Skoda Kodiaq Scout seven seater SUV – Road Test

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Skoda's Kodiaq Scout seven seater mid-size SUV easily copes with life's ups and downs..

...says David Miles (Miles' Better News Agency).

The award-winning Skoda Kodiaq five and seven seat models in the large SUV market arrived in the UK last year, and soon became the benchmark models in the sector against which a raft of established and newcomer models were judged. Now the 2018 range has been further extended with the addition of Scout and Sportline versions, and Skoda has just announced L&K (Laurin and Klement) top spec models will make their world debut at the forthcoming Geneva Motor Show in March.

Current Kodiaq prices start from £22,625 with S, SE, SE L and Edition specification levels with petrol and diesel options, 2WD and 4WD versions and five/seat seat model options. The Scout 4×4 versions with seven seats as standard are positioned between SE L and Edition

models and are priced from £32,765. The top spec Sportline 4×4, seven seat derivatives cost from £33,120. No prices are yet available for the upcoming L&K models

Seven seat SUV competitors include the Kia Sorento, Hyundai Santa Fe, Peugeot 5008 and the Mitsubishi Outlander Diesel.

The Scout versions go further to emphasise the Kodiaq's SUV credentials as well as optimising the multiple seven seat layouts or large load carrying space options. There are six engine and transmission , all with 4WD as standard. These are the petrol 1.4 TSI 150 hp manual or DSG automatic and the 2.0 TSI 180 hp DSG auto whilst 2.0 litre TDI turbodiesel units are available as 150 hp with manual or auto gearbox options and the 190 hp unit with DSG auto as standard.



My test version was the 2.0 litre TDI 150 hp with the seven-speed DSG auto transmission with 4WD priced at £35,605. In addition the vehicle was fitted with the much needed, in winter, heated windscreen and screen washer nozzles costing £335 and the should-be standard fit temporary space saver spare wheel at £100.

Of course being the Czech member of the Volkswagen Group of companies, Skoda uses the engine/gearbox, platforms, chassis components, controls and switchgear readily available for other models in the Audi, VW and SEAT ranges, but Skoda has the knack of differentiating their versions from their fellow VW Group brands. Higher spec at lower prices and larger interior space being the most noticeable advantages; those and the latest

distinctive new Skoda family face front end design which has upmarket kerb appeal.

Just on interior space alone the Kodiaq scores highly with seven seats, ample middle row leg space and a load area which ranges in space from 270 litres (9.53 cu.ft) with all seven seats in use up to a massive 2,005 litres (70.81 cu.ft) with the middle and third row of seats folded down. Another clever touch is the facility to stow the load area cover under the load bed floor so you are not left with the situation of where to put it when the rear of the car is full. Also useful is the storage of umbrellas located in the front doors and of course there is the latest in in-car infotainment, connectivity and driving support systems.

In keeping with other Skoda Scout models, the Kodiaq Scout comes with a raft of special features that mark it apart from other models in the range. The bespoke exterior design package includes special Scout off-road front and rear bumpers, a rear diffuser, Scout plaques on the front wings, also silver-coloured door mirrors – and 19-inch aluminium alloy wheels complete the rugged look.

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Inside, the Kodiaq Scout features Alcantara trimmed seats and door panels, along with wood finish dashboard and door inserts and a Scout plaque on the dashboard. Equipped with seven seats as standard, the Scout cabin also features aluminium trimmed pedals and LED ambient lighting.

In keeping with the Scout badge, this version of the Kodiaq family is ideally equipped for adventures off the beaten track. All models are equipped with an off-road mode that adapts the chassis, engine and brake settings for rough terrain. It also engages Hill Descent Assist on steep downhill slopes, holding the car at a safe speed while it’s descending. The Scout also features a ‘rough road package’ as standard that includes a tough engine guard and underbody stone guard.



My week long test driving period with the Kodiaq Scout was timely as it coincided with another spell of really bad UK weather. Gales, snow, ice, floods and muddy road conditions were all encountered as were several long journeys on congested roads and with appalling pot-holed road surfaces made worse by the recent weather.

