



**WHEELS-ALIVE!**

[www.wheels-alive.co.uk](http://www.wheels-alive.co.uk)

---

# Kia Niro HEV '2' 1.6 GDi – Road Test

Published: January 30, 2025

Author:

Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/kia-niro-hev-2-1-6-gdi-road-test/>



**WHEELS-ALIVE!**

[www.wheels-alive.co.uk](http://www.wheels-alive.co.uk)

---



## Kim Henson test drives the five seater Niro 'compact crossover SUV', in HEV self-charging hybrid form...

(All words and images © Kim Henson).

It is no surprise to me that Kia is doing well in sales terms. The firm's comprehensive range provides vehicles to suit a wide range of preferences and practical needs, and for U.K. buyers the company's line-up currently includes petrol-powered, hybrid propulsion and fully electric models. In other words they cover 'all bases'.

Reassurance for buyers is provided by Kia's market-leading (and transferable) seven year/100,000 mile warranty, with the company's faith in its products borne out by a proven record for reliability in real world use.



To view Kia's full range, their website will help: <https://www.kia.com/uk/>

## **Niro HEV '2' 1.6 GDi**

Now in its second generation, the South Korean built five door, five seater family-friendly Niro (Kia's second best-selling model in Britain) is described as a 'compact crossover SUV'. The basis for the vehicle is Kia's third generation 'K-platform'.

The body shell is larger than that of the first generation Niro, allowing greater interior space.







Kia advises that the proportion of high tensile strength hot-stamping steel incorporated into the new shell has been increased by 22 per cent compared with the first generation car, and the body-in-white weight has been reduced by six per cent (20.3 kg or 45 lb), while torsional stiffness has been increased by one per cent.

Providing versions of the model to suit all requirements, three different propulsion types are offered for the Niro; these are 'fully electric', Plug-in Hybrid and (self-charging) 'Hybrid' (HEV - the subject of this road test).

There are three straightforward trim levels, starting with the '2' (the least expensive variant, as tested), and rising through '3' to '4' grade.

My test vehicle was the entry-level but nonetheless well-equipped HEV '2' Hybrid model, carrying a price tag of just over £30,085.

(Note: The higher specification HEV '3' costs £32,335 while the range-topper HEV '4' is priced at £35,085. For comparison purposes, Plug-in Hybrid Niro's run from £35,325 ('2') through £37,575 ('3') to £40,325 ('4'), and the all-electric Niro's cost from £37,325 ('2'), through £39,575 ('3') to £42,325 ('4'). (With heat pump and black C-pillar and Grey Pack, the highest spec '4' price rises to £43,970).

My HEV '2' test car was powered by Kia's 1.6 litre 16 valve four cylinder 'Smartstream' GDi petrol engine, developing 139 bhp and assisted by a hybrid system incorporating a relatively small battery (1.32 kWh, by comparison with the 11.1 kWh Plug-in Hybrid variant, which allows for electric-only use of about 40 miles on a full charge, and the 64.8 kWh all-electric version, said to give up to 285 miles on a single charge).



The powertrain drives the front wheels via Kia's second generation six speed dual clutch (DCT) automatic transmission. Interestingly, changes for this transmission include the use of low friction ball bearings, gears optimised for efficiency, and notably the removal of the reverse gear (this move alone saves 2.3 kg or 5.1 lb in weight). Reversing is now accomplished by using the car's electric motor, thus saving tailpipe emissions.

