SEAT Ibiza 1.0 – Road Test

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The popular SEAT Ibiza 1.0TSI FR 95PS manual hatchback sampled by Robin Roberts.

The Coronavirus pandemic masked a lot of changes made by car-makers last year and the

SEAT Ibiza was one of them.

SEAT was well advanced with giving the highly popular Ibiza family hatchback a mid-term make-over before the pandemic virtually paralysed production and it has raised the bar for the car against more expensive rivals.

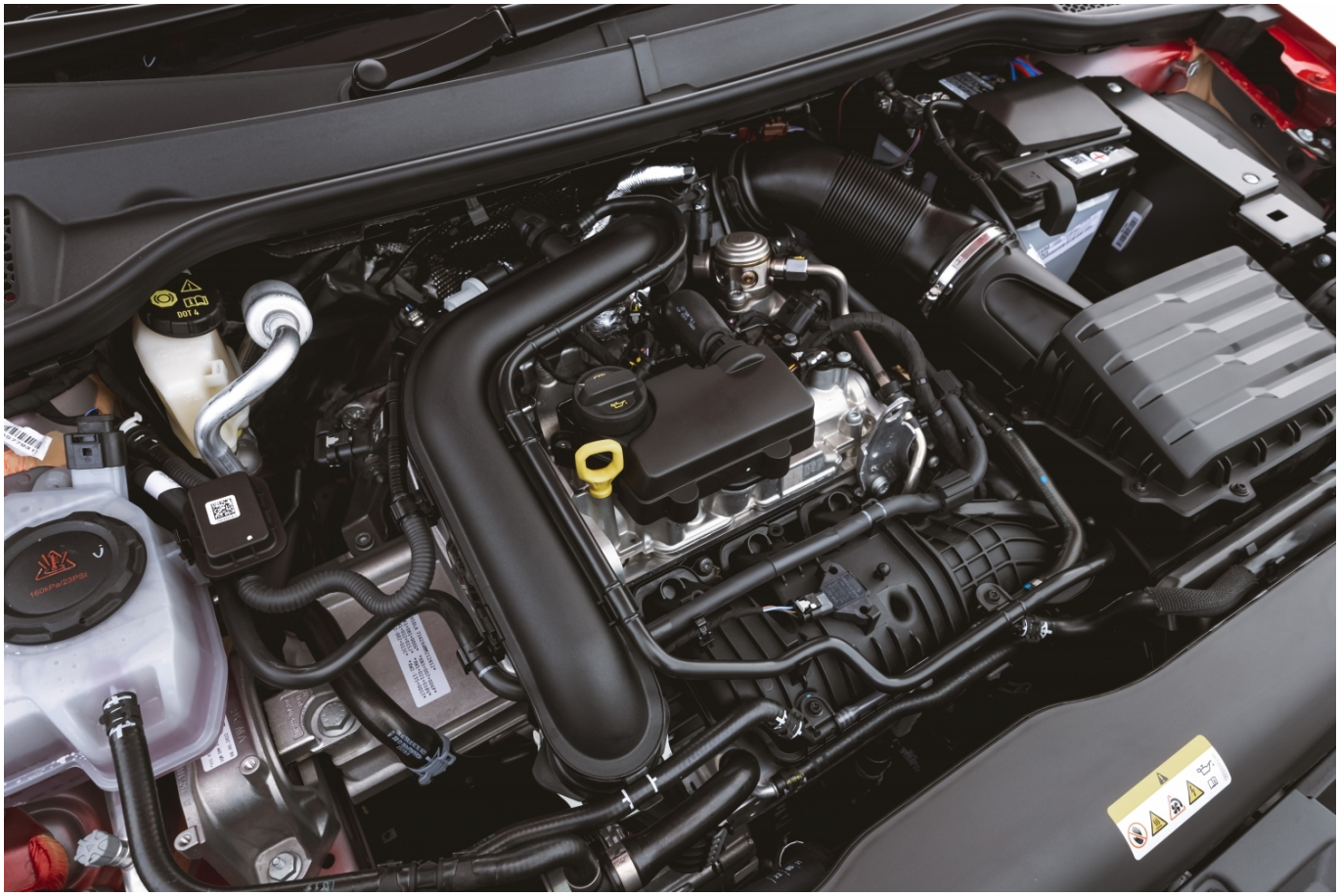
There is a new look to the car front to back with revised apron on some models and the latest high performance headlights while inside it benefits from a carefully integrated sound system and media interface.

