# New Hyundai Tucson Road Test

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## The New Hyundai Tucson SUV is Already Driving Up Hyundai's UK Sales Says David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The demand by customers for SUVs and Crossovers small, medium and large has made

these types of vehicles the best selling sector in the European new car market and the third best selling sector in the UK, where sales increased by 21% last year.

Such is the demand, even manufacturers who have never had an SUV in their line-up, and for others who have, they are busy introducing new or refreshed ranges.

The South Korean brand of Hyundai has recently replaced their popular ix35 mid-sized SUV with their all-new Tucson range, which is priced from £18,995 to £32,695. Reflecting the wide range of prices there is a substantial number of different models. Current engine choices are 1.6 GDI petrol or 1.7 and 2.0 litre CRDi turbodiesels, with power outputs from 116 hp up to 185 hp. Depending on the engine chosen there are 2WD and 4WD options, manual and automatic transmission choices and a wide range of S, SE, SE Nav, Premium and Premium SE specification levels.

Demand is already strong in the UK market for the new five seater mid-sized Tucson. Early sales reportedly make it the brand's current top seller with 13,000 registrations, well ahead of the predicted 9,000 sales.

As a guide to the likely best selling version it could be the mid spec SE Nav with the 1.7 litre 116 hp turbodiesel engine, manual gearbox and 2WD, priced at £23,145. With the potential for fleet and business-user sales this version has an official Combined Cycle figure of 61.7 mpg with CO2 emissions of 119 g/km so road tax is £0 First Year rate and £30 thereafter and Benefit-in-Kind company car tax is 23% from 1 April this year.

The new Tucson was designed and engineered in Europe and is now built at Hyundai's facility in the Czech Republic. The vehicles are covered by their highly valued five year unlimited mileage warranty. The Tucson's competitors include the industry's best selling Nissan Qashqai, followed by the Mazda CX-5, Renault Kadjar, Peugeot 3008, new Toyota RAV4, Ford Kuga, new VW Tiguan, Honda HR-V, new Suzuki Vitara, Mitsubishi ASX, Land Rover Discovery Sport, BMW X1/X3 and Audi Q3/Q5. There is also the Tucson's family member from Kia – the slightly cheaper £17,465 to £31,645, new Sportage.

Hyundai first entered the European SUV market with the large Santa Fe in 2000 and the latest version came along last year. Following the original Santa Fe the first Tucson mid-sized SUV followed and in 2009 it was replaced by the very popular ix35. Now that has been replaced by a new model range again bearing the Tucson name.

So what goes around in name terms come around again and my first test drive of the all-new Tucson was in the near top of the range 2.0 litre CRDi 136 hp automatic version with 4WD and Premium SE specification, carrying a price tag of £31,825. I admit this will not be the best-selling model but Hyundai want to showcase their move upmarket with this all-new range. Hyundai Motor UK President and CEO Tony Whitehorn is on record as saying, “The new Tucson will further the brand’s appeal to new and existing customers.” The ix35 it replaces accounted for 20% of Hyundai’s UK sales and the Tucson is on course to better that.




The most noticeable thing about the Tucson is its imposing exterior size with a body length of 4,475 mm (14.7 ft), extra width at 1,850 mm (6.1 ft) and it's also higher at 1,650 mm (5.4 ft). It fronts-up with a very attractive face dominated by a hexagonal grille flanked by sleek swept back LED headlight units. The front bumper incorporates neat daytime LED running lights and the overall appearance is a visual reference to the vehicle's wide track. To the side is the now commonplace rising waistline, deep sculptured door panels and a coupe style roofline which slopes down to the rear but doesn't restrict rear seat passenger headroom. At the rear is a substantial wide opening tailgate, electrically operated on my

test model, which gives easy and flat access to a 513 litre (18.1 cu.ft) boot with a tyre inflation kit or 488 litres (17.2 cu.ft) with the spare wheel mounted under the load floor of the boot. This increases with the 60-40 split folding rear seats lowered to a useful 1,503 litres (53.1 cu.ft) or 1,478 litres (52.2 cu.ft) with the spare wheel option. Overall it looks like a slightly scaled down version of Hyundai Santa Fe 2.2 litre turbodiesel 200 hp five or seven seat SUVs,which are priced from £31,845 and rise to £38,995.

First impressions of the Tucson's interior is again about size – it's roomy front and rear with plenty of width and good headroom. The seats are comfortable and the dashboard sensibly and logically laid out with plenty of seat adjustment, electrically operated on my high-spec model. There is also good up and down and fore and aft steering column adjustment, all helping provide a good driving position. In the rear there is enough width for three adults and the low-height transmission tunnel doesn't limit foot space for the middle seated passenger.

