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Renault Kadjar Signature S Nav TCe 165 1.6 petrol – Road Test

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With a move by customers - not surprisingly - towards petrol-powered models Renault has kept the Kadjar relevant by introducing a 1.6 litre TCe turbocharged direct injection petrol



engine with 165 hp, matched with a six-speed manual gearbox and with 2WD.

Apart from this engine the Kadjar can also be ordered with a 1.2 TCe 130 hp turbo petrol engine and the choice of two turbodiesels – the 1.5 dCi 110 hp and the 1.6 dCi with 130 hp, which is the only unit available with 2WD or 4WD options. All models have a six-speed manual gearbox but Renault's EDC twin-clutch automatic is available as an option with the dCi 110 and TCe 130 engines.

In line with other Renault cars the specification levels are Expression+, Dynamique Nav, Dynamique S Nav, Signature Nav and Signature S Nav, depending on the engine chosen. All models are covered by a four-year 100,000 mile warranty. Prices range from £19,785 rising through 35 derivatives to £29,615. To sweeten the New Year deal which runs until the end of March this year, Renault is offering up to £1,500 off the price of a new Kadjar when customers part exchange their old vehicle.

When first introduced the Kadjar proved an immediate sales success, gaining praise and awards because of its practicality, comfort, refinement, comprehensive specification and attractive pricing. At that time its main competitors were the best-selling Nissan Qashqai, Kia Sportage, Hyundai ix35, the old Peugeot 3008, previous VW Tiguan and the Ford Kuga. Today the fast growing market place is much more competitive with the recently revised and impressive Qashqai (which shares many of the components with the Kadjar), the award-winning new Peugeot 3008, SEAT Ateca, new VW Tiguan and Hyundai Tucson to name but a few, plus the updated Kia Sportage and Ford Kuga continue as popular models.

The new engine is set to broaden the Kadjar's appeal for those owners who want to move to a larger capacity petrol engine from a diesel. The new 1.6 litre, four cylinder direct injection turbo petrol unit provides plenty of power with 165 hp but with a less impressive amount of torque of 205 Nm (151 lb.ft) at 2,000rpm. Top speed is 127 mph and zero to 62 mph takes 9.2 seconds. The Combined Cycle fuel consumption is 45.6 mpg with CO2 emissions of 139g/km, which means VED road tax costs £200 for the First Year rate and then £140 Standard rate. Company car drivers will pay 26% Benefit-in-Kind tax and insurance is Group

19.



It all looks impressive on paper but after my week of driving I feel the 1.2 TCe 130 turbo petrol engine and more economical 110 or 130 hp dCi diesels are still the best choices because of lower purchase prices and running costs. The diesels in particular, because they offer better driveability with better torque delivery, which makes driving easier with lower running costs.

The new 165 hp petrol unit just lacks that bottom to mid range response for acceleration,



due in part to its high gearing used to achieve low CO2 emissions and on-paper good fuel economy. Cruising in top gear at 70 mph is fine, it's relaxed and quiet but loses momentum on hills, or when pulling out to overtake slower vehicles; it requires changing down several gears to get the engine back 'on-song' and responsive again. Driving on winding country roads I found myself operating between fourth and fifth gears or even third at times just to keep up even modest progress and in ECO mode it was even worse. The saving grace was that the six-speed manual gearchange was slick and precise, allowing 'block-changes' (i.e. 'skipping' a ratio when changing up or down) when conditions allowed. My week-long test driving returned 39.9 mpg, somewhat short of the 45.6 mpg official figure - and much of my driving was at a sedate pace due to the heavy pre-Christmas traffic.

Like all Kadjar models the 165 hp version handles well with a compliant comfortable ride and the only downside were the impact shocks felt inside the cabin due to the large 19-inch alloy wheels and low profile tyres fitted to my test car as standard. Other lesser spec models have 17-inch wheels with higher profile tyres which better absorb the impacts from our poor road surfaces.

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All versions of the Kadjar look smart inside and out and even the starter Expression+ spec level is not short of most equipment needed to satisfy potential owners. My test version however was the top level Signature S Nav which was fully loaded and with the new 165 hp engine costs £26,415, which is still competitive in today's crowded mid-sized SUV/Crossover market place.

The Signature S Nav spec list is long and comprehensive and includes such high value items as a BOSE 7-speaker plus subwoofer sounder system, DAB radio, R-Link multimedia system with a seven-inch touchscreen, TomTom Live sat/nav, Bluetooth and Voice Control, Lane Departure Warning, Traffic Sign Recognition, auto high/low beam headlights, LED headlights, cornering lights, auto lights/wipers, electric door mirrors, Hill Start Assist, Blind Spot warning, cruise control, panoramic sunroof, handsfree parking, front and rear parking



sensors and a rear view camera, on-board computer, heated front seats, air-con, black leather upholstery and really comfortable large front and rear seats. The rear seat leg and headroom is ample thanks to the long wheelbase, the rear seats are split 60/40 and fold down to extend the load space from 527 to 1,478 litres (18.61 to 52.19 cu.ft).

The important item of missing specification was the Advanced Emergency Braking System which was fitted to my test car as a £200 option but it should be standard fit.

VERDICT

Overall the Renault Kadjar is still a very good choice of vehicle in this ultra-competitive and growing market sector, it's just the new 1.6 litre 165 hp petrol engine isn't in my opinion the best choice unless most of your driving is open road/motorway cruising. The 1.6 dCi 130 hp turbodiesel, with much more torque of 320 Nm (236 lb.ft) from 1,750 rpm with a manual gearbox and Dynamique Nav spec looks a better choice to me for most people. It is priced at £24,715 with 2WD, £26,215 with 4WD or £26,015 with 2WD and the automatic transmission option.

For: High specification, good looks inside and out, comfortable and roomy interior, compliant ride, a refined family car (but note that other models offer better value for money).

Against: New engine lacks torque at low to mid range acceleration speeds, diesel engines offer better driveability and lower running costs and a lower spec offers better value for money, emergency auto braking is an extra cost option and it should be standard fit.



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

Renault Kadjar Signature S Nav TCe 165, 2WD mid-sized SUV.

Price: £26,415 + £200 emergency braking option.

Engine: New 1.6 litre, four cylinder direct injection turbocharged petrol, 165 hp, 205 Nm (151 lb.ft) of torque at 2,000 rpm, six speed manual, 2WD.



Performance: 127 mph, 0-62 mph 9.2 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 45.6 mpg (39.9 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 139 g/km, VED road tax £200/£140, BiK company car tax 26%.

Insurance Group: 19.

Warranty: Four years/100,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,449 mm (14.60 ft), W 1,836 mm (6.02 ft), H 1,613 mm (5.29 ft), wheelbase 2,646 mm (8.68 ft), boot/load space 527 to 1,478 litres (18.61 to 52.19 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,800 kg (3,968 lb), five doors/five seats.