Latest Nissan X-Trail – Road Test

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LONG SERVING NISSAN X-TRAIL EVOLVES INTO A SOFTER CROSSOVER.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Nissan introduced the original X-Trail in 2001 when it was a hard-core proper dual-purpose 4×4 workhorse which sold in huge numbers around the world. From 2007 the X-Trail moved from hard-core 4×4 to SUV/Crossover and in 2017 received further restyling and specification changes to soften its image into a more family friendly suitable model. It completes the Nissan's modern SUV/Crossover range of Juke, Qashqai and X-Trail.

The large X-Trail shares much of its design, components and technology with the very

popular Nissan Qashqai mid-sized SUV and with five or seven seat models the X-Trail has replaced the Qashqai+2. Its competitors are numerous and include the Skoda Kodiaq, SEAT Tarraco, Peugeot 5008, Mazda CX-5, Citroën C5 Aircross, Kia Sportage, Hyundai Santa Fe, Honda CR-V – and if you venture into the more expensive premium brands then add in the Audi Q5, BMW X3/X5 and Land Rover Discovery Sport.

The latest X-Trail only offers two engine options; the 1.3 litre DIG-T 160 hp turbo petrol which comes as standard with a 7-speed DCT dual clutch auto transmission and with 2WD. The largest choice of models comes with the 1.7 litre dCi 150 hp turbodiesel unit which is available with 6-speed manual, CVT Xtronic automatic transmissions with 2WD and 4WD options for both gearboxes.

Depending on the engine chosen the full spec level line-up is Visia, Acenta, Acenta Premium, N-Connecta and Tekna. Prices range from £25,795 to £35,045. The 7-seat upgrade ranges from £660 to £1,000 depending on the spec level of the vehicle. There is a wide range of extra cost options, everything to please the modern-day family life from tow bars for pulling a horse trailer, boat or caravan, to ski and snowboard carriers and to impress the neighbours side styling bars and larger alloy wheel options.

Using the CMF platform from the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Motors conglomerate the X-Trail is a shade longer than its predecessor but has a 60 mm (2.36 in) longer wheelbase over the Qashqai which also uses the same modular platform. The overall vehicle length is 4,690 mm (15.39 ft), width 1,830 mm (6.00 ft), 1,740 mm (5.71 ft) with roof rails and a long wheelbase of 2,705 mm (8.87 ft). The ground clearance is a valuable 210 mm (8.27 in) for those users who might still venture off-road.

The all-important interior space can be configured to accommodate up to seven passengers but the optional rear row has two small seats suitable only for children. But even with those in use there are still 445 litres (15.71 cu.ft) of boot space. In its five seat configuration the boot space is 565 litres (19.95 cu.ft) and with the second and third row of seats folded down the load area is 1,996 litres (70.49 cu.ft). The braked towing weight is 1,500 kg (3,307 lb)

for petrol and 2WD diesel auto models but 2,000 kg (4,409 lb) for diesel 2WD/4WD manual versions.



Styling wise the sharp angles and square-ness of the first generation X-Trail body has long gone and evolved to a Crossover SUV, heralded by smoother rounded muscular styling lines with the usual rising waistline and large opening tailgate at the rear. The side doors are also wide opening as well allowing easy access for young or old. Visibility is generally good due to the high seat positions but limited through the tailgate due to the high rear seat head restraints. At the front is the now familiar Nissan V-motion grille design flanked by sleek lights. It has all the styling cues we are familiar with from the best selling Qashqai models so for X-Trail think Qashqai but bigger.


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Inside it’s much the same – a scaled up Qashqai so it’s roomy and comfortable, with well laid out switches and proper controls. The only disappointment is the small-size 7-inch touchscreen which operates the sat-nav and entertainment functions, which is standard for Acenta Premium and above spec levels. The all-important safety driving functions termed Smart Vision Pack is fitted to all but the lowest spec level model and includes Traffic Sign Recognition, Lane Departure Warning, Intelligent Forward Emergency Braking with Pedestrian Recognition and front and rear parking sensors. From that grade onwards more spec items are added but perhaps not over-generously. I couldn’t see or find connectivity functions such as Apple CarPlay or Android Auto and it’s not shown in the media or public specifications or in the price list or on the vehicle for that matter. Bluetooth connectivity is included.

