Ford Edge Titanium 210 hp 2.0 TDCi Automatic AWD SUV Road Test

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Ford has the Edge with new UK vehicle sales in 2016.

Ford’s Edge SUV – reviewed by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

There are no certainties in life but with official UK new vehicle sales figures not due to be released for a few days, it is already likely that Ford will again top the UK’s new car sales chart for 2016, and the commercial vehicle league as well. Also most likely is the fact that in 2016 we Brits will have bought more SUVs/4x4s/Crossovers than we did in 2015 when 355,118 were sold – a 21% increase over 2014.

Ford is fortunate to now be a significant competitor in the SUV market. This year they launched their third SUV offering, the large five door, five seater Edge which joined the mid-sized Kuga and the compact EcoSport, so they have all areas of the fast growing SUV/Crossover market sector covered.

Under its previous ‘One Ford’ product strategy, where models from various global markets were made available to other markets, it gave us in Europe the Brazilian designed but Indian-built EcoSport, the American iconic Mustang muscle car, produced in Europe, and the Canadian-built Edge, previously designed for the American market but now available elsewhere including Europe and Australia. Europe gave the World the new Focus RS plus of course other less hard-core bread and butter models.

The Edge for the UK market is only available with the choice of two diesel engines although four and six cylinder petrol units are available in other markets. For now in this large SUV market diesel power still rules but that might change as legislation to reduce or even ban diesel cars from major cities is rumoured to happen.

The two engine options are both 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbodiesels, one of 180 hp, the other – tested here – of 210hp. Which of the four spec levels is chosen, Zetec, Titanium, Sport or Vignale, can also determine which engine is available. All have 4WD as standard and the 180 hp unit is mated with a six-speed manual gearbox whilst the 210 hp motor, with its twin turbochargers, gets a PowerShift six-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission with Sport mode.

All models have only five seats despite its significant size of 4,808 mm (15.77 ft) in length, 1,928 mm (6.32 ft) wide and 1,707 mm (5.60 ft) high. The boot is enormous with 602 litres (21.26 cu.ft) of space with the three rear seats in place, but fold them down and this increases to a massive 1,847 litres (65.23 cu.ft).

Prices start from a competitive £29,995 and go up to a less convincing £40,280 for the ‘posh’ new Vignale level with the 210 hp engine and auto gearbox. My test drive model was the 210 hp version automatic with the popular Titanium spec, and this weighed in at an affordable in this sector price of £35,245. But of course there is a wide range of personalisation options that will add to those prices.

The competitors for the Edge are numerous and include the premium brand BMW X3/X5, Audi Q5/Q7, Mercedes GLC plus the Kia Sorento, Honda CR-V, the top selling Land Rover Discovery Sport, VW Touraeg, Mitsubishi Shogun, Nissan X-Trail, Toyota Land Cruiser and Hyundai Santa Fe.

The Edge is based on the same platform as the Mondeo and S-Max ranges and the fascia panel and controls are similar to those found in the S-Max in particular. None of the spec levels are low on content. The base Zetec spec includes 19-inch alloy wheels, electrically adjustable door mirrors, active noise control, electric windows, Ford DAB radio – now with Sync 3 for 2017, lane keep assist with traffic sign recognition, Active City Stop, automatic lights and wipers, starter button, rear view parking camera, heated front windscreen and of course air-con. The Titanium level additions include Ford's FreeKey system with power operated tailgate, DAB sat-nav, front and rear parking sensors, chrome roof rails and heated front seats. Sport versions get 20-inch alloys, sports tuned suspension, body styling kit, upgraded sound system, aluminium pedals, adaptive steering and black roof rails. The Vignale is just a bit more luxurious with higher quality leather upholstery and trim around the dashboard, climate controlled front seats, active park assist, LED adaptive headlights and of course it only comes with the 210 hp engine and auto gearbox.

