



Mini Countryman (2010 - 2017)

The Countryman can

Review | The MINI Countryman is the first MINI over four metres in length. It is also the first MINI with four doors, four full size seats and a huge boot. On top of that the Countryman has a raised suspension and can be fitted with four-wheel drive. What is the purpose of this versatile MINI? And who would want one?

The vehicle hasn't even left the car park and it is already obvious: the Countryman is a real MINI. After only a few yards a big smirk appears on the face of the test driver.

The Countryman has very direct steering and gives the driver confidence. From the very first corner the pace is frantic and the car hugs the road like it wants to party as well. That is good news, because the Countryman has a raised suspension and therefore a higher centre of gravity. This could affect the handling, but luckily the Countryman handles like a true MINI.



Performance

The eager engine adds to that feeling. The test car is the fastest version of the Countryman and it shows! The "Cooper S" delivers 184 PS / 260 Nm. Particularly in "Sport"-mode, the throttle reacts very directly and seems to dare the driver to go faster all the time. When giving in to this seduction, one is not disappointed: the Cooper S can accelerate fiercely and is seriously quick. However, it is noticeable that the Countryman is bigger, taller and heavier than a traditional MINI. The real poise has gone, yet the Countryman is great fun to drive.

Every new MINI features a range of fuel-saving technologies named "MINI malism". During this test drive they didn't amount to saving very much, because it simply takes too much self-control to drive economically with a car like this. At the end of the day the trip computer showed an average fuel consumption of 31.8 mpg. According to MINI the car can do 42 mpg.



Four-wheel drive

When the tarmac ends, the fun still goes on with the Countryman thanks to optional four-wheel drive. "All4" proves to be useful on paved roads as well. The "Cooper S" is so strong that the front wheels can

barely handle the power, resulting in torque steer. Four-wheel drive prevents this.

With "All4" the Countryman can handle light terrain. Although the power can be distributed over the front and rear wheels variably depending on the situation, the ground clearance of just 149 mm isn't enough for serious off-roading. Also, the standard tyres are not suited to handle mud or sand. Therefore "All4" is best used for winter sports or other on-road adventure.



Space

The looks of the Countryman have been adopted to reflect its adventurous character. The front is completely new and now has a tough instead of a cheeky look. Skid plates all around add to this feeling. Although the Countryman is instantly recognisable as a MINI, it is awkward to see this city car now pose as a rough adventurer.



The biggest advantage of the Countryman is its extra space. A traditional MINI measures 371 cm, while the Countryman is 410 cm in length. The extra length mainly benefits the space in the rear; even adults now sit comfortably in the back. In fact the Countryman offers more space in the back than a VW Golf or Vauxhall Astra, while both of these cars are bigger.

The Countryman is available with either two or three seats in the back. The version with two back seats features a central rail that extends from the dashboard to the boot. Cup holders, storage boxes, an iPod dock and other space-saving items can be attached to this rail. Behind the back seat there's room for the luggage of four people (12.2 - 41.0 cu ft).



Cabin

In the front of the cabin, the Countryman looks and feels like every other MINI. Only those who drive a MINI daily, will notice that the seating position in the Countryman is slightly elevated. The dashboard is still an ergonomical puzzle. The buttons aren't in the most logical place, as they are still in the same place there were in the base model from the 1960s.



The test car is fitted with the optional satnav. Its display is placed inside the huge, central speedometer. The combined audio, communication and navigation system is controlled by a single joystick and reminds of BMWs "iDrive".

The Countryman is the first MINI that features iPhone integration. Thanks to a tailor-made "app" the iPhone acts as a bridge between car and Internet ("MINI Connected"). This can be used to show news and Twitter messages on the display of the car. Thanks to the iPhone connection, Internet radio is now available in the car and during the test drive this was enjoyed very much!

AutoZine



Conclusion

Many people want a MINI, but very few actually buy one. That is because, up to now, a MINI did not offer enough space for the entire family. Potential MINI customers therefore bought "crossovers" instead: spacious cars that still look special because they have the tough looks of off-roaders.

Now MINI introduces the Countryman, the MINI that can. The "Cooper S" driven here is seriously quick, has sublime handling, can conquer light terrain and finally offers room for four adults and their luggage. Despite all the changes, the Countryman offers the same driving fun as any other MINI. ■



Specifications

Mini Countryman (2010 - 2017) Cooper S All4

Size and weight



Length x width x height	410 x 179 x 156 cm
Wheelbase	260 cm
Kerb weight	1.380 kg
Trailer	500 kg
Trailer - braked	750 kg
Fuel capacity	47 l
Luggage space	350/1170 l
Tyre size	205/55R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	1598 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	184 PS @ 5500 rpm
Max torque	260 Nm @ 1700 rpm
Drive	four wheel drive
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	7.9 secs
Top speed	210 km/h
Average mileage	6.7 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	8.2 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.8 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	157 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 22,030
Price base model	Â£ 16,000