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The plastic trim has various forms of textures and generally they look neat and well-fitted but some of them are hard to the touch and look prone to scuff marks. My test version had leather upholstery which looks nice but whether it's 'real' leather or a cheaper manufactured type I'm not sure. The front seats are heated and also have a fan assisted cooling function.

The base level S trim includes such items as DAB digital radio, Bluetooth, 16-inch alloy wheels, air-con, automatic lights, electrically operated windows and door mirrors. And so the spec gets loaded further as you go up the range with larger wheels, an 8.0-inch touchscreen, reversing camera, TomTom navigation with live services, road speed real-time sign recognition and lane keep assist. The Premium and Premium SE levels additions include 19-inch alloy wheels, front parking sensors, rear cross traffic alert, automatic wipers, autonomous emergency braking, blind spot detection, heated outer rear seats, heated steering wheel, keyless entry, smart parking assist for auto transmission versions

and a panoramic sunroof with an electric tilt and slide facility. Special praise goes to the excellent sat-nav system, it's live, it's fast, it's easy to use, reliable and above all informative – a definite must have item I think. Praise also must go to the driver aid systems – in particular the blind spot detection facility was really useful as the rear quarter visibility is limited.

With the all-new platform and suspension system tuned for European roads, even the worst of British road surfaces didn't unduly unsettle the composed handling. The suspension is set up to give a softer ride but that didn't induce significant body-roll during cornering, or pitching fore and aft during acceleration and braking. Only the steering lacked feedback, but it was precise enough. The 4WD system provides 100% of the drive to the front wheels most of the time with up to 50% sent automatically to the rear wheels if front end grip is reduced. The traction control cornering function combines with the variable torque distribution, so in the event of front end understeer higher torque is sent to the rear axle to improve cornering grip. There is also a 4WD Lock setting which locks the torque delivery 50/50 front and rear for off-road travel.

When it comes to the choice of engine, whilst the 1.7 litre 116 hp turbodiesel unit is likely to be the most popular choice, because of its lower purchase cost and less emissions, it is reported to be lack-lustre in performance. However the 2.0 litre, 136 hp turbodiesel engine I tried proved to be a refined unit with plenty of linear power delivery and a healthy 373 Nm (275 lb.ft) of torque delivered from just 1,500 rpm. Mated with the six-speed automatic transmission the two provided progressive power delivery with smooth changes up and down the ratios. My test model also had 4WD, and there is a Sport button which sharpens the engine and auto gearbox responses if needed. Top speed is 114mph and zero to 62mph takes 12.0 seconds; it's not class-leading but it is more than adequate for most people's use.

The official Combined Cycle fuel consumption is 47.1 mpg and on a long motorway journey my test car retuned 42.7 mpg, which reduced to an overall average of 38.4 mpg once local driving trips had been undertaken. The CO2 emissions are a high 160 g/km which means VED road tax is £180 a year and company car drivers will pay a high 32% Benefit-in-Kind

tax. Choosing a manual transmission with 4WD instead of the auto gearbox will significantly reduce tax gathering CO2 emissions to 139 g/km, VED to £130 and BIK tax 27%. It also reduces the cost of the vehicle by £1,500.

## VERDICT

If a mid-sized SUV is your choice of vehicle, and there is a fast growing amount of new customers who want one, the Hyundai Tucson has to be considered on its road presence, interior space, high levels of equipment and for some versions they are very competitively priced. But care should be taken on exactly what model is chosen, not just on price but on running costs as well.

For: Handsome bold styling, spacious and well laid out interior, high specification, comfortable ride, refined engine and auto gearbox combination, good to drive, long warranty.

Against: Top spec 4WD/auto models are expensive to buy and run, high CO2 emissions for this version so higher tax and running costs, some hard plastic interior trim.




MILESTONES AND WHEELS-ALIVE TECH. SPEC. IN BRIEF:

New Hyundai Tucson SUV, Premium SE 2.0 CRDi 136hp 4WD automatic.

Engine: 2.0 litre, 4 cylinder turbodiesel, 136 hp, 373 Nm (275 lb.ft) of torque from just 1,500 rpm.

Transmission: 6-speed auto with manual mode, on demand 4WD with Lock function.
Performance:

0-62mph 12.0-seconds.

Top speed: 114 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 47.1 mpg (38.4 mpg overall on test).

Emissions: CO2 160 g/km, VED road tax £180, BIK company car tax 32%.

Insurance Group: 23.

Warranty: 5 years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: 5 Doors, 5 seats, L 4,475 mm (14.7 ft), W 1,850 mm (6.1 ft), H 1,650 mm (5.4 ft), boot/load space 513 to 1,503 litres (18.1 to 53.1 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,900 kg (4,189 lb).

Price: £31,825.