Autozine
ONLINE AUTO MAGAZINE

Publication date: 7 February 2008
www.autozine.co.uk

Suzuki Splash

Heavenly, Halcyonic, Handy

review | Suzuki has brilliant news. The brand is introducing a MPV which is also nice to drive. The new model is a space wonder, but yet still good to look at. Suzuki has named this fresh newcomer: Splash!

Yeah! White! White is the trendy colour at the moment which just suits the Splash. This newest from Suzuki's stable is handsomely designed. It looks so good that it is hardly recognizable as an MPV (Multi Purpose Vehicle). Even so, this is Suzuki's new space wonder.

Up front

The Splash has the daring lines, big wheel arches and handsome headlights of Suzuki's bestseller: the Swift. However the Splash is significantly higher, with a high seating (+54 mm) facilitating entry. The windshield has been placed extremely far forward, resulting in an enormous feeling of space in the Splash. With the high roof line, headroom is overwhelming.

The dashboard has the same round, playful shape as the rest of the car. The gear stick has been placed high on the dashboard to provide extra space between the two front seats.

The interior has all the necessary compartments, boxes, drawers and other practical equipment, but no more than average. The Splash is good on practical possibilities, but it's not innovative and a new car should be better than the establishment. This is partly compensated with such refreshing options as the "Splash" drop motif accents and dashboard panels painted in the same colour as the car.

In the rear

The legroom in the rear is reasonable; the headroom ample. Unfortunately, there is not much storage room around the back seat; the rear doors have no storage compartments. In no time at all, children's toys will be roaming wild around the car. The luggage space is average for a car of this size. Under the loading floor, there is an extra storage compartment, considerable in size, which offers extra storage space welcomingly.

The back seat is very easy to fold down (removing the headrests isn't necessary) and then the Splash is able to provide no less than 1,050 litres luggage space. Suzuki has stuck to all the rules of the game: the luggage space has no loading lip, a perfectly flat loading floor, is well finished and easily reachable thanks to the broad tailgate.

Performance

It is not only the outward appearance of the Splash which is based on the Suzuki Swift, the technical base of both cars is also similar. This is of course logical, since the Swift is one of the best cars in its range. The Swift is extremely sporty and very safe due to its excellent road handling.

The Splash is however geared more to comfort. That combination of a sporty undertone and comfortably chassis does take some getting used to initially. The Splash steers with a lot of sensation (in other words: not unfeelingly light) and reacts directly to every wheel movement remarkably. However since the Splash is lightly sprung and higher than an ordinary private car, this MPV does tend to incline quickly nevertheless. This is only notable during the first few kilometres; the longer the test-drive, the more faith you develop in the Splash. At the end of the day, the Splash has a safe and lively driving performance. With its sporty undertone, the Splash can offer more driving pleasure than many of its competitors.

On top of that the brakes deserve a special mention: the Splash is very precise in its application and if required can be brought to a stand still within a minimum distance. A safe feeling!

Engine

Suzuki has started with three engines which are especially developed new for the Splash. There is one diesel and two petrol engines. Since the petrol engines are already very economical, many kilometres would need to be driven every year to repay the high price of the diesel engine.

Consequently, the test-drive only consisted of driving the two petrol engines. Although the Splash is just as large as compact MPV's from other brands, Suzuki's engines are significantly smaller. Since the Splash is relatively light and has a low air resistance, the small engines are sufficient. Even so, the mature sensation of other adversaries is missing. The advantage of this choice by Suzuki is that the Splash is affordable both to purchase and to run.

The 1.2 litre engine was driven first and is expected to become the most popular engine. What is immediately noticeable is that the Splash is extremely quiet for a car in this class. The engine is barely audible and even wind and wheel noises are minimal. Also even from outside the car, it is noticeable that the Splash drives over the tarmac with little or no noise.

Even so the engine character is contradictory to its comfort character. When it is driven calmly, the engine has barely any reserve. Tapping the gas a little harder has little impact resulting in the Splash feeling sluggish. To accelerate seriously the accelerator must be firmly depressed; temporarily suspending any comfort. In the city, on the motorway and even in the mountains, the 88 bhp 1.2 litre engine is just sufficient enough so long as the revs are kept high.

Eco-friendly

As an alternative there is the extremely efficient 1.0 litre engine. This has three rather than the more usual four cylinders. A three cylinder engine runs as less smoothly, but is by nature extremely economical. Since the Splash is so quiet, there is little noticeable in the expected rough running. The onboard computer shows at the same time an extremely (eco) friendly consumption.

In the city and on byroads, the Splash 1.0 performs nearly as well as the 1.2. It is solely on the motorway that it is noticeable that it's a basic engine. Here the Splash 1.0 has to work even harder than 1.2 to filter in smoothly. Also in the mountains it's necessary to shift down regularly to maintain the tempo.

Consequently the following advice: if the Splash is to be used as a city car, the 1.0 engine is the most economical choice. The Splash 1.0 is quiet, smooth and very efficient. For many motorway kilometres or distant holidays, the better choice is the 1.2. Moreover it's only the Splash 1.2 that can carry a bicycle rack. The Splash 1.2 is more refined on all fronts and attains good performances more easily.

Conclusion

The final verdict is clear: the Suzuki Splash knows how to set itself apart from the competition. With regard to space and practical possibilities, the Splash just belongs to the mid-section. However the Splash looks uniquely fresh and certainly does not have the air of a boring family van.

Moreover the Splash drives just as well as it looks. Due to the shared genes of the Suzuki Swift, the Splash has a sporty undertone, but this family car is geared more to comfort. For a car of this class the Splash is very quiet. The petrol engines achieve credible performances with efficient fuel consumption. ■

Specifications
Suzuki Splash

Size and weight

Length x width x height	372 x 168 x 159 cm
Wheelbase	236 cm
Kerb weight	965 kg
Trailer	200 kg
Trailer - braked	200 kg
Fuel capacity	45 l
Luggage space	178/1050 l
Tyre size	185/60R15

Engine and performance

Capacity	1242 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
power	86 PS @ 5500 rpm
Max torque	114 Nm @ 4400 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	12.3 secs
Top speed	175 km/h
Average mileage	5.5 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	6.9 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.7 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	131 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 9,499
Price base model	Â£ 8,999