Skoda Fabia 130 – Road Test

Published: April 13, 2026

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/skoda-fabia-130-road-test/



Driving enthusiasts of a certain age will fondly remember how Skoda seriously challenged and embarrassed the most expensive works rally teams with its comparatively cheaper Flying Fabias.

And in national and club rallies across Europe they can still pull out a few surprises.

When skill and low weight combined, the flying Fabias really set the pace for others to follow.

Now, a different set of standards ensure the regular production Skoda Fabia 130 can show a clean pair of wheels to competitor models.

While some car-makers have all but withdrawn from the warm hatchback sector to pour money into the slow burning electric car market, Skoda can shock them with the Fabia 130.

The Fabia 130 is a tribute to the brand’s sporting history and comes with 18-inch black wheels, red calipers, a lowered sporting chassis, front splitter and bigger rear spoiler along with black twin tailpipes.

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Up front is a beefy, proven petrol engine and this combines with a slick and smooth automatic transmission giving instant responses, respectable acceleration across a wide range and a remarkable high speed where conditions permit.



Everything is very smooth about the Skoda Fabia 130, its acceleration, feelsome steering, strong progressive brakes and all delivered through a chassis which is very surefooted and surprisingly compliant riding for a car with a sporting edge to its character.

You can ease along at motorway speed or relish roads which twist and turn and even endure a busy commuter run if you have to.

Then, overall, the fuel economy will bring a smile to a driver's face, particularly when paying for the pleasure of the Fabia 130.

Staying with costs for a moment, it is in a mid-range insurance bracket with VED category and the warranty is about average.

The major controls all worked easily and the car inspired confidence with its ability around town or taking it on a cross country trip. The secondary controls fell straight to fingers and the infotainment display was clear if not big – and it was not very quick changing to input touches.

Dials were sensibly sized and clear to read with display changing as dictated by the mode button selecting eco, normal, sporting or individual character.

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Heating and ventilation was easy to use and effective, filling the cabin with air as directed and not too noisily.

Oddments room was a bit fiddly to use with a number of small, irregularly shaped compartments and the bootspace was not very big unless the rear seat-back was dropped.

In the back, taller passengers would find legroom short and headspace restricted, but there were no such restrictions for the driver and passenger

infront.

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Noise levels were mostly confined to those coming from the sporting low profile tyres and big wheels, an enjoyable busy engine note but little wind wuffle to intrude.

The front and back seats were nicely shaped to hold occupants and cushion them from the road shocks which overcame the lowered, sporting suspension.

VERDICT

So, the Skoda Fabia 130 stands out from most warm hatchbacks with its overall performance, good driving dynamics and delivers a feature which many new cars do not, affordable fun.

For: Performance, economy, handling, excellent seats.

Against: Short rear legroom, modest boot, average warranty.



FAST FACTS

Model: Skoda Fabia 130

Price: £30,000

Mechanical: 175 hp**,** 1498cc 4 cyl petrol 7 speed automatic

Max Speed: 142 mph

0 – 62 mph: 7 4 secs

Combined MPG: 48.7

Insurance Group: 22

C02 emissions: 127 g/km

Bik rating: 31%, £440FY, £195SR

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.14 m (13.58 ft), W 1.78 m (5.84 ft), H 1.46 m (4.79 ft)

Bootspace: 330 to 1,150 litres (11.65 to 40.61 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,196 kg (2,637 lb)

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