



Kia's latest Sportage – First Impressions

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Author: David Miles, Robin Roberts

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THE ALL-NEW FIFTH GENERATION SPORTAGE – NEWS AND VIEWS

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

Overview

Motoring writers had a static view sneaky peek of the all-new Kia Sportage last November at a Kia UK media test driving event for other models in the range, but this week we got



behind the wheel of this important mid-sized SUV family favourite.

Here is a quick specification résumé by David Miles of the all-new Sportage UK line-up...

It is the fifth generation Sportage with the original Sportage first launched in the UK in 1995.

It is designed and developed for sale in Europe and the Sportage is the biggest-selling Kia model in the UK, Europe and globally. Last year, its final full year of sales in the UK, 27,611 Sportages were sold and 327,502 have been sold in this country through four generations since the first full year of sales in 1995.

UK prices for the new models range from £26,745 for the grade '2' front wheel drive 1.6 petrol and rise to a hefty £43,795 for the top spec yet to arrive 4WD PHEV plug-in hybrid model.

The new model range offers a choice of petrol, diesel, mild hybrid, full hybrid, and plug-in hybrid versions making eight powertrains.

In addition there are five model grades; '2', 'GT-Line', '3', '4' and 'GT-Line S' making 22 different versions, all comprehensively equipped with Kia's famous long 7-years/100,000-miles warranty.

Body

Built in Slovakia the latest Sportage follows the SUV trend for sleek and muscular styling with a long wheelbase to maximise interior rooms. It uses Kia's brand-new 'N3' architecture and measure up by being 30 mm (1.18 in) longer, 10 mm (0.39 in) wider, 10 mm (0.39 in) longer wheelbase and 10 mm (0.39 in) higher. At the front is a very different interpretation of Kia's signature Tiger Nose grille which appears to have similarities to the Peugeot 3008 SUV grille.



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For the first time there is the option of a two-tone black roof available for 'GT-Line S' models, with a choice of four alloy wheel designs across 17, 18 and 19-inch diameters and the availability of 10 body colours.

Interior

The new Sportage of course has a modern design of cabin that looks nicely sculpted with the use of high quality materials. In the fascia are high visual impact twin 12.3-inch



touchscreens forming a curved panoramic display.



Practical functions up-front include a well thought out ergonomically designed centre console providing storage solutions such as the cupholders that fold into the console when not in use, at the touch of a button.

For those taking up the auto transmission option the shift-by-wire selector dial is neat and compact, taking up less space than a traditional gear selector. There is high speed 15 W wireless charging for smartphones on '4' and 'GT-Line S' editions. In addition keeping the interior neat and tidy there are integrated hangers within the slim headrests, allowing clothing and handbags to be conveniently and easily hooked into place.

Rear seat passengers use the 40:20:40 split rear seats which can easily fold down by pulling a lever. There is up to 591 litres (20.87 cu.ft) of luggage space with the seats up and with a



maximum boot capacity of 1,780 litres (62.86 cu.ft) when folding the rear seats down. Overall there is greater headroom, legroom, and boot space than the outgoing Sportage.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Technology and safety

In addition to the twin 12.3-inch touchscreens display which is standard on most variants Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone compatibility is fitted as standard, as is Forward Collision Avoidance Assist (FCA) which now includes sensors for city, pedestrian, cyclists, and junctions.

Highway Driving Assist (HDA), Smart Cruise Control with Stop & Go functionality and paddle shifters are standard on all automatic versions. Lane Follow Assist (LFA) and Lane Keep Assist (LKA) are included on every Sportage as are front and rear parking sensors and reversing camera system.

Blind-spot Collision Avoidance Assist (BCA) with Parking Collision Avoidance Assist (PCA) is standard on '4' and 'GT-Line S' versions. Remote Smart Park Assist (RSPA) for autonomous parking in tight spaces is standard on '4' and 'GT-Line S' hybrid models.

In addition a Harmon Kardon premium sound system is fitted to '4' and 'GT-Line S' editions,

wireless smartphone charging on '4' and 'GT-Line S' models and a free seven-year Kia Connect subscription service is provided on all 'GT-Line' and above models. Advanced connectivity software allows users to connect with their vehicle remotely via the Kia Connect smartphone app and this app also gives peace of mind to owners allowing them to check that the doors are all locked and even the location of where the car is parked.

