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Suzuki Ignis 1.2 Adventure – Road Test

Published: September 25, 2018

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/suzuki-ignis-1-2-adventure-road-test/>



Kim Henson assesses a special edition of Suzuki's compact five door 'crossover'/SUV city car...

(All words and photographs by Kim).

Suzuki's Ignis arrived in the U.K. early in 2017, at once appealing to buyers due to its 'stand-out-from-the-crowd' looks, also its sprightly performance and commendable fuel consumption. Buyers also like the car for its generous interior space (within a compact body shell), comfort and luggage accommodation.

All this is offered at a sensible price too, with the range currently starting with the SZ3 version at £9,999, after deduction of a 'customer saving' offer from Suzuki, of £1,500, and with variants further up the specification scale commanding discounts of £2,000. Please note that all these offers are applicable only until 30th September 2018; if you are reading



this after that date, please check with your Suzuki dealer regarding any special offers in operation. At the time of writing (very late September), any future customer savings deals from October 2018 have yet to be finalised.

At the moment the Ignis line-up comprises four versions. These start with the entry-level but well-equipped SZ3 ('Normal' list price from £11,499, but at the moment from £9,999 due to Suzuki's customer offer of £1,500 off), moving up through the mid-range SZ-T (priced from £12,999 but currently subject to Suzuki's customer saving deal of £2,000), next is the 'Adventure' special edition, based on the ST-T but with additional features (listed from £13,999 but again subject to Suzuki's customer saving offer of £2,000 off this figure), and the range-topper is the SZ5 (from £14,499 but until 30th September the £2,000 discount brings this down to £12,499).

As examples of the equipment levels for each version, even the SZ3 features air conditioning, a DAB radio and Bluetooth, while the mid-range SZ-T specification adds such aspects as roof rails, a rear parking camera and wheel arch extensions, the Adventure (based on the SZ-T) has additional equipment as detailed in our 'On Test' section below, and at the top of the line-up is the comprehensively-equipped SZ5. As standard this comes with built-in features such as dual camera brake support, keyless entry and exit, a navigation system and automatic air conditioning, plus, on manual versions of both two and four wheel drive variants, Suzuki's SHVS compact and lightweight 'mild' hybrid system - which employs a high performance 12 volt lithium-ion battery plus a belt-driven 'Integrated Starter Generator' which generates energy (for example when braking) and assists the petrol engine.

ON TEST



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The variant that I have been test-driving for a week is the 'Adventure'. This is a special version that incorporates a number of unique features not found on other Ignis models, including... a high-mounted rear spoiler, eye-catching, contrasting-colour body side graphics/side stripes, door mirror bodies and front fog lamp bezels, and the car is also fitted with wheel arch extensions/body side mouldings plus front and rear skid plates.



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The Adventure is comprehensively equipped in other ways too, notably with an array of safety systems (including, among many other aspects, an Electronic Stability Program, curtain airbags, a brake and clutch pedal release system, also anti-lock brakes with electronic brakeforce distribution).

Convenience/comfort features include (examples from a long list)... manual air conditioning, and 'guide-me' headlamps. This system enables the headlamps to be switched to remain on for a short time after locking the car, to show the way from the vehicle to (say) the driver's domestic front door. At night the lamps will also illuminate on remotely unlocking the vehicle using the key fob, thus enabling the driver to see the way from the their house (etc.) to the car.

In addition the Adventure features a DAB digital radio (with USB connectivity and



Bluetooth-integrated), a rear parking camera, a fuel consumption/range computer, a driver's seat height adjuster and electrical operation for the door mirrors plus front windows.

Our test car was fitted with an SD card which upgrades the system to include satellite navigation; without the SD card there is no sat nav, but the car still features Apple play connectivity.

The Adventure also features attractive black-finished 16 inch aluminium alloy road wheels, and is offered in one of four colours: Fervent Red, Pure White Pearl Metallic, Super Black Metallic and Boost Blue Metallic, in which our Ignis was painted (note that all the Metallic colours incur an additional cost of £465).





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THE POWER



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Like all the Ignis models the Adventure (offered in two wheel drive only) is powered by Suzuki's 90 bhp 1.2 litre Dualjet engine.

