Ford Fiesta Active ‘crossover’ – Road Test

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The Ford Fiesta Active Edition 1.0T Ecoboost tried and tested…

…By Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Ford has put a lot of eggs in its family car basket as it seeks to build sales in difficult and highly competitive times.

The best-selling Fiesta has an added new name at the top of its range, a crossover series called Active, which is probably more widespread in appeal than the stablemate and slightly dull EcoSport SUV.

Now, not so many years ago the Active would have been a regular version of the Fiesta range but in today's marketing-led social media driven sales environment it helps if you have a new tag on which to hang yourself. Enter the Active, which is really a higher riding, better protected and internally spruced up version of the best selling hatchback in Britain carrying the Fiesta name.

It shares the usual hatchback's powertrains and most of the dimensions except for a 2 cms (just under an inch) higher roofline and perhaps not surprisingly it handles as well as the shorter stablemate.



The crossover series sits within the traditional Fiesta range and carries the Active name over 15 versions using mostly, but not exclusively, petrol engines with manual gearboxes, although automatic is available solely on the 100 hp petrol unit. All are five-door design and

prices are between £18,000 and £22,250.

One of the best-selling versions is the 125 hp, tested by us and fitted with a six-speed manual gearbox. It packs a useful punch for getting away smartly when one up, overtaking in safety and then cruising with a composed character on main roads and we were delighted to see it return close to 50 mpg over mixed roads.

The Ford triple-pot engine is a compact, busy unit which really needs to be coaxed along to be enjoyed at its best. It’s a very willing one-litre engine but go above mid-range with the revs and it becomes fussy, noisy and annoying and the economy drops away once you start using that sweet-changing gearbox with its light progressive clutch.

This is necessary if you load the Fiesta Active with people or anything else as you might be prone to do in a family car. Then you might be surprised by a shortcoming I noticed on what is a family car, the rear doors don’t open wide and the aperture is low and narrow, so some may actually struggle to get in without doubling up and twisting a good bit. That said, the nominal bootspace and its quickly expanded full capacity with fold-flat seatbacks was very good and praiseworthy.



Driver and front seat passenger have a much easier job getting in or out and the front seats are very well shaped, supporting and have good adjustment range, while those behind also benefit from good location if not overly generous headroom.

Heating and ventilation is straightforward, worked well and filled the cabin with desired air backed up by powered windows. There was good but not generous oddments room throughout but a very good sound system filled the car. I was, however, disappointed to find the Ford SYNC3 Navigation was not up to date, with some roads or speed limits not displayed.

Active comes highly equipped with safety and comfort features to make driving and owning enjoyable, including the latest bright, far reaching and wide-spread headlights, powered

windows, rain sensing wipers and intelligent cruise control with lane sensing and the Quickclear heated front windscreen is a must-have for winter mornings.

The driver is really well looked after with big clear instruments infront, an adjustable on-board computer display for essential and desirable data, good secondary controls layout and a tablet-like infotainment screen in the centre of the fascia top.

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As with all Fiesta models the Active's steering was pin sharp and brakes reassuringly positive with only modest pressure applied while the transmission boasted three modes for various conditions, namely eco, normal and slippery.

The handling was faithful, the grip inspired and the ride was generally firm but comfortable nevertheless.

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VERDICT

To my mind the Fiesta Active is one of the best in the family, and which does all a Fiesta hatchback does, only better with a more stylish interior and more distinctive exterior.

Fiesta has a number of rivals and the Active means it's now better able to take them on and in most cases beat them when it comes to value and equipment.

For: Mild SUV styling, roomy in the front and versatile passenger/load space in the rear, economical, good fit and finish.

Against: Small rear passenger doors and openings, some road noise, modest acceleration, hard plastic trim throughout, out of date sat-nav information, ungenerous warranty.



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

Ford Fiesta Active Edition 1.0T Ecoboost

Price: £21,735 as tested with premium paint and driver assistance pack

Mechanical: 125 hp, three cylinder, turbo-petrol, six speed manual, 2WD.

Performance: 121 mph, 0–62 mph 10.0 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 55.4 mpg (48.6 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 96 g/km.

New tax rates from April, VED First Year £135, Standard rate £150, BiK company car tax, BiK company car tax rating: 22%.

Insurance Group: 10E.

Warranty: Three years/ 60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.04 m (13.25 ft), W 1.74 m (5.71 ft), H 1.50 m (4.92 ft), boot space: 292 to 1,093 litres (10.31 to 38.60 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.