The 2.0 litre, 150 hp TDI turbodiesel unit is the go-to workhorse engine available throughout the VW Group of brands. It's generally refined, and has loads of torque at 340 Nm (251 lb.ft) from 1,750 rpm, so it's always responsive and it is really well matched when used with the slick changing seven-speed DSG twin-clutch automatic gearbox. It resulted in

tireless driving on long journeys on roads busy with traffic. It cruised easily without any stress at 70 mph and in stop/start traffic and driving in congested cities it was flexible and faultless, and of course the elevated seating position provided the best view for dealing with impatient road users and selfish ‘blind’ cyclists.

The handling is generally well-balanced with good cornering grip given its substantial size and marginally increased Scout ground clearance. The large 19-inch wheels look good but impacts from the ever increasing number of potholes do resonate inside the cabin, but it’s a commonplace issue in the SUV sector; it’s a choice you make buying an SUV over a softer-riding conventional family saloon or estate.

Officially this engine/transmission combination will return 49.6 mpg and overall for my week of motoring in hugely variable traffic and weather conditions the real-life figure was 42 mpg. With CO2 emissions of 149 g/km the First Year VED road tax costs £200 before reverting to the £140 Standard rate. Company car drivers will pay 31% Benefit-in-Kind tax and the insurance group is 18E, whilst the warranty cover is an ungenerous three years/60,000 miles, which is in keeping with other VW Group brands. However, as Skoda has a habit and reputation of offering just that bit extra with their models over the rest of the VW Group family members, it would be opportune to offer a better warranty.

When it comes to the Kodiaq with its Scout specification it is all-encompassing, other than not having the spare wheel as standard, and I would happily pay the extra for that and indeed the heated windscreen which just makes life that bit easier if early morning journeys are started in icy conditions. The standard-fit Columbus sat-nav system with its 9.2-inch touchscreen was easy, accurate and quick to use and of course the WiFi connectivity, cruise control and the driving mode selector are also must-haves these days in a vehicle of this type. The heated door mounted mirrors are another sensible standard fit item and the heated front seats just added to the driving comfort. Cornering front LED front fog lights also eased the driving stress-load and of course the auto lights and wipers just added to the driving refinement.

It just all added up to a very sensible and capable, easy to live with large SUV that makes light work of hard driving conditions whether it's on or off road work. Potential owners just need to work out whether it is worth paying extra money for this Scout version or to go with one of the marginally less rugged looking but equally capable Kodiaq 4×4 models. For example the SE L version with seven seats, the same engine, auto transmission and 4WD costs £33,310, a £2,295 saving – albeit with a little less spec and underbody protection for serious off-roading.

Likely Kodiaq Scout customers will include vets, surveyors, country estate managers, the Police and Rescue Services, those who tow, indeed anybody who wants, or more likely needs, an all weather, all-terrain roomy SUV with lots of useable and worthwhile driving aids.

VERDICT

The Kodiaq in its standard form is a capable vehicle and the Scout version just adds to those credentials. The Skoda Kodiaq Scout is not just ideal for winter driving as I found out, it's ideal for work or family life all the year round.

For: Scout specification brings added functionality, specification and off-road driving protection to this award-winning large and capable SUV, easy to drive and easy to live with.

Against: Ungenerous warranty, considerable price premium over the already very good high spec Kodiaq 4×4 models, no spare wheel as standard.



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

Skoda Kodiaq Scout 2.0 TDI 150 hp DSG 4×4.

Price: £35,605 (£36,040 with options).

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, four cylinder, direct injection turbodiesel, 150 hp, 340 Nm (251 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, seven speed DSG auto gearbox with standard fit 4WD and driving mode selector including Off-Road and Hill Descent Control

settings.

Performance: 119 mph, 0–62 mph 9.8 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 49.6 mpg (42 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 149 g/km, VED road tax £200/£140, BiK company car tax 31%.

Insurance Group: 18E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,697 mm (15.41 ft), W 1,882 mm (6.17 ft), H 1,672 mm (5.49 ft), wheelbase 2,791 mm (9.16 ft), boot/load space 270 to 2,005 litres (9.53 to 70.81 cu.ft), braked towing weight 2,000 kg (4,409 lb), five doors/seven seats.