



Honda Civic (2011 - 2017)

Right on time

Car review | The previous generation of the Honda Civic was ahead of its time. Its innovative design and outspoken handling made the Civic loved by many, but actually bought by a very small audience. Honda would rather sell cars to a larger audience. Therefore, Honda now introduces the new, more mature Civic. Is the grown-up Civic still a joy to drive?

It is a tried and tested method: ask your customers for their opinion and use that to improve the product. Honda took things one step further and interviewed the people who did not choose the Civic.

This led to the conclusion that the previous Civic had too much character. The gutsy design was admired, but most people felt it was only right for trendsetters and fashion freaks rather than John Smith and Joe Public. For example, the glass panel between the headlights and the UFO-like dashboard were just too much for the average car buyer.



The new Civic still has plenty of personality left, but it doesn't shout about it. In other words: the unique character remains, but the car has matured. At the same time build quality has made a huge leap forward; the Civic feels more solid and durable than ever before.

Space

The dashboard is still shaped around the driver, just like the cockpit of an airplane. When starting the engine there's no circus of flashing lights and animating displays anymore. In this way the presentation is still special, but less overwhelming.



What's left is an unusual use of space. The fuel tank is placed under the front seats, meaning they cannot be adjusted in height quite as much as one would prefer. Despite the coupé-like layout, the driver isn't submerged in the many displays but instead looks down on them. Head and legroom in the front are fine, yet it does take some time to find an ideal driving position.

The space in the rear is downright poor. Still, the special location of the fuel tank has a good reason: the back seat cannot just be folded down, like in regular cars. The Civic seats can also be folded upwards ("Magic Seats") and then there's enough space to transport taller loads than any competitor! For example, a mountain bike snugly fits upright behind the front seats! The boot measures 477 litres and that's also a record value for a car like this.



Diesel

The Civic is available with two petrol engines and one diesel. These are basically the same engines as before, although they have been modernised. All power trains are more powerful and more frugal than before. Just as important: the aerodynamics of the bodywork have been improved, which lowers both noise levels and emissions. The diesel engine benefits most: it is 20% more fuel efficient than before.

The diesel engine doesn't produce a traditional noise, but rather emits a metal-like sound. At low revs the "Civic 2.2" is a calm and frugal car. An average fuel consumption of 5 litres per 100 km can be easily achieved. Shift down, rev the engine just a bit and this company car shoots off!

Petrol

The 1.8 litre petrol engine has the same characteristics. The gearbox ratios have been chosen so that engine speed is always low, making the Civic a quiet, comfortable car. Only when shifting down a notch, does the 1.8 litre four-cylinder come alive making the Civic perform very well. The optional automatic gearbox does its job, no more no less.



Only the 1.4 litre petrol engine is a disappointment. It merely sufficed in the previous Civic, but isn't strong enough to power the new generation. When climbing a hill, the driver has to change from sixth to fourth (!) gear just to keep a steady pace of 60 mph.



Eco

No matter what engine, every Civic is always fitted with an "eco" button. This makes the engine management switch to a more efficient programme, at the expense of performance. The climate control also uses less energy by less precisely maintaining the set temperature.

The driver is encouraged to save fuel in two ways. The backlight of the speedometer is green when driving economically and turns blue when speeding. When driving economically for a long time, a tree root is displayed on which branches and leaves start to grow. After "harvesting" a sufficient number of trees, a trophy is displayed. This isn't belittling at all. Instead it is an original way to promote saving fuel.



Although the 1.4 litre engine is quiet, it is restless. 120 km/h means 3,500 revolutions per minute and that is tiresome on long distances. This is why the driver feels like being punished continuously for buying the base model. In short: do save up for the Civic 1.8 if possible.

Poor performance also means "poor" thirst. Despite a more than sporty driving style and a highly demanding route, fuel consumption was still limited to 6.5 litres per 100 km (43 mpg).



Handling

Conservative car buyers didn't choose the Civic because of its daring looks. Existing buyers express they are likely to buy another Civic because of its sublime handling. Roadholding only improved for this next generation! Suspension is now even stronger than that of the most sporty Civic of the previous generation.

The new Civic feels a bit less playful and offers a bit more comfort on bad road surfaces. Yet it manages to reach even higher cornering-speeds with more ease. The feeling in the steering wheel has also been improved, positioning the Civic amongst the best drivers' cars in its class again.



Conclusion

The new generation of the Honda Civic is less extravagant than its predecessor. Despite that, all unique selling points are still there. The cockpit-like layout of the dashboard still gives the privileged feeling of driving a special car. Thanks to the clever layout of the cabin, room in the front and the boot is excellent. Do note that the space on the back seat was sacrificed to do so.

The 1.8 litre petrol engine and the 2.2 litre diesel both perform very well, while still being economic. The 1.4 litre engine offers poor performance and simply lacks the "oomph" to power a car like this.

Handling remains the strongest point of the Honda Civic. While the new model offers more comfort, roadholding is even better than before. Comfort has also been improved by means of the rich, modern electronics. In short: the Honda Civic is no longer ahead of its time, yet it is more in time than ever before. ■



Specifications

Honda Civic (2011 - 2017) 1.8 EX Plus

Size and weight



Length x width x height	430 x 177 x 147 cm
Wheelbase	260 cm
Kerb weight	1.241 kg
Trailer	500 kg
Trailer - braked	1.400 kg
Fuel capacity	50 l
Luggage space	477/1210 l
Tyre size	225/45R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	1798 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	142 PS @ 6500 rpm
Max torque	174 Nm @ 4300 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	9.7 secs
Top speed	215 km/h
Average mileage	6.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	7.6 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.2 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	145 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 24,395
Price base model	Â£ 16,470