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Toyota Yaris Premiere Edition – Road Test

Published: May 27, 2024

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/toyota-yaris-premiere-edition-road-test/>



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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) puts Toyota's latest Yaris through its paces...

The Toyota Yaris has been one of the brand's most successful models with over 10 million made, and it's not resting on its laurels.

This Spring the familiar Yaris hatchback range was increased with the addition of the Premiere and GR models which have brought more electric power and greater refinement to the range.

Toyota has launched the new Yaris in five versions from £22,640 to about £29,715. They are all highly equipped for their class and the top versions get the latest stronger electric motor to boost mid-range acceleration as well as a bigger instruments display with 12 possible settings to show.

The Premiere comes with the new bi-tone Neptune Blue paint finish, eight speaker sound system and useful head-up display.

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In a nutshell, the Premiere we tested brings many luxury and big car features to a compact super-mini at a reasonable price but retains that essential and familiar "fun to drive" philosophy. It's what some term a 'warm-hatch'.

The existing 114 bhp and 85 kW hybrid powertrain has been joined by a 130 hp and 96 kW system still using the proven 1.5 litre triple cylinder petrol engine but now Toyota has tinkered with the powertrain software, hardware and power control unit to give a 12% lift in output with 30% greater pulling power for easier driving, which also improves economy as the powertrain does not have to work so hard.



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It's still fitted with a straightforward continuously variable transmission and the emissions are reasonable while economy is hardly affected and very good overall.

The car starts instantly and silently until you press for more power and the petrol engine kicks in very smoothly and provides most of the urge with additional boost from the electric motor when required.

This blend of power meant we saw up to 72 mpg at times and a surprisingly good 66 mpg average.

We liked the smooth, consistent and strong power delivery through the CVT box, the powerful and well balanced brakes underfoot and the easy to use 'hold' button on the parking brake.

Steering was faultless with good feedback, no vibration, a neat turning circle and modest weight when going slowly. There was a firm feel to the suspension but it remained surprisingly comfortable for a supermini.

Much of that must be down to the extremely comfortable seats in front with good adjustment range and excellent support under thighs and around the back. The rear three seats were flatter and less comfortable and hindered by lack of legroom, unlike the space for the two in front.

Access was very good to the front, a bit more of a squeeze into the back but headroom was fair throughout and the boot, although small when five-up, could quickly more than double as the backrests were dropped. A useful underfloor compartment was welcome but the cabin was not blessed with a lot of oddments room for a family car.

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Visibility was very good to front and sides with good wipers and wash systems both ends, bright long range wide beamed lights and a useful wide-view reversing camera, but the



were a few blindspots around the rear wheelarches.

It is inside that the latest Yaris Premiere Edition delighted most, apart from the abundant black interior plastic over the fascia and door casings, because it is very highly specced.

A big 12.3-inch multi-function display in front of the driver can be set up to show a 12 different patterns of information and remarkably they were all very clear and easy to manage, helped by a simple and clear head-up display. Backing it up is a central 10×7-inch infotainment screen for navigation, media, telephone and vehicle settings. This was also quick and clear to use and wisely the heating and ventilation controls were separate beneath and the climate control was efficient with good output direction and temperature settings.

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The driver safety systems on the new Yaris Premiere Edition are dominated by anti-collision measures, with radar detection, steering assistance and even safe exit assist to warn of oncoming danger when a door handle is pulled. Dynamic assistance includes intelligent cruise control, undertaking warning, filter lane assistance, and lane assistance.

The new Yaris displayed good ride and handling with excellent responses, grip and predictability, excellent pickup and very low noise levels from any source. It was particularly smooth when accelerating and cruised comfortably at the motorway maximum while it could be a quick cross-country car if wanted.



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VERDICT

Toyota has been wise to keep its hybrid technology advancing with such a popular super-mini which fulfils so many roles very well.

For: Good powertrain and reasonable performance, excellent handling and major controls, economical and very well equipped.

