New Vauxhall Mokka X 1.4T Auto 4WD Road Test

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Vauxhall's new Mokka X 1.4 T Auto 4WD tried and tested...

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The compact Vauxhall Mokka Crossover/SUV was first launched in 2013 and it received a major refresh at the end of 2016. One of its additions to differentiate it from past versions was to bear the additional branding of X.

Its main competitors, there are numerous others, are the Nissan Juke, Renault Captur, MINI Countryman, Fiat 500X, Ford EcoSport and Peugeot 2008. With high demand both from retail customers and an equal number of 'fleet' users the Mokka traditionally sits just outside the UK's top ten new models sales chart along with those named above. Sales of

SUV/Crossover small medium and large now account for one in every four new cars sold in Europe, including the UK.

The increased popularity of SUVS of all sizes is why the Mokka X is available in a huge model range appealing to the widest range of potential customers. All Mokka X models have a five door body and with five engine options so there are no less than 44 different derivatives. Some offer 2WD, some have on demand 4WD plus there are manual or automatic gearbox choices. Prices start at £17,640 for petrol versions and £19,565 for diesel models.

Depending on the engine chosen there are Design Nav, Active, Elite and Elite Nav specification levels. The five engine options are 1.6 petrol 115 hp, 1.4 Turbo petrol in two power outputs – 140 and 152 hp, and a 1.6 turbodiesel also available with two power outputs of 110 and 136 hp.

When originally launched the Mokka was equipped with a range of long-serving noisy engines. In its relatively short life new generation petrol and diesel units have now arrived so in technical terms the latest range is thoroughly up to date. The latest additions are the most powerful engine on offer so far – the 1.4i 152 hp Turbo automatic with 4WD and with

automatic transmission as standard, which has a top speed of 120 mph and zero to 60 mph takes 9.4 seconds, with a Combined Cycle fuel consumption figure of 43.5 mpg and CO2 emissions of 150 g/km. A better new engine option for company car drivers is the new 1.6 CDTi 110 hp ecoFlex turbodiesel with a six speed manual gearbox, which delivers up to 72.4 mpg in the Combined Cycle, with CO2 emissions from 103 g/km with 2WD.

As a guide to the specification the latest Mokka X line-up starts with standard equipment on Design Nav models that includes 18-inch alloy wheels (excluding ecoFLEX models), LED daytime running lights, front fog lights and silver roof rails. Inside the cabin there is an 8-inch touch screen with Vauxhall's IntelliLink Infotainment system as well as the innovative OnStar personal connectivity and service assistant.

Elite Nav is the top-of-the-range trim and adds a host of comfort and convenience features

including full leather upholstery, heated front seats and steering wheel, and tinted rear windows.

My test version was the Elite with the new 1.4T 152 hp turbocharged four cylinder petrol engine with stop/start, with its standard fit six speed automatic transmission and 4WD system. This version is priced £25,860 although if I was buying a Mokka X I would have gone for the Elite Nav version for an extra £700 as it just adds that bit more driving convenience, with an integrated navigation system rather than a portable one.

On the subject of specification the Elite level, apart from not having fitted sat-nav, is fully loaded and the most desirable ones include leather seat facings, heated front seats, sports style front seats, 60/40 split flip and fold rear seats, dual zone air-con, cruise control, auto lights and wipers, intelligent 4WD with Descent Control, electrically operated windows front and rear plus electrically adjustable and heated door mirrors, Bluetooth, touchscreen, multi-function computer, Hill Start Assist, central locking and the standard fit OnStar personal Assistant with 4G connectivity.

From the inside looking out visibility is not the Mokka's strongest point, with thick front A pillars obscuring the driver's view at certain angles and at the rear the small rear window is restrictive for vision as well.