Ford is targeting the Edge at premium buyers as its European flagship range. And those customers will not only appreciate the comprehensive specification but also its greatest asset, a very compliant and comfortable ride. Whilst it is not as sharp-handling or as agile as say a BMW X3 or Audi Q5, due to its bulk, its driving refinement, comfortable ride and large supportive comfy seats will be appreciated by most people as will the plentiful rear seat legroom. The Active Noise Control system uses sound waves to cancel out the frequency of road and diesel engine noise and it works well. On my test car at times there was some wind noise from the driver's door but that will be a matter of adjustment rather than a design fault.

There is no getting away from the fact that the Edge is a large vehicle, and it fills the road on country winding lanes, also it just about fits snugly into in-town parking spaces. Thankfully the parking aid and sensors help as the rear visibility, and side visibility due to the high waistline, is not that great.

From the outside the Edge is imposing, it looks bulky with its high waistline but the sculptured areas of the door panels do add an athletic look to the vehicle, as does the rear

roof spoiler. At the front is a high-level clamshell bonnet above a strong looking large grille flanked by sleek headlights. The high ground clearance and front and rear underbody scuff plates front point towards the vehicle's off-road nature.

It has an automatic intelligent on-demand 4WD system with driving torque moving between the front and rear axles as acceleration and grip demands. But there is no low ratio facility, descent control or differential locks so in reality, despite its weight, it should be considered more of a lightweight off-roader able to cope with gravel or muddy tracks. It will be more at home coping with bad on-road driving conditions and the suspension just shrugs off impacts from potholes. The 4WD system and its strong engine will also make it a useful towing vehicle with a braked towing weight capacity of 2,200 kg (4,850 lb).

When it comes to the choice of engines my colleague Robin Roberts recently spent some

time driving the 180 hp TDCi engine with its manual gearbox. His view was that this unit is a bit underpowered and lacking in response for acceleration from standstill, and required constant gearchanges on country roads between fourth and fifth gears. It has to work quite hard and that reflected in the fuel economy. Officially this lower powered engine should return 47.9 mpg in the Combined Cycle but overall his test drive figure was 38 mpg with CO2 emissions of 152 g/km.

Whereas my test vehicle with the 210 hp unit has 50 Nm (37 lb.ft) more torque at 450 Nm (332 lb.ft) making it more responsive with the auto gearbox, and the official Combined Cycle fuel economy is 48.7 mpg but in real-life it returned 39.3 mpg. The CO2 emissions are also lower at 149 g/km so VED road tax is £145 as opposed to £185 for the 180 hp engine. The larger engine is also marginally quicker with a top speed of 131 mph with zero to 62 mph taking 9.4 seconds. The downside of course is that the larger engine, with its standard-fit auto gearbox, is £2,250 more expensive to buy than the 180 hp manual, and the insurance group is higher at 29E rather than 26E.

VERDICT

The Edge may not have initially been designed for the European markets but with the changes to the suspension, tuned steering and careful selection of the specification levels it gives Ford a competitive must-have presence in the large SUV market. There are lots of things to like about the Edge and for most people not much to moan about. Its big, it’s comfortable, it’s well made, the specification is good and despite its size it generally easy to drive. And in most cases it’s cheaper to buy than the comparable sized offerings from Audi, BMW, Mercedes and Land Rover.

For: An imposing road presence in terms of size, very roomy interior, huge boot, very comfortable and compliant ride, strong engine matched with a slick automatic gearbox, well equipped, well priced in its sector.

Against: Big but bland exterior styling, some may feel it’s dull to drive, limited rear side and rear quarter visibility, no seven seat option, not a generous mileage limit from the warranty.

Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Ford Edge SUV, Titanium, 2.0 TDCi, AWD, automatic.

Price: £35,245.

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, TDCi four cylinder turbodiesel 210 hp, 450 Nm (332 lb.ft) of torque from 2,000rpm, six speed PowerShift automatic dual clutch with manual mode, intelligent AWD.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 9.4 seconds.

Top speed: 131mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 48.7 mpg (real-life 39.3 mpg).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 149 g/km, VED road tax £145, BIK company car tax 29%. Insurance Group: 29E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,808 mm (15.77 ft), W 1,928 mm (6.32 ft), H 1,707 mm (5.60 ft), boot/load space 602 to 1,847 litres (21.26 to 65.23 cu.ft), braked towing weight 2,200 kg (4,850 lb), five doors/five seats.