What does this mean...? 'Dualjet' indicates that the power unit employs twin fuel injectors for each cylinder. The injectors are located very close to the inlet valves to provide a finer fuel mixture than usual, which helps to ensure a more effective transfer to the cylinder, in turn resulting in greater efficiency.

The front wheels are driven via a five speed manual gearbox (automatic transmission is available on other versions of the Ignis, also four wheel drive can be specified on other variants).



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THE SPACE



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I was impressed by the generous head and leg room throughout the vehicle (bearing in mind its fairly compact external dimensions), also by the commendably large luggage space and the practical, versatile loading arrangements.

It should be pointed out that this version of the Ignis (as with all variants except the 'entry-level' SZ3) is a four seater, with the two rear seats being equally-divided but individually-slideable.



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In fact the seats can each, on their own, be moved forwards (and backwards) by 17 cm (almost seven inches) to enlarge the carrying capacity of the boot, which, with the seats in 'normal' use is relatively short from front to back, but is wide and deep.

The seat backs can be folded forwards when required, to accommodate large items. This releases a very useful additional amount of load space, and each of the seat backs, when folded forwards, provides a horizontal platform. However it should be noted that when folded the seat backs are not horizontally flush with the rearmost 'normal' section of the boot floor, but sit approximately 28 cm (about 11 in) above it.

Having said that, in practice during my time with the car this was not a problem at all, and for one long trip I carried a huge amount of sound/music equipment, including large



speakers, decks, lamp and microphone stands, etc, and it all fitted in amazingly easily. On another occasion I was called upon to transport a substantial wheelchair, and this too fitted very easily (and upright) within the deep rear section of the boot.

I found that the fact that there's plenty of height available within the vehicle helps with the carrying of all sorts of large items. For the record, according to my tape measure (and all figures approximate), the available height above the folded rear seat backs is about 76 cm (30in), and in the deepest (rearmost) section of the normal boot floor, this increases to a very useful 95 cm (37.5in). In addition, with the front seats set in a comfortable position for me to drive, there's a useful available length for loads of approximately 130 cm (51 in) between the front seat backs and the rear load sill. At its narrowest point the boot is about 102 cm (40in) wide, between the rear wheel arches.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

I should also mention that the tailgate opens high from bumper height, and the boot floor is not very far below this, so there's no awkwardly high rear body sill to negotiate when loading/unloading, as on so many cars. In addition, the car's usefully wide side doors open to 90 degrees when required; a great feature. Not only does this help the loading of large/heavy items through the rear side doors, but also makes it easier for all passengers to enter and leave the car; a clever touch in every way.



(Note: The 'entry level' Ignis SZ3 versions have rear seats accommodating three people, but the seats do not slide as with the two individual rear seats in our test car and all the other models in the line-up).

There are plenty of useful storage spaces for smaller items within the vehicle, including door bins (incorporating bottle holders), a good-size glove box, plus a small compartment ahead of the gear lever (and incorporating two cup holders). In addition, with the rear seat backs folded forwards, and even with the two rear seats slid forwards as far as they will move, there is plenty of room for soft bags(etc.) to be stored on the floor just behind the front seats.



ON THE ROAD

Our test car was a quiet runner and an eager performer. The four cylinder 1.2 litre engine pulled strongly at all times and the car felt nippy both in urban traffic situations and when on longer drives, out on the open road.

The five speed manual gearbox was easy to use, courtesy of a slick-moving gearchange set-up.

The Ignis proved to be easy to park and to manoeuvre in town use, and despite fairly high



rear bodywork corners, reversing was not a problem; in any case it was helped in our test car by its useful rear-view camera (which automatically engages as reverse gear is selected).

All occupants spoke highly of the car's ride quality, which was impressive for a small vehicle. Most of the broken surfaces encountered on our main 'A' and 'B' roads were easily taken in the car's stride without shaking nor stirring the car's occupants, with only the most severe potholes/dips being felt by passengers.

The Ignis felt positive to drive on twisting cross-country roads, with secure handling/roadholding characteristics and reassuring brakes.

Long-distance high speed cruising was enjoyable too; at 70 mph in top (fifth) gear, the rev counter needle indicated just 3,000 rpm and the four cylinder motor felt smooth and refined.