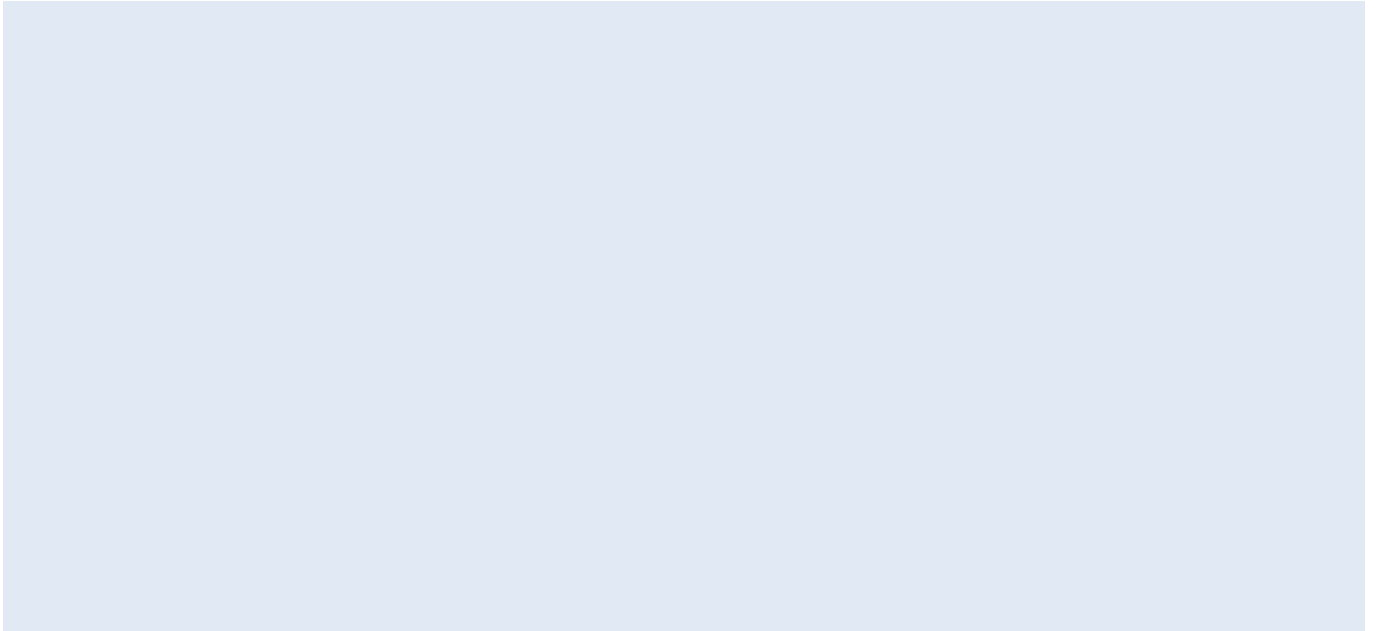
Against: Some restriction to rear legroom and small boot, dark interior, modest oddments space.

Fast facts: Toyota Yaris Premiere Edition



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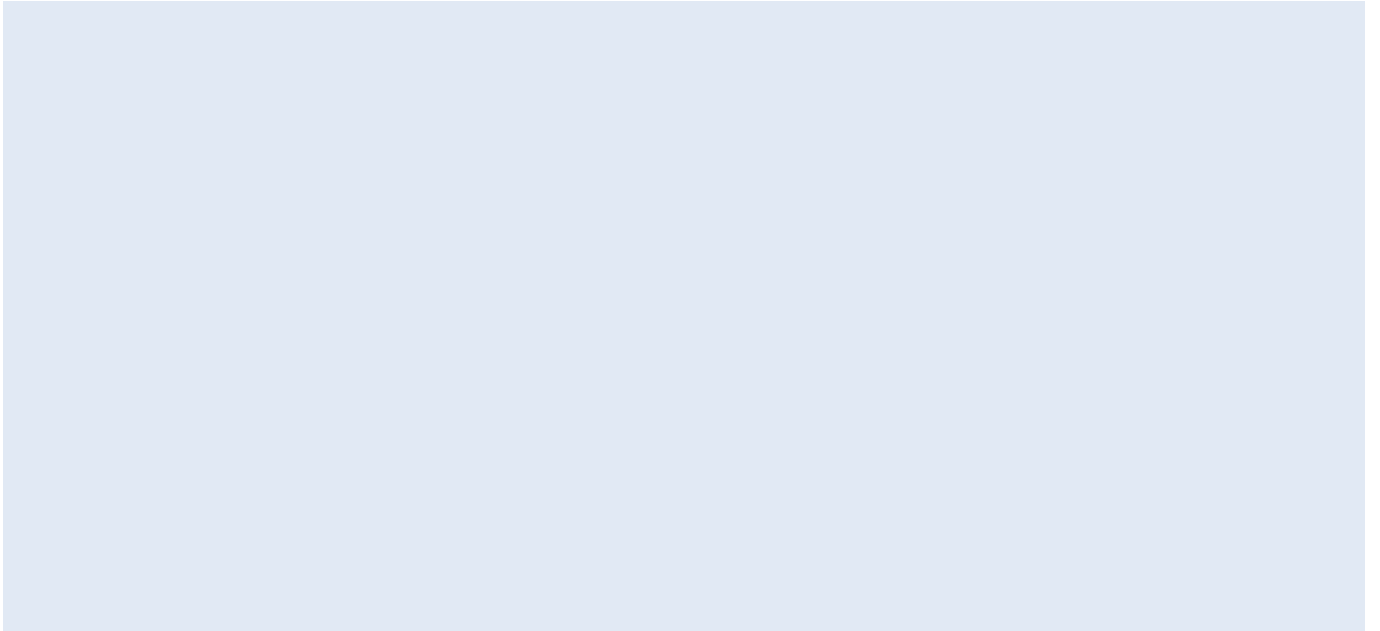
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Price: £28,295

Mechanical: 130 hp 3cyl 1.5 litre petrol engine with 62 kW electric motor, cvt

Max speed: 109 mph

0 - 62 mph: 9.2 secs

Fuel consumption: 66 mpg

Insurance group: 14

Emissions: 96 g/km

BIK: 24%, £165FY, £180SR

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 3.94 m (12.93 ft), W 1.75 m (5.74 ft), H 1.50 m (4.92 ft)

Bootspace: 286 to 768 litres (10.10 to 27.12 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,190 kg (2,624 lb)

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