My top of the range, Tekna spec 1.7 litre, 250 hp manual 4WD 7-seat model costs £33,595 plus £575 for the Gun metallic paint finish and £660 for the 7-seat upgrade, making a total on the road price of £34,830. Some of the Tekna higher specification includes heated front seats, heated second row seats, heated steering wheel, adaptive auto LED headlights, Safety Shield including Blind Spot Warning and rear Cross Traffic Alert, electronic handbrake with auto hold function, electrically adjustable front seats, electric tailgate opening and closing, leather upholstery, panoramic sunroof, DAB radio. There is a close to hand easy to use rotary 2WD/4WD Auto switch which can be easily used as and when required giving the 4WD X-Trail a reasonable amount of off-road ability but it's no longer a heavy-duty mud-plugger. The 4WD ability is more suited for getting caravans, horse trailers and boats into position and back onto firm ground again and of course providing better grip on winter roads.

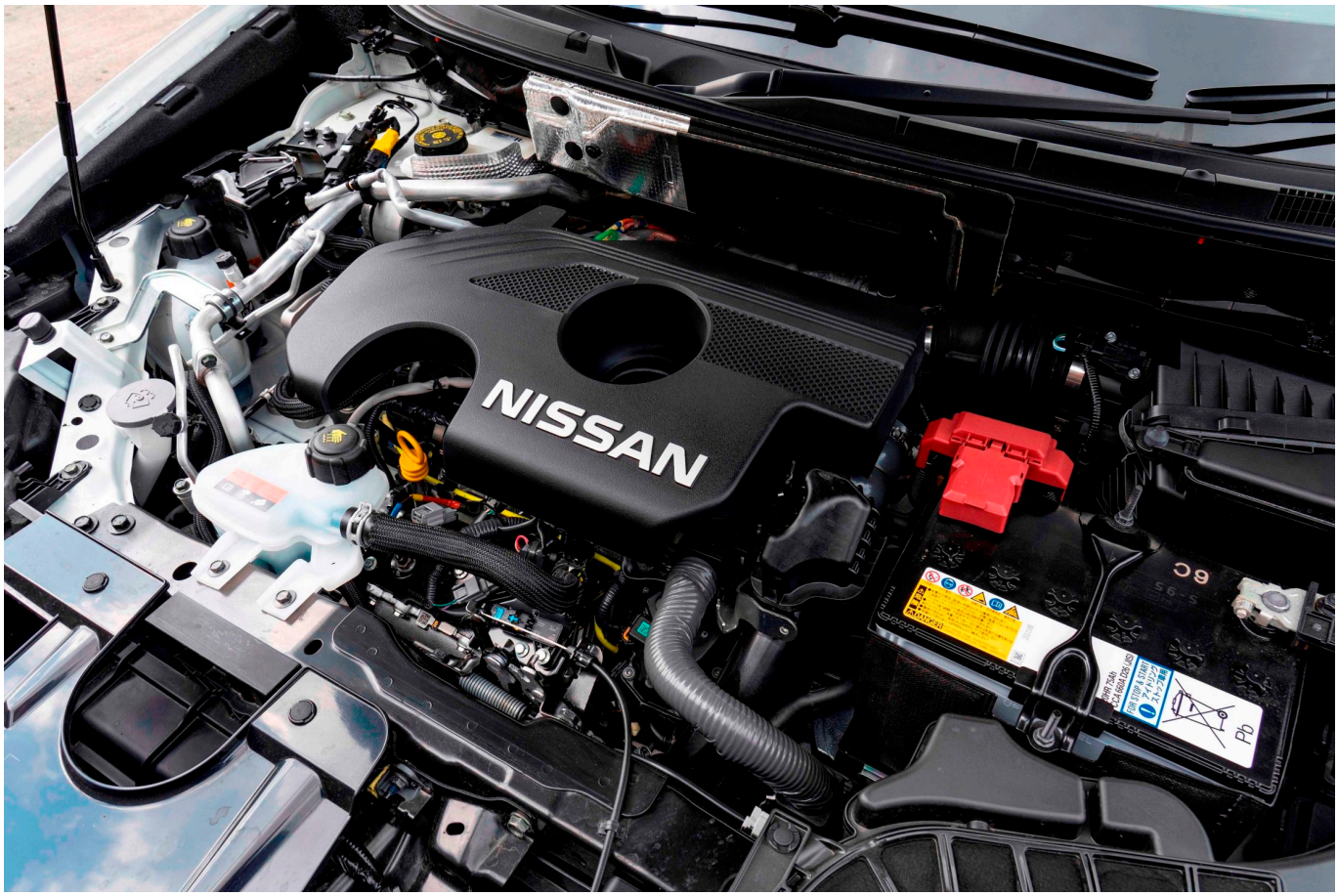
Overall the interior layout and design is practical for family use, good storage, easy to load seats and baggage area and of a reasonable quality. It's sort of semi-plush on a budget but at least the trim and coverings are going to be durable which is all the majority of customers want.