Powertrains and running gear



Sportage 1.6T-GDi petrol unit in non hybrid, hybrid and PHEV forms.

As already stated there is the choice of petrol, diesel, mild hybrid, full hybrid, and plug-in hybrid drivetrains, and depending on the power unit buyers can choose between front and all-wheel drive options.

The new range kicks off with 148 bhp 1.6 T-GDi petrol and 113 bhp 1.6 CRDi diesel engines. The 1.6-litre T-GDi petrol engine is also offered with 48-volt mild hybrid technology for the first time and the 48-volt mild hybrid technology has as standard a seven-speed DCT automatic gearbox for both petrol and diesel drivetrains.

Talking of diesel engines, when rivals are limiting diesel options, Kia offers two choices, with 113 bhp 1.6-litre CRDi unit and manual gearbox or 134 bhp with mild hybrid technology and seven-speed DCT automatic transmission.



The 1.6 T-GDi petrol electric full hybrid models pack 226 bhp of punch and are offered with both 2WD and AWD. The battery pack for these HEV models is placed underneath the back seats resulting in similar rear legroom to petrol and diesel versions.

The AWD option is available with petrol and diesel 48-volt mild hybrid units in '4' and 'GT-Line S' specifications and full hybrid AWD is available on 'GT-Line S' models.

As a broad guide, depending on the power unit/hybrid/drivetrain chosen current CO2 figures are as low as 132 g/km and rise up to 158 g/km. Combined Cycle fuel economy figures range from 54.3 mpg to 40.4 mpg depending on the power units and drivetrain. These figures do not include the PHEV model which is yet to arrive.

The latest Sportage is capable of towing braked loads of up to 1,650kg (3,924 lb).

Behind the wheel of the new Kia Sportage – By Robin Roberts.



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The fifth generation New Sportage is a big advance over the outgoing series. It's roomier and far better equipped with standard features such as the very large twin screens for the driver and passenger, enhanced safety systems and sharper driving dynamics.

There is a more up-market appearance to the interior, particularly across the fascia and flowing around the door casings while the centre console designs subtly change depending on chosen trim and drive train.

Seats are very good with a lot of adjustment in front and boot access is easy and simple to



expand.

We drove only 1.6 litre petrol models as likely to be the better sellers in normal 148 bhp output front wheel drive with six-speed manual box, and the mild-48V hybrid version with all-wheel-drive and seven-speed sequential dual clutch automatic.

The 3 Grade car was fitted with 17-inch wheels and tyres, was smooth, handled well with good gearchanges and using long-legged overdrive ratios on 4, 5 and 6 gears. This returned up to 44.4 mpg on our first drive.

The GT-Line S 48V DCT AWD was shod with larger 18-inch tyres and the ride was noticeably stiffer though still comfortable. It handled more tautly and pick up was sharper while the changes were really velvet smooth and quick going up or down the box using the paddles. Over a slightly shorter route than before we managed to return 37 mpg, possibly because the eagerness of the engine and transmission encouraged a more enthusiastic driving style.



There was a price difference between the two models of £8,300 so it shows you have to carefully evaluate what you want in the New Sportage and you will not be spoiled for choice.

Existing Sportage owners may wince at the prices but the Kia Sportage has raised its game by a big margin and can be seen as a strong rival to the best from the leading German brands.

At a time when diesel has been ostracised there is no escaping it still makes sense for the



high mileage business user and private hire or taxi operators, backed up with the very comprehensive seven years/ 100,000 miles warranty.

The business buyers also tend to specify the top of range versions and contrast with private purchasers who look for a very good entry-level package without all the trimmings when using their own money. The taxi trade fall between them.

Together, the entry level 2 Grade and top GT-Line S Grade will make up the majority of New Sportage sales this year and Kia expect the arrival of the PHEV versions to gradually replace the diesel demand with their greater BIK benefit.

On-line enquiries and reservations since December 2021 have seen 3,000 orders to be fulfilled over coming weeks and Sportage is expected to easily remain Kia UK's best seller.



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