# Kia Sportage MY26 – First Impressions

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## Kia Sportage MY26 – First Impressions

**On the back of soaring sales in September, a new Kia Sportage has hit showrooms, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).**

After four generations since 1995 it has become Britain’s most popular family sized SUV and now gets a significant facelift outside and in with a number of technical improvements to build on the range’s powertrain options.

The latest 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.

Its arrival marks the end of a diesel powertrain in the Sportage range.

Prices of the straightforward petrol 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.

Sportage has become a regular badge on UK roads over the last 30 years with 450,000 registered and it currently accounts for 37.8% of Kia UK sales this year, is the best selling SUV and the country's second most popular vehicle.

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






Inside the major changes are to the big touchscreens and their connectivity and the GT-Line S versions get dual 12.3-inch screens, while the piano black console has given way to a brushed-effect finish to hide dust and fingerprints more easily.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

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.

For the HEV models, Kia has introduced selectable retardation power in Eco mode to stretch battery range or you can stick with Sport setting for sharper responses and there is a new page in the infotainment features to show charging rate and efficiency.

Later this year the model series gets an additional Plug-in Hybrid Electric Version including a entry level Pure car with front-wheel-drive to keep down its price.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

We had brief runs in the base Pure six-speed manual and the top of range GT-Line S AWD six-speed automatic, covering both ends of the new series.

The Pure ICE model is likely to be the choice for hire fleets or those who tow and cannot now have a new diesel in the line-up, developing 250 Nm (184 lb.ft)at 4,000rpm over a wide power band.

It had respectable pickup from rest and I liked the light, direct six-speed gearchange, smooth medium travel clutch and saw up to 51 mpg overall, a lot more than expected.

The Pure petrol with front-wheel-drive actually felt more agile than the flagship GT-Line S AWD over an undulating and twisting test route, possibly because it was approximately 180 kg (397 lb) lighter.

Taller, narrower tyres on the Pure also helped reduce road noise while improving ride quality over the GT-Line S AWD.

The top of range model felt more stable when cornering and it's worth going for this in our wet or wintry conditions and which we are led to believe will become more commonplace in future.

The 6AT was very smooth changing and unhesitating in delivering higher or lower gears with the useful ability to choose Eco or Sport settings and therefore select the power feedback into the battery pack.

It's marginally quicker than the ICE model helped by the silent electric motor. We saw 45 mpg overall in the GT-Line S, in line with the WLTP assessment.

Steering was good in both with sharp inputs and no kickback while the brakes were always smooth and strong.

All the 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.

## VERDICT

The refinement and sophistication of the fifth generation Kia Sportage series will impress existing owners, even if it means diesel devotees will have to look elsewhere after Kia extolled the benefits of a compression ignition engine in the previous iterations.

**Breaking news:**

The new Kia Sportage is available with 5.9% across finance offers, with up to £1,500 towards a Finance Deposit Contribution (FDC)

The Kia Electric Car Allowance continues to offer 3.9% APR for EV3 and EV4, with a generous £3,750 FDC towards an ‘Air’ grade, or £1,500 towards ‘GT-Line’ and ‘GT-Line S’ grades

Kia’s other fully electric models are available with no minimum customer deposit and a £1,000 FDC on 3.9% APR finance offers

Opening offers for new Stonic of 5.9% APR with a £1,250 FDC, and K4 available with 7.9% APR and a £1,000 FDC

Five-seat PV5 Passenger available exclusively from Kia PBV Centres with 3.9% APR on retail finance offers, and qualifies for the 1-Year Free Kia Charge ‘Plus’ offer

5.9% APR offers available across new Stonic, XCeed and Niro HEV, in addition to FDCs.