Latest and Outstandingly-economical Dacia Logan MCV – Road Test

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2017 Dacia Logan MCV Runs on Air – Well Almost!

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Before I tell you anything about the 2017 Dacia brand, their sales, their low prices, I must explain the headline. My Dacia Logan MCV (Maximum Capacity Vehicle) family five door estate with a 1.5 Renault sourced dCi 90 hp turbodiesel engine returned an unbelievable 86.07mpg during my week long test driving spell.

This was no economy drive but my normal driving of commuting trips to town, a longer country roads journey and a motorway/dual carriageway journey at 70 mph cruising speeds with a fully loaded vehicle.

How do I know the figure is correct, it seemed impossible it could be that good? Well the test car arrived at my office with the gauge still showing full of fuel. But with this budget buy £10,895 estate not having an on-board computer to give me the mpg figure or the driving range left in the tank there was no way of knowing what the real-life mpg figure was going to be.

So a fill-up to fill-up check was the option. What really started to concern me was after 100 miles the fuel gauge hadn't moved, it still hadn't after 173 miles so a pit-stop was called for to top-up the tank just in case the gauge was faulty. It took just 9.01 litres, or two gallons in UK terms, and a quick calculation showed indeed the figure was 86.07 mpg. And it didn't stop there because after the return journey the gauge still hadn't moved. The only concession I made was driving the Logan diesel in its ECO setting as I do with most test cars.

The other good news, apart from the low purchase price and brilliant fuel economy, is that this engine officially returns 80.7 mpg in the official EU Combined Cycle test so it is probably the only car I have driven over numerous years that has done better than the official figure, other than taking part in economy driving events. With CO2 emissions of just 90g/km, VED road tax is relatively low cost as well with the new First Year rate costing £100 before the £140 Standard Rate applies for year two onwards. Company car drivers will pay 20% Benefit-in-Kind tax and insurance is a low 9E rating.

All Dacia models are covered by a three-year/60,000-mile warranty and the firm was one of only four manufacturers to be awarded a five star reliability rating out of 36 manufacturers in the 2017 Which Car Guide survey, the largest of its kind in the UK with over 44,000 car owners surveyed.



The Dacia Logan estate actually has on-the-road prices starting from £7,295 and they top out at £12,095. There are three engines on offer, two petrol and one diesel. The petrol units are a 1.0 litre three cylinder normally aspirated 73 hp unit and 898cc turbo three cylinder 90 hp unit. The turbodiesel is a 1.5 litre four cylinder 90 hp unit. All have five speed manual gearboxes but an automatic option for the diesel engine is due shortly. When it comes to specification levels there is a choice of three. The base Access level is only available with the 73 hp petrol engine, Ambiance and Laureate levels are available with all three engine

options.

A Stepway version of the Logan is also due, priced from £11,495. This has muscular styling with flared wheelarches, low body protective cladding and a raised ground clearance to give it an all-terrain look even though it's still front wheel drive (rather than four wheel drive).



The 2017 Dacia UK range also consists of the five door Sandero hatchback, billed as the most affordable new car available in the UK at £5,995. Next in line is the Sandero Stepway priced from £8,995 and the best selling Dacia Duster – the most affordable SUV with 2WD and 4WD versions priced from £9,495.

Renault acquired the Romanian Dacia company in 1999 and was re-launched with new models in 2004 and over four million Dacias have been sold in that period in 38 countries. Sales started in the UK in 2013 and over 100,000 have been sold since then, mainly to customers buying their first new car. For the first seven months of this year Dacia UK sales are 15,847 cars, an increase of 6.8% over the same period last year in a UK new car market showing a fall of 2.2%. The value-for-money Dacia brand now outsells longer established brands such as Infiniti, Jeep, MG, Mitsubishi, SsangYong and Subaru. UK sales of Dacia vehicles are handled either through Renault dealerships or on-line via their dedicated sales website.

The Dacia Logan MCV five door, five seater estate perhaps will not win many awards for its styling inside or out. There are no curvaceous panels or sharp styling lines but just an honest and practical package. There is no tinny sound when closing doors, the vehicle feels solid and well-built using Renault knowhow and components. With an overall body length of 4,501 mm (14.77 ft) there is ample room for five passengers and that still leaves a boot with a capacity of 573 litres (20.24 cu.ft). Fold down the 60/40 split rear seat backs and this goes up to 1,518 litres (53.61 cu.ft).

I tried the Ambiance dCi 90 turbodiesel version, the mid range spec level with its frugal turbodiesel engine, Renault's best selling engine overall. The spec includes ECO mode with Stop & Start, remote central door locking, anti-lock braking, stability control, hill start assist, front and side airbags, ISOFIX child seat points, LED daytime running lights, 15-inch steel wheels with alloy style wheel trims, tinted windows, roof rails, air-con, electric front windows, remote manual door mirrors, DAB radio, Bluetooth and perhaps the only two missing items of equipment would be the on-board computer and cruise control with this grade level but at £10,895 that is not going to be a deal-breaker. The options are very limited, metallic paint costs £495, the height-adjustment pack for the steering wheel, driver's seat and front seat belts costs £50 and the must-have emergency spare wheel is £100.

The 2017 model year Logan estates have received updated and upgraded equipment and

minimal styling tweaks. A new honeycomb grille, revised bumpers, new wheel designs and new bodywork colours. Inside the changes include chrome trim detailing, a new style steering wheel, upgraded upholstery and additional storage space. The heating controls are sensibly placed but are a bit rustic in look and feel.

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The ride comfort and overall handling are good and the steering well weighted. It's not meant to be a sports estate but it is equipped with what most practical customers want.

The 1.5 litre turbodiesel engine with 90 hp and 220 Nm (162 lb.ft) of torque available from 1,750 rpm is relatively quiet except when it's fully under load, and the engine can run out of puff overtaking slower traffic at speeds above 50 mph. The five speed manual gearbox has well-spaced ratios to suit the torque output, with fifth gear being more of an overdrive ratio. The engine drones and felt less happy in fifth gear at speeds below 50 mph so for country roads more driving was done in fourth gear than fifth but as my test drive overall fuel economy proves, that didn't harm fuel consumption. Having a high ratio fifth gear means that 70 mph cruising speeds requires just 2,000 rpm so that helps fuel economy. The top speed is 107 mph and the zero to 62 mph acceleration time is 11.8 seconds – well in keeping with its no-nonsense approach for no frills economical motoring.

VERDICT

Inexpensive to buy, practical and super-economical on fuel.

For: For the price it's hard to fault, fantastic real-life fuel economy on test, low taxes, budget purchase price, reasonable no frills level of specification, comfortable ride, roomy, a thoroughly practical estate for family or work use.

Against: Bland exterior and interior styling, hard plastic interior trim, some rustic quality controls, limited mid-range acceleration, small criticisms and at this price in the real world who really cares?



Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Dacia Logan MCV Ambiance dCi 90 estate.

Price: £10,895.

Engine/transmission: 1.5 litre, four cylinder, turbodiesel, 90 hp, 220 Nm (162 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, five speed manual.

Performance: 107 mph, 0-62 mph 11.8-seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 80.7 mpg (86.07 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 90 g/km, VED road tax £100 First Year rate then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 20%.

Insurance Group: 9E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,501 mm (14.77 ft), W 1,733 mm (5.69 ft), H 1,552 mm (5.09 ft), boot/load space 573 to 1,518 litres (20.24 to 53.61 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,100 kg (2,425 lb), five doors/five seats.