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There are SE, SE Technology, FR, FR Sport, Xcellence and Xcellence Lux models in the range and priced from £16,790 to £24,420 using 1.0 petrol engines developing 80, 95 or 110 PS with 5 or 6 speed manual gearboxes or 7 speed dual clutch manual/ automatic transmission.

The mid-range FR spec includes 17-inch alloys, tinted glass, heated electric mirrors, intelligent headlights, leather interior detailing, dual zone climate control and sports suspension.

The well proven sub-1.0 litre triple-pot engine is one of the smoothest in this class and with engine management tuning delivered 95 PS in our mid-range FR version, but 80 or 110 PS versions are also available.



That’s perfectly adequate for most commuting uses and shopping runs when giving 95 PS but I think it would struggle with 15 PS less and you can appreciate how hard the 95 PS unit works if you load the car with people or baggage.

I liked the slickness and precision of the FR five-speed manual gearbox with its light and progressive clutch but now and again wished it had an additional gear for longer trips on main roads and motorways. There is a six-speed version but it comes with a particular trim and higher price tag and you have to decide if you want that or even go up further to the very sophisticated seven-speed manual/ automatic DSG unit.

Gearbox aside, the major controls like steering and brakes inspired with their precision and ease of use and you could very precisely place the car on quick roads or wiggle it into the

tightest parking space without too much effort. Underfoot the brakes soon and smoothly slowed the 1,169 kg (2,577 lb) car and the parking brake securely held it on our test hill.

There was an inclination for the FR to understeer and run wide on tighter turns but it soon came back on line if the throttle was lifted and a bit more lock was applied. The 17-inch wheels and full coil sprung suspension did a good job in smoothing out bumps even though they could be heard in the cabin.

The seats were well shaped and supportive so it felt like a bigger car and the front adjustment range was reasonable.

Access to front and back seats was good, the rear door lifted high to reveal a deep boot floor but the normal capacity was only fair for a couple of modest cases or several shopping bags before you had to drop the offset split back seats and almost triple the volume.

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Oddments room was a little on the tight side with slim and shallow compartments.

Visibility was clear thanks to big windows, very good intelligent headlights and excellent wipers front and back. The driver has good major and minor controls layout and the conventional dials are clearly displayed directly infront of the steering wheel and column.

Good dual zone air conditioning worked well with clear directional control, temperature selection and modest noise, backed up by powered windows.

Pick up was good but you had to stir it along through the five gears to make quick progress and I found it noisy at higher revs on the motorway, however, the overall fuel consumption nudged 47 mpg, and once or twice I saw it pass 50 mpg when driven really gently in light traffic.

VERDICT

It’s a good mid-range model for most drivers, but carefully pick what Ibiza you want to save money or to treat yourself. It is good value as a city car with lots of practicality for short or longer journeys.

For: Very refined powertrain, good economy, positive major controls, comfortable, easy to drive, well equipped.

Against: Lots of road and suspension noises, modest boot unless extended, strong understeer, sixth gear would be advantageous, ungenerous warranty.



WHEELS-ALIVE AND MILES BETTER FAST FACTS

SEAT Ibiza 1.0TSI FR 95 PS manual 5-door compact hatchback

Price: £19,955

Mechanical: 95 PS 999cc 3-cylinder petrol engine, 5-speed

Max Speed: 116 mph

0 – 62mph: 10.9sec

Combined MPG: 47

Insurance Group: 11E

C02 emissions: 124 g/km

Tax costs: Bik rating 28%, VED first year £180 then Standard rate £155

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.06 m (13.32 ft), W 1.78 m (5.84 ft), H 1.45 m (4.76 ft)

Boot space: 355 to 1,165 litres (12.54 to 41.14 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,169 kg (2,577 lb)