Honda Super-N Advance – Road Test

Published: September 14, 2026

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/honda-super-n-advance-road-test/

Those of a certain age who loved and longed for the original Mini will ooze happiness behind the wheel of the new Honda Super-N. So says our Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) after spending a week with this diminutive vehicle.

And it will also delight drivers who want a modern city car for commuting and a weekend fun run skateboard to getaway – up to a point.

Inspired by the Honda N-One petrol city car of the second decade in the millennium, the Honda Super-N is a pure electric descendent created for today's market.

The basic car is just under £19,000 and the Advance Plus is about £300 more for the two-tone roof colour, to which you can add decals in style packs for another £700.

Its cuteness is related to its very compact angular design, not unlike the Nissan Cube, or what a child might draw as their concept of a city car. Such cars fall into the Kei-class in Japan, short for kei-jidōsha or light automobile.

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Reduced VAT and insurance was applied to K-cars in Japan and boosted their sale in busy towns and cities.

This class is not new to Britain which saw the jointly made Mitsubishi i-MiEV, Peugeot i~On and Citroen C-Zero K-cars selling alongside the Renault Twizy heavy quadicycle about 14 years ago and more recently the quirky Citroen Ami Urban Quadricycle.

Worth mentioning in passing is the in and out decision making which saw the Ford Think car shown and then pulled from a venture in Norway and Europe after California rolled back its pioneering strict zero-emission legislation.

Honda, too, has dabbled in small Evs and sold the Honda e from 2020 to 2024 until it brought in bigger SUV BEVs.

Honda has marketed the Super-N as a ‘small car, big fun’ buying decision rather than a super clean, green environmentally friendly set of four wheels. In complete fairness, it is precisely that and what it says on the box.

The size may seem ridiculous but a generation ago the footprint of the Super-N was normal for a family car until manufacturers started adding engineering and design changes, sometimes to meet safety crash tests but also because occupants were getting larger, most notably in America.

The result is the Super-N comfortably fits inside most car parking spaces that many SUVs overhang and its taller roofline sticks above a row of models so it’s easy to pick out from a distance.

Wide opening doors and a high-lift tailgate reveal an easy access cabin and small boot for shopping while the split “magic seats” in the back drop completely flat or cushions click upright with a folding metal rest stowed to dramatically triple total carrying capacity. It’s really good.

We found rear seat legroom was fine for two, although seats were shapeless, and headspace was very generous while the driver and passeger had to put up with short seat travel but

good rake range and headroom; the column had short rake adjustment.

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Unlike many evs today on sale, the Super-N had a starter button and then you selected direction of drive and one of five performance modes – ECON, City, Normal, Sport or Boost with the last unlocking extra dials, more power, acceleration and synthetic engine noise along with simulated gearshifts through column paddles. Hugely enjoyable.

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The little Honda's steering was not as light as you might expect in a city car but it gave good feedback and the turning circle was good in town and nicely balanced on more open roads.

Underfoot, the brakes imparted a lot of feeling with a good progressive pressure or using the City mode just relying on the motor's natural retardation brought it to a halt simply by lifting off the throttle.

In this way and playing around with the available modes we saw the range display a maximum up to 130 miles but overall it worked out with a few recharges to 120 miles. Depending on the recharging rate and battery free-space, the Super-N was ready to go anywhere between 45 mins and 14 hours, but for practical purposes it is usually up to 80% in 4hrs 30mins… It came with AC and DC cables.

One irritation we had with the Honda Super-N was the under-bonnet release wire for the power cable, a looped wire immediately above the plug, which might cause some issues particularly on a wet and dark night should you need a quick getaway. Honda could have done much better.

The cabin is dominated by the driver's info screen which was simple, clear and converted to performance displays in the sport/ boost mode and a central infotainment screen for mobility, navigation, vehicle settings etc.. It was a good size, quick to change and easy to

read.

The car's heating and ventilation controls below this display were straightforward, worked well and had a good range of direction, output and temperature, helped by a number of fascia vents backed up by powered windows all round including a one touch button for the driver.

The interior lacked decent sized compartments and recesses for on-journey items which might be used by a family together with auxiliary plug points.

It is compatible with Android and Apple phones and apps and they synced easily. The Bose sound system was good.

The abundance of hard plastic panels inside the car meant sound deadening was not as good as with softer finishes and road rumbles were constant over bad surfaces which also produced a stiff response from the suspension.

The 15-inch wheels and short wheelbase of 2.52 m (8.27 ft) meant it struggled to give a smooth ride over most roads but it was comfortable on motorway stretches and better topped main roads.

Visibility was very good and the cameras and sensors covered blindspots and were supported by sonic alerts.

Bright self-dipping LED headlights, big wipers and powerful washers were appreciated.

VERDICT

The Honda Super-N was ideal as a city runabout and commuter car in the week and sufficiently powerful and dynamically pleasing in sporting modes to be thoroughly enjoyable on leisure trips.

Roadholding was good, it pulled and slowed quickly, steered with smoothness and never gave a moment's concern while the "seven-speed" transmission was fun.

The versatile interior would fulfill many roles without a problem and it has all you could need for a trip.

The range is not brilliant but the time between recharges would probably be enjoyable, so long as you could unhook the fiddly power cable.

For: Good roadholding, agile, versatile loading, good powertrain, highly equipped, comfortable front seats, good visibility.

Against: Stiff riding, short legroom, small boot, very fiddly power-cable release system and shortage of oddments spaces.

Honda
RX26 TXP

FAST FACTS

Model: Honda Super-N Advance

Price: £20,665

Mechanical: 70 kW motor/ 29.6 kWh battery, front wheel drive, auto 7 speed – simulated

Max Speed: 84 mph

0 – 62 mph: 10 – 14 secs

Range: 120 miles

Insurance Group: 27

C02 emissions: Zero

Bik rating: 4%, £10FR, £200SR

Warranty: Standard 3yrs (but with Approved annual servicing it extends to 8yrs for major components) / 100K

Size: L 3.6 m (11.81 ft), W 1.79 m (5.87 ft), H 1.61 m (5.28 ft)

Bootspace: 162 to 967 litres (5.72 to 34.15 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,097 kg (2,418 lb)

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