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Mazda CX-80 FD – First Impressions/First Drive

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Mazda has launched a new flagship CX-80 to do battle in the luxury seven-seater SUV sector in Britain, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales)...

After a tough year for car sales in 2024, Mazda did better than most and wants to attract new buyers to the brand with the CX-80, which is slightly bigger than the five-seat CX-60 SUV it introduced in Spring 2022.

They share the same platform which has been given new rear suspension under both models for 2025 to sharpen handling while the emphasis is also on high levels of standard equipment at prices which undercut rivals from



Germany and Korea.



With a 25 cms (9.84 ins) longer wheelbase and 2 cm (0.79 in) higher roofline, the CX-80 stretches to include a third row of individually folding twin seats. The profile of the CX-80 is different to its shorter stablemate to emphasise the additional seating.

To appeal to buyers with differing needs, the CX-80 will have five trim levels with options to specify one of three mid-seat configurations from a traditional bench, two captain's seats with a walk-through gap or a fixed centre console.



The options are intended to appeal to buyers differing requirements and lifestyles.

Powered by the same engines as the Mazda CX-60, there is a choice of plug-in hybrid combining a Skyactiv-G 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine with a 129 kW electric motor producing 327 PS and a 17.8 kWh high-capacity battery – or Mazda’s advanced in-line six-cylinder 254 PS 3.3-litre e-Skyactiv D diesel engine. Across both powertrain options, the Mazda CX-80 is exclusively matched to all-wheel drive.

It is also the first Mazda to feature Amazon’s Alexa in-car voice controls for infotainment and apps.

Jeremy Thomson, Managing Director, Mazda Motors UK, said, “The all-new Mazda CX-80 is our new flagship SUV, a car that sits at the very top of our range in the UK, it offers a unique blend of space, practicality, luxury and stand-out design.

The all-new Mazda CX-80 is a car that will allow us to challenge the established premium brands in the UK market with a luxury SUV that is the most spacious car in Mazda’s European line-up. This opens the Mazda brand up to UK customers who need the space and practicality of a three-row large SUV.”

Mazda UK sales director Laura Brailey added that global registrations for the brand rose 11% last year to a record 1.4 M and in Britain it intended to lift its current 117 dealership outlets to about 126 by filling open points by 2026.



We have seen a downturn in private sales but we know more people have moved to pcp and lease deals with businesses and charity groups so the usual 40/ 60 split is now fairly even at 50/50.”

The arrival of the new CX-80 and reworked CX-60 shows Mazda’s intention to offer purchasers a range of power options and it will not take a headlong rush into the pure electric powertrain but rather develop key models to meet buyers’ wishes and needs up to 2050.

There are 172 countries worldwide who will demand petrol and diesel cars for decades, said Graeme Fudge, Mazda UK PR Director.

The new Mazda CX-80 PHEV range costs between £49,670 and £56,420 while the diesel models are priced £52,205 and £59,165. The latest CX-60 models come in from £45,420 to £49,520.

First impressions

It’s big and very roomy.

Those are the first features to strike you about the new Mazda CX-80, the largest model ever sold by the brand in Britain.

Access is very good to the front and in our six-seats test car the two captain’s seats and walk-through middle seats made it much easier to reach the rearmost pair of seats. With this set-up the nominal luggage space is about 280 litres (9.89 cu.ft.), just enough for a couple of suitcases, but it has a



maximum 1,971 litres (69.61 cu.ft) when used just with the front seats.

The seats were very deeply shaped and soft with fold-away armrests on the mid-pair and legroom was good, even for an adult in the rear, so long as a trip was not too long.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

The proven powertrain with eight-speed automatic box was extremely smooth-shifting and easily changed modes from normal to sport or into EV and Off-road.

The size becomes apparent in car parks or country lanes but on A and B-class roads it had good pickup and reassuring handling with good brakes.

The revised suspension to cope with additional loading was fine on good surfaces, but the 20-inch wheels did pick up a lot of bumps and potholes and the ride was not as compliant as I expected – and it does not come with adjustable suspension which is best in an SUV expected to do a number of tasks from light to heavy loadings.

Our run in the CX-60 diesel five-seater showed up the flexibility of the engine and its ability to pull from low revs without problems and maintain easy progress on A-roads. This is probably the better version if towing, and its minimum boot space is 570 litres (20.13 cu.ft), double that of its stablemate.

Oddly, the ride in the CX-60 felt smoother than in the CX-80 and the anticipated engine noise was well muted.



VERDICT

Both models are eye-catching, well equipped and come in at highly competitive price points.