## Features galore



**WHEELS-ALIVE!**

[www.wheels-alive.co.uk](http://www.wheels-alive.co.uk)

---



**WHEELS-ALIVE!**

[www.wheels-alive.co.uk](http://www.wheels-alive.co.uk)

---





Although the test vehicle was the lowest-priced version in the Niro line-up, it was certainly not lacking in standard equipment. I am not going to list all the many features (that approach would fill this article!), but among them are:

Solar windscreen, rear windows and tailgate, 16 inch aluminium alloy road wheels, bi-function projection halogen headlamps, automatic headlamp control, dual temperature control, two front USB charge points plus two USB-C charge points, a six speaker sound system, a 10.25 inch touchscreen with satellite navigation system plus a 4.25 inch supervision colour cluster display, a multitude of connectivity functions plus free 7-year membership of the comprehensive Kia Connect telematics information service, and a reversing camera system incorporating dynamic guidelines, also reverse parking sensors.



Driver aids include drive mode selection (Eco/Sport), plus Smart Cruise Control (SCC) with stop/go functionality, also motor-driven power steering (MDPS).

Of course, safety systems in abundance are standard-fit too, including Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Emergency Stop Signalling (ESS), Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist (FCA 1.5), Car/Pedestrian/Cyclist Junction Turning awareness system, Hill-start Assist Control (HAC) plus Lane Follow Assist (LFA) and Lane Keep Assist (LKAS) systems.

The Niro has achieved a Five-star Euro NCAP safety rating.

## Living with the Niro



**WHEELS-ALIVE!**

[www.wheels-alive.co.uk](http://www.wheels-alive.co.uk)

---





I liked the spacious interior, with generous head and leg room throughout, and found the seats and ride quality very comfortable, even over long distances. During my time with the car, all my passengers commented favourably on these aspects too.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

More happy boxes were ticked for me with a multitude of storage compartments provided throughout the vehicle, including a glovebox, door bins and centre console accommodation for small items, and including two cup holders. In addition, the rear seat incorporates a handy folding central armrest, with twin built-in cup holders.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.



The luggage compartment is roomy too, providing a capacity of 451 litres (15.93 cu.ft.) with the rear seats in use, and up to 1,445 litres (51.03 cu.ft) with them folded. The rear seat backs are easily released to fold, by the touch of a button at the top of each seat section, instantly folding forward to provide a near-flat load floor. Brilliant.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

The hybrid system's battery is located beneath the rear seat base, and beneath the main boot floor is a shallow compartment accommodating the emergency tyre inflation kit.

According to my own measurements (all approximate), the impressive load compartment measures up thus:

The load floor is about 84 cm (33 in) long from front to back, with the rear seats occupied, or 175 cm (69 in) long with the rear seatbacks folded and front seats set on their runners in 'normal' positions - for this driver at least.

The minimum available width of the load compartment (between the wheel arches) is 107 cm (42 in) and the maximum width is around 132 cm (52 in).

The available height from floor level to the underside of the roof's rear cross-bar assembly is about 73 cm (29 in).

Overall, these generous measurements result in a spacious, practical load compartment.

## On the Road

I enjoyed the Niro's eager performance, the seamless integration of the petrol and electric power sources and the smooth, quiet progress provided, at high or low road speeds. The switch between petrol and electric power and back again was impossible to detect, except for the tachometer registering 'zero' when the car was running on electricity, and springing back to life as the petrol motor cut in.





At 70 mph the digital readout type rev counter was showing 2,200 rpm.

For almost all of my test mileage I ran the car in 'Eco' mode, finding performance perfectly adequate, in fact lively. I did sample the 'Sport' mode, which provided even more rapid acceleration when required.

Mechanical noise levels were always low, including when the petrol engine was running. Some tyre 'roar' became evident on some road surfaces, to me just emphasising how quite the vehicle was overall.

I was very impressed also by the accommodating suspension that soaked up surface undulations with ease (and there are plenty of rough tarmac sections in my locality), yet the car handled well too, including on twisting country by-ways and on fast roads with sweeping bends. Body roll was minimal and I found the car fun to drive.

No quibbles about the effective brakes (including the electrically-operated handbrake that worked well), and the positive, nicely-weighted electric power steering, modified for the second generation Niros.

The headlamps provided a good spread and reach of light, both on dipped and main beams, and the distinctive rear lamps were very effective in terms of being visible from a distance, even in poor weather conditions.