On the outside the multi-spoke 18-inch alloy wheels nicely fill the large wheelarches and the alloy-effect front skid plate and side protection mouldings promote the SUV image of the vehicle. The exterior styling looks chunky with a wide lower body section below the rising waistline and a narrower 'pinched' style above the wide haunches. It looks a tall vehicle at 1,658 mm (5.44 ft) as well but that gives good headroom inside the vehicle. The boot offers 356 litres (12.57 cu.ft) with the rear seats in use and a useful 1,372 litres (48.45 cu.ft) with them folded down.

The high specification goes well with the driving luxury of a thoroughly modern 1.4 litre turbocharged petrol engine with 152 hp and a responsive 245 Nm (181 lb.ft) of torque from 2,200 rpm, linked as standard with a slick-changing six speed auto gearbox and intelligent 4WD. So the vehicle is most likely going to appeal to more affluent retail customers willing to spend just that bit more money to achieve that extra driving refinement and upmarket well-equipped interior.

Generally it is a pleasant and easy vehicle to drive. The four cylinder engine is quiet, smooth and well matched to the auto gearbox. The transmission also has a manual mode so lower gear ratios can be selected and held descending or ascending steep hills. For light off-road work the Hill Descent Control is another valuable feature of this system.

Top speed is 120 mph and zero to 60 mph acceleration takes 9.4 seconds, which is brisk

enough to entertain most drivers when they want to be more ‘enthusiastic’. It is not the most fuel-frugal with its auto gearbox and intelligent 4WD system, although all wheel traction only engages when it is needed. Officially it should return 43.5 mpg in the Combined Cycle but during my week long test driving period, covering most types of roads including some motorway travel, the figure was a disappointing 35.2 mpg. I say disappointing only because it is too far removed from the official figure, but given the performance, the safety of 4WD and the overall driving refinement I would be happy to pay for a bit more fuel and tax.

On the subject of running costs this model has CO2 emissions of 150 g/km so VED road tax is currently £150 every year. However from 1 April 2017 when the new VED rates come into force this particular Mokka bought new after that date will see their First Year VED cost rise to £200 and then £140 for subsequent years. For company cars drivers Benefit-in-Kind tax for this model is currently rated at 27% and that goes up to 29% from April as well. However insurance is not unreasonable with a Group 14E rating. As an alternative choose the 1.4T petrol with 140 hp with a manual gearbox and without 4WD and you save £1,740 on the purchase price, fuel economy is officially 47.1 mpg, CO2 is better at 140 g/km so VED is lower at £130. It is all a matter of choosing what version suits your needs and pocket best.

VERDICT

Generally the Mokka X 1.4T auto 4WD is a nice all round package with a high quality fit and finish interior and that added all wheel drive grip. The ride comfort is generally good although with the 18-inch wheels shocks from potholes are certainly felt inside the cabin so it’s not as compliant in its ride qualities as say a Peugeot 2008.

For: Lower cost 2WD versions with competitive monthly finance purchase plans are already popular with UK buyers, chunky stylish SUV design, good quality interior, high level of equipment and connectivity functions, easy to drive responsive turbo engine with auto gearbox.

Against: Auto gearbox plus 4WD adds considerably to the purchase price and running costs,

thick front A pillars create driving blindspots, not the roomiest of compact SUVs, firm and noisy ride over poorer road surfaces, disappointing real-life fuel economy.

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

Vauxhall Mokka Elite 1.4T 152 hp Auto 4×4 compact SUV.

Price: £25,860.

Engine/transmission: 1.4 litre, four cylinder, turbocharged petrol 152 hp, 245 Nm (181 lb.ft) of torque from 2,200 rpm, start/stop, six speed auto with 4WD.

Performance:

0-60 mph: 9.4 seconds.

Top speed: 120 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 43.5 mpg (35.2 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 150 g/km, VED road tax £150, BIK company car tax 27%.

Insurance Group: 14E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,275 mm (14.03 ft), W 1,781 mm (5.84 ft), H 1,658 mm (5.44 ft), boot/load space 356 to 1,372 litres (12.57 to 48.45 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.