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The ride quality and handling errs towards the softer side which is no bad thing for most customers. There is some body roll during cornering due to the softer suspension settings but for such a tall vehicle we have to be realistic about its roll in life, it's roomy family or business transport fit for the long haul.

Under the bonnet is a 1.7-litre dCi, 4-cylinder turbodiesel engine from the Renault-Nissan family. It is perhaps of smaller capacity than we might have expected for a large SUV but long-gone are 2.0 litre diesel engines from the previous X-Trail models. This newer unit pushes out 150 hp and 340 Nm (251 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm which is just about enough to make it practical and not frustrating to drive on longer journeys. The 6-speed manual gearbox has higher gear ratios from 4-6th gears, ideal for long-legged cruising but

driving on country winding and hilly roads meant changing between ratios on a regular basis to keep the torque on offer within the engine's rev range. Top speed is more than adequate at 121 mph but the zero to 62 mph acceleration time is a modest 10.7 seconds. But again we have to moderate our thoughts because for most users in the real-world of modern motoring it will be fast enough.



The Official WLTP Combined Cycle fuel consumption figures are 39.9 to 41.5 mpg and my week of test driving during lockdown was limited but the overall average was 40.1 mpg with one motorway journey showing 42.2 mpg. The CO2 emissions are 154 g/km so VED First Year diesel rate road tax is £850 followed by £150 Standard rate. The company car driver will pay the maximum 37% Benefit-in-Kind tax rate because of the added 4% for diesel cars. Insurance Group 21E and Warranty 3-years/60,000-miles.

VERDICT

Overall the X-Trail is a big chip of the Qashqai block – which is no bad thing. Look on it as the Qashqai that offers more space albeit for slightly more money. The medium sized Nissan Qashqai is the UK's best selling SUV and the X-Trail is a larger version of the Qashqai so it deserves consideration.

For: A larger version of the best selling Qashqai midsized SUV, well equipped apart from connectivity functions, comfortable and compliant ride, roomy with lots of seating and load carrying options, wide opening doors for easy access.

Against: Higher diesel taxation costs, lack of connectivity function even for this top spec version, small and fiddly touchscreen, moderate acceleration performance, soft handling during cornering, no longer built in Britain, ungenerous warranty.

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

Nissan X-Trail Tekna 1.7 dCi 150 hp, 4WD, manual 7-seat SUV.



Price: £33,595 (£34,830 as tested with options).

Engine/transmission: 1.7 litre, 4-cylinder, direct injection turbodiesel, 150 hp, 340 Nm (251 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, 6-speed manual gearbox with on demand 2WD/4WD. Performance: 121 mph, 0 – 62 mph 10.7 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 39.8 to 41.5 mpg (40.1 mpg overall on test). Emissions and taxation: CO2 154 g/km, VED First Year diesel rate road tax £850 then £150 Standard rate, BiK diesel rate company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 21E.

Warranty: 3 years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,690 mm (15.39 ft), W 1,830 mm (6.00 ft), H 1,740 mm (5.71 ft), wheelbase 2,705 mm (8.87 ft), boot/load space 445 to 1,996 litres (15.71 to 70.49 cu.ft), braked towing capacity 2,000 kg (4,409 lb), 5-doors/5+2 seating.