I liked the very clear instrumentation and the comprehensive information available to the driver. I also appreciated the clear mapping and information provided by the built-in satellite navigation system. I did find that the car's speed limit displays - unmistakably clear and very good, by the way - sometimes lagged a little behind reality. For example, on several occasions when driving from a 60 mph speed limit area to a 70 mph one, it took a long time for the car's system to react and update/display the correct limit.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.



For those unfamiliar with the vehicle, I feel that it could take a while to 'learn' the operation of all the various controls operated through the central screen. That said, the comprehensive array of switches/controls for a variety of functions, including the heating/ventilation/air conditioning system (these switches/controls were mounted separately from, and below the screen) were easy to assimilate and worked well. In damp conditions, starting with misted-up windows, the system cleared the screens within seconds, and it was easy to set the heating controls to provide desired levels of heat output and air direction. The separate heat controls for driver and front seat passenger were appreciated, although these can be synchronised if desired.

At times during my week with the test vehicle, the weather was appalling, with strong head and side winds and exceptionally heavy rain. I am happy to report that in such conditions the lights, screen washers and wipers were very effective and the car was relatively unruffled by very strong side winds; it was still easy to hold a chosen line.

The official 'Combined' fuel consumption figure is quoted at 64.2 miles per gallon; during my week-long test drive the figures recorded on the on-board trip computer varied from around 53 mpg to better than 64 mpg, with an overall average figure of 56.2 mpg - pretty good considering the tricky driving conditions.

## VERDICT

Impressive. Spacious for passengers and luggage, comfortable and pleasant to drive too; a driver's car as well as being a family-friendly vehicle.

For many prospective buyers, not keen on having to plug-in their car to recharge the propulsion battery, the Niro's self-charging hybrid system perfectly suits their needs.



**WHEELS-ALIVE!**

[www.wheels-alive.co.uk](http://www.wheels-alive.co.uk)



## **Tech Spec in Brief - Niro HEV '2' 1.6 GDi**

On the Road Price: £30,085

### **Propulsion:**

1.6 litre (1580cc) four cylinder 16 valve petrol engine (139 bhp @ 5,700 rpm; Max. torque 265 Nm (195 lb.ft) @ 4,400 rpm)



Plus: TMED type hybrid system

Battery: 1.32 kWh 64 cell Li-on polymer, nominal voltage 240, located under rear seat

Max. power 42 kW

Battery capacity 5.5 Ah

Battery weight 34 kg (75 lb)

**Transmission:** Six speed dual clutch (DCT) automatic

Performance:

Acceleration: 0 - 62 mph, 11.3 seconds

Top speed: 99 mph

Fuel consumption:

Official 'Combined': 64.2 mpg

Actual figure achieved on our road test: 56.2 mpg

Fuel tank capacity: 42 litres (9.24 gallons)

Range using our actual overall consumption figure achieved: Approximately 519 miles

CO2 emissions: 100 g/km

Suspension:



Front: MacPherson strut

Rear: Multi-link (quad link)

Steering:

Motor-driven Power Steering (MDPS)

Dimensions and useful weight figures:

Overall Length: 4,420 mm (14.50 ft)

Wheelbase: 2,720 mm (8.92 ft)

Overall Width: 1,825 mm (5.99 ft)

Overall height: 1,545 mm (5.07 ft)

Kerb Weight: 1,474 kg (3,250 lb)

Maximum braked trailer weight: 1,000 kg (2,204 lb)

Warranty cover:

7 year/100,000 mile warranty

12 year/unlimited mileage anti-perforation warranty

5 year/100,000 mile paint warranty

1 year Kia roadside assistance





**WHEELS-ALIVE!**

[www.wheels-alive.co.uk](http://www.wheels-alive.co.uk)

---

© All words and photographs, Kim Henson and Wheels-Alive.