

# Citroën Berlingo

Featuring 1.4



**C**ITROËN HAS ITS SEVEN-SEATER Synergie to compete in the full-sized MPV sector, but until the distinctive looking Picasso people carrier arrives on the scene next year, double chevron representation is more limited lower down the MPV scale. Limited, that is, but not non-existent.

No doubt only too aware that the Vauxhall Zafira, Fiat Multipla and a revised Scenic would get the jump on its own Scenic rival, Citroën came up with a novel stop-gap solution, by bolting a back seat, side windows and a tailgate on to its load-swallowing Berlingo delivery van. Unglamorous as it may be in white van, courier configuration, transforming his parcel purveyor into a more affordable (albeit a little less stylish and versatile) people carrier has turned a van *ordinaire* into a van *extraordinaire*.

As a “toe-in-the-water” exercise, Citroën introduced a limited quota of Berlingo Multispaces from around mid-1998, powered by a less powerful but more torquey version of its eight-valve 1.8-litre engine. The idea worked. Indeed the perky newcomer proved sufficiently popular for Citroën to expand the line-up, adding two more power units (a 1.4 petrol and a 1.9 diesel) to the

original 1.8, sprinkling on a few interior and exterior styling changes and increasing the list of options. The cost of getting behind the wheel of a Berlingo has also been lowered by over £1000 compared with the original 1.8 model.

Bolting a mere 75bhp’s-worth of 1.4-litre petrol power into the bulky Berlingo would be a recipe for pedestrian puniness, you might think. As its 15sec 30-70mph saunter confirms, the 1.4 is no traffic-light tearaway, but it proves a surprisingly game little performer – rather tardy on its toes in cut-and-thrust town take-offs, admittedly, but impressively relaxed and subdued once up to speed. Motorway inclines call for occasional downshifts to maintain momentum, but this apart, the 1.4’s mid-range vitality makes the small-engined Multispace feel far more willing than its modest underbonnet credentials have any right to.

Lower gearing and a harder worked engine than the 1.8 do fuel economy few favours, yet despite this we obtained a fairly respectable 36mpg overall – a worthwhile 3mpg gain on the original 90bhp 1.8-litre version we sampled.

As we reported on the 1.8, the way the Multispace soaks up road faults and makes smooth, stately progress

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