has a not-so-sporty maximum power output of 110 PS / 240 Nm, yet the "Juke 1.5 dCI" is surprisingly quick. When put into numbers, the Juke sprints from 0 to 62 mpg in 11.2 seconds and will reach a top speed of 175 km/h (109 mph).

When it comes to excitement, the Juke is a lot more exhilarating than that. Sitting in such a special car with such a special cabin, the drive simply must be good. The gear lever is short and the clutch reacts unusually directly, making the car feel agile and willing.



In the city the Juke diesel performs very well. If you want to be off the line at the traffic lights first, you have to be careful not to end up with wheelspin alone. On the highway the Juke easily travels at high speeds. The noise levels are average, this certainly isn't a pushy sports car that is tiring on long distances.



After a test drive with mainly city traffic, the trip computer (which can only be operated by sticking an arm through the steering wheel!) showed an average fuel consumption of 7.2 litres of diesel per 100 km (63 mpg). A drive on highways and back roads, cost 5.3 litres of fuel per 100 km (factory figures: 5.1 litres per 100 km (89 mpg)). For now the Juke is not fitted with a start-stop system, shift indicator or other fuel-saving features; this car could be a lot more frugal.

Handling

The sports car isn't complete without dynamic handling. The Juke is based on the same platform as the roomy Nissan Note and the relaxed Cube. However, the Juke is wider and lower. On top of that the suspension has been altered significantly.



The steering is also more direct than that of the average car. Despite a more than average height (1.57 metres) the Juke hardly tilts over in the corner. In short, fast corners it is mainly the weight of the car that eventually triggers the electronic stability programme (ESP). The Juke grips very well in long, fast corners.

The difference between the comfortable and sporty mode mentioned earlier, is hardly noticeable. The suspension is a bit firmer than that of a regular car, but not half as firm as that of a real sports car. This means that the Juke is comfortable enough in the city and on bad surfaces.



Handy in city traffic: the headlights actually poke through the bonnet making them visible to the driver. This makes it easy to estimate the size of the car while manouvering.

The Juke can optionally be fitted with four-wheel drive. This is not meant to make the car suitable for off-road driving, but to improve handling. The so-called "Torque Vectoring System" can variably distribute the power from the engine over the left and right rear wheels and the front wheels. In this way only the wheels that can actually handle the power will receive it, thereby preventing skidding.



Conclusion

Is the new Nissan Juke a joke? Judging by the enormous amount of work that was put into the photography for this test, the answer should be obvious: Autozine thinks it is brilliant! However, taste is highly personal and while driving the Juke reactions from the public differed.

It should also be mentioned that Nissan merely concentrated on the visual design of the car. The Juke features no space-saving inventions, no safety-improving systems and no technology to improve fuel economy. On all these points the Juke scores no more than average.

With the Juke everything is about being different and thanks to its daring design the car certainly succeeds in being so. Thanks to the presentation (which also includes the feeling in the steering wheel and the response from the engine) everything seems more exciting than with a regular car. Yet the Juke is sensible as well: despite its above average height, handling is fine. The performance of the 1.5 litre diesel engine is good while fuel consumption is modest. The Nissan Juke is big fun, but certainly no joke! ■



Specifications

Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna

Size and weight



Length x width x height	414 x 177 x 157 cm
Wheelbase	253 cm
Kerb weight	1.285 kg
Trailer	640 kg
Trailer - braked	1.250 kg
Fuel capacity	46 l
Luggage space	550/830 l
Tyre size	215/55R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	1461 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/2
Max power	110 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	240 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	11.2 secs
Top speed	175 km/h
Average mileage	5.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	INF l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	INF l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	134 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 17,145
Price base model	Â£ 12,795