This is an observation, not a criticism... With the car very heavily laden, on long motorway and main road ascents it was necessary to change down from top (fifth) gear to fourth, in order to maintain progress without losing speed. Of course, changing gear is what the gearbox is for, and in no way was this a problem.

I found the controls easy to operate, including the centrally-positioned touch screen system for activating the radio, smartphone and satellite navigation functions.





From previous experience with a variety of different Suzuki models, I know that the official 'Combined' fuel consumption figures have always come closer to real life motoring expectations than is usually the case. With an official figure for this Adventure of just over 61 mpg, I feel that realistically most drivers should see 55 mpg or better in everyday motoring (and talking to others who have driven the Ignis, I know that figures of around 70 mpg are achievable on long trips).

Backing up the theory, in my case, during my week of mixed driving covering nearly 400 miles over a variety of roads and in a range of driving conditions, the overall figure recorded by the on-board computer was a brilliant 56.5 mpg (a figure not only good in itself, but very close to the 'official' Combined figure of 61.4 mpg). This overall figure should also be viewed in the context of my use of the vehicle, for on one long trip in particular the Adventure was fully loaded with heavy music/sound system equipment, plus two people and luggage, and for more than 150 miles we were driving against very strong headwinds (in fact, of up to 50 mph or so), and the car was still cruising happily at the legal limit of 70 mph when the roads allowed, and still returning excellent consumption figures.

Interestingly too, during my first 50 miles or so with the car, all clocked up during in-town driving, the indicated average figure was a highly creditable 59.8 mpg - considerably ahead of the official Urban figure of 51.3 mpg!



VERDICT

Excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed test-driving the Adventure.

The Ignis is smart and cleverly different (in a positive way), in terms of styling and practical touches, from rival models from other manufacturers.

In addition it's economical, comfortable, practical to live with and easy to drive in both town and country motoring. I will stick my neck out and add that almost certainly, it will be very reliable as well (judging by other Suzuki models produced over many years!).

I also feel that the car represents very good value in today's market.



Any minus points? Well during my time with the car I appreciated the versatility offered by the sliding individual rear seats, to create a large number of different passenger-carrying and load-carrying options. However there are occasions when it is handy to be able to carry a third passenger in the rear of the car, which can't be done with any Ignis but the 'entry-level' SZ3 version. I'm just a bit surprised that a three-seater rear seat isn't available as an option in the higher specification versions.

So the \$60,000 dollar question... Would I buy an Ignis? Definitely yes, and (apart from my minor reservations about rear seat passenger numbers) an Ignis would be a very welcome automotive member of my family.





Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Suzuki Ignis 1.2 Adventure

Price: (List figure before deducting any current customer savings offers; check with your Suzuki dealer) £13,999 (as tested, with Boost Blue Metallic paint, £14,464). At the time of my road test, the price of the Adventure as tested was £12,464 (£11,999 for the car plus £465 for the metallic paint finish).

Engine: 1242cc four cylinder petrol, 90 PS @ 6,000 rpm; 120 Nm (88 lb.ft) torque @ 4,400 rpm.

Transmission: Five speed manual gearbox; four wheel drive.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 11.5 sec.

Top speed: 103 mph.

Fuel consumption (Official figures):

(Please note that the Adventure is a limited edition model with only a few in stock, and production has ceased so the following mpg figures shown are on the older 'NEDC' basis rather than under the latest 'WLTP' method of assessment).

'Urban': 51.3 mpg.

'Extra Urban': 68.8 mpg.

'Combined': 61.4 mpg (actual figure achieved on test, 56.5 mpg).



CO2 Emissions: 104 g/km.

Road Tax: Band B (£140 per year after first year).

Insurance: Group 16E.

Dimensions:

Overall length 3,700 mm (12.14 ft); Overall width 1,690 mm (5.54 ft); Overall height 1,595 mm (5.23 ft); Luggage capacity 260 litres (9.18 cu.ft) with rear seats in use to 514 litres (18.15 cu.ft) with rear seats folded to 1,100 litres (38.85 cu.ft) maximum.

Please also see my main text for further dimensions relating to the luggage compartment).