Mazda CX-5 2.2D – Road Test

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Not to be overlooked in the SUV market, Mazda's CX-5 2.2D Sport Nav Automatic is a worthy contender.

By Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency)

Mazda has a reputation for quietly getting on with the job and building some great if unassuming cars, such as the CX-5 large SUV.

It also proves it's not a one-trick pony, best known for the stunning sporty MX-5 two-seater. It also builds a very good SUV in the shape of the CX-5 and you may consider it's the natural

step up from the sports car when family responsibilities kick in.

The Mazda CX-5 range runs to ten models split over two trim levels, SE-L Nav and Sport Nav, with manual or automatic transmissions and a choice of 165 hp 2.0 petrol 2WD and 150/175 hp 2.2 turbodiesel engines with 2WD and 4WD choices. Prices range from £23,995 to £33,395 and we tested the top model in the range.

Our 2.2 TD manual was one of the most popular and impressive with good pull once on the move through the gears, and then settling down to a steady long-legged cruising gate on main roads where it proved economical.



The automatic transmission is quick and very smooth up or down ratios and it is matched with nicely balanced steering for easy parking or effortless open-road precision.

The footbrake matched the power underfoot and the parking brake held it on a steep test slope we use for comparisons.

There was a lot to like about the simple, well-placed switchgear and straightforward instruments, but which could have been better marked.

Climate control system was easy to understand, use and effective and oddments space was good for a family car. It was effortless to load the boot from the back and its capacity was good – and soon increased when the seatbacks were dropped.

Driver and passengers had no trouble getting into the cabin, with plenty of front seat adjustment and comfortable support, and even those behind did not complain about a lack of leg or headroom.

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From the driving seat I had issues with over-the-shoulder vision when leaving a junction or pulling into a stream of traffic, or when reversing. Sensors and camera are a necessity but you still need to exercise caution.

At night the headlights were bright and far reaching while the wipers did a good job in heavy rain.

On the move you could hear the suspension absorbing bumps and potholes but generally it smoothed them out very well despite its bias towards firmness overall.

That may be due to the 4×4 transmission, but there was no harshness through the system and it coped very well with wintry roads that seemed to linger for too long around us.



Handling was surefooted, responses good and body roll or pitching was minimal so you never felt out of control or likely to induce sickness on longer runs.

I would have liked less four-cylinder engine noise at higher revs and muted road noise. Mazda could reduce that with thicker insulation of the cabin area and under the bonnet.

Unlike one of its Mazda siblings, the CX-5 is not a sports car but it has a respectable acceleration, is refined on motorways and can give almost 40mpg overall.

VERDICT

It does nothing badly but a lot very well.

For: Strong powertrain, compliant ride, overall refinement, easy drive.

Against: Some rear visibility issues and road/engine noise intrusions, high CO2 emission figure so high tax costs, ungenerous warranty.



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

Mazda CX-5 2.2D 4WD Sport Nav, Automatic, SUV.

Price: £33,395.

Engine/transmission: 2.2 litre,175 hp, four cylinder turbodiesel, six speed auto, 4WD.

Performance: 126 mph, 0–62mph 9.4 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 51.4 mpg (38 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 152 g/km, VED First Year road tax £830, Standard rate £140, BiK company car tax 35%.

Insurance Group: 23E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.56 m (14.96 ft), W 1.84 m (6.04 ft), H 1.71 m (5.61 ft), boot/load space 503 to 1,620 litres (17.76 to 57.21 cu.ft) braked towing weight 2,000 kg (4,409 lb), five doors/five seats.