



Kia Sportage

Tim Saunders discovers some real family friendly features in Kia's crossover

There are three features in the Kia Sportage that help to make it quite a user-friendly family vehicle.

If a car seat is needed in the front passenger seat, on the left hand side of the dashboard there is a slot to switch the airbag off by inserting the car key. It is surprising how few cars actually include this option, making it dangerous to place a child seat on the front passenger seat. So top marks for Kia.

Secondly, the rear seat backs can be adjusted to a selection of positions, which is quite a rarity as usually rear seats are fixed in position. By simply pulling the lever up beside the seat the seat back moves forward. Keep pulling it up and the seat back goes all the way down allowing easy access to the boot.

Thirdly, as my son Henry (aged three) discovers, the dark cabin becomes so much lighter when the cover on the panoramic glass roof retracts. Incorporated within this is a sizeable sunroof, ideal for those hot summer days.

However, for me the driving position in the Sportage is uncomfortable. I cannot seem to get my desired position

with the electric seat. I think it's down to the lumbar adjustment mainly, which I just can't seem to get right.

The centre armrest in the front is also too large for my liking, meaning that my elbow has to rest on it while changing gear, which annoys me. I don't think this would be an issue if it was an automatic.

The front and back seats and steering wheel are all heated in the Kia, which are very welcome additions in the cold winter months. There are also door mounted buttons for the rear passengers to operate their heated seats.

There's a sizeable boot with retractable cover. It is perhaps a little surprising in these days of goody laden vehicles that the fairly heavy boot lid is not electrically operated but it doesn't bother me as I prefer old fashioned ways. An external grab handle might make life a little easier, though.

The Sportage is a well established SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle), having been introduced in 1993. This model is the facelifted Sportage 2 (the fourth generation).

Externally, it's attractive with a good amount of chrome on the grille and the door handles, which

complement the overall black finish. Inside the black theme continues with black leather upholstery.

The Sportage is a 1.6-litre diesel and is a pretty swift vehicle. There is an electric handbrake and with such systems I always experience a delay when applying or releasing. There's a tell tale sign of the brake pedal moving slightly which alerts you to the fact that something has happened but I'm never completely sure. I can't trust it in the same way as a traditional handbrake. 🙄

The big numbers

Price:£28,510OTR
Top speed:..... 112mph
0-60mph:.....10.8secs
Economy:..... 39mpg

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