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Kia Sportage GT Line – Road Test

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When you look at some of Britain's best selling cars it's easy to become dazzled by what you see and not appreciate what's behind them, writes Robin Roberts (WheelsWithinWales)...

The UK's immensely popular Kia Sportage SUV was facelifted last autumn and given some technical improvements after four generations since 1995, although the diesel derivatives were discontinued.

The fifth generation of eight models come with a choice of three power trains and renamed three trim levels, Pure, GT-Line and GT-Line S, utilising 147 bhp 1.6 four-cylinder petrol engine or 235 bhp version with a 47.7 kW electric motor as a hybrid. Depending on the



model and engine there is front wheel drive or four wheel drive and an entry level six-speed manual gearbox, seven-speed dual clutch automatic or straightforward six-speed automatic. Prices of the petrol-powered models go on the road from £30,885 to £40,285 while the HEVs run from £34,425 to £43,725 for the range topping AWD version.

Over 450,000 Sportage models have been registered in the last three decades on UK roads and it was the second most popular vehicle for registrations in 2025.

In the Autumn, we enjoyed initial drives in the entry level Pure model and range-topping all-wheel-drive GT-Line S, so looked forward to a spin in the mid-range GT-Line. This front wheel drive version came with the useful and efficient 147 bhp busy four-cylinder petrol engine and particularly efficient seven-speed auto box, which is one of the most impressive autoboxes on any car today.



Visual changes for MY26 are “star Map” daytime running lights incorporated within a stacked new LED headlight design as part of an updated grille, revised side shaping, new tailgate and lights with subtle black highlights on most trims.

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Inside the major changes are to the big touchscreens and their connectivity while the piano black console has given way to a brushed-effect finish to hide dust and fingerprints more easily but which, I think, does not look as elegant for the want of an occasional wipe with a lint-free cloth.



The technical “improvements” feature ChatGPT to utilise spoken instructions and questions of the systems, customisable Head-UP Display on the flagship with a digital key, wireless infotainment links standard for all and you can subscribe to integrate Netflix, Disney+, YouTube and games. I found the unexpected voice interruptions inviting feature changes to be annoying and unnecessary. It’s technology for its own sake and not something I could really appreciate.

Pickup was good and it was fairly quiet even under load while the transmission was utterly seamless and I liked its responsiveness to mode changes between eco, normal and sport. Overall fuel consumption was good.

It handled well on twisting roads, slowing and stopping without drama and generally coped with any surface it encountered, although you could hear the suspension working away.

Secondary controls were convenient and easy to use, the new displays very clear and the revised interior coloured trim and seat fabric brightens up the blackness of the cabin now there is no piano black surface.

You now have variable heated steering wheel rather than an on-off button to match the heated front seats and the air conditioning is excellent with powered windows to use as well.

It’s as roomy as before with good boot, versatile folding back seat and easy access for every seat.



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You have good vision all-round, efficient wash and wipe both ends along with really bright headlights.

VERDICT



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The newest facelifted Kia Sportage models are more sophisticated than ever although not the leap you might expect, but it's enough to keep them ahead of the pack in a hotly contested market.

For: Better equipped than before, roomy, comfortable, versatile, good ride, reasonable



performance and economy, transferable long warranty.

Against: Road rumbles, cheapened dark interior trim.

Fact file: Kia Sportage GT Line

Price: £35,085

Mechanical: 147 bhp 4 cyl 1600cc petrol engine, 7 speed auto

Max speed: 119 mph

0 - 62 mph: 9.4secs

Fuel consumption: 44.7 mpg

Emissions: 160 g/km

Insurance group: 20E

BIK: 34%, £1360FY, £195SR

Warranty: 7 years/ 100,000 miles

Size: L 4.54 m (14.90 ft), W 1.87 m (6.14 ft), H 1.65 m (5.41 ft)

Bootpace: 591 to 1,780 litres (20.87 to 62.86 ft)

Kerbweight: 1,590 kg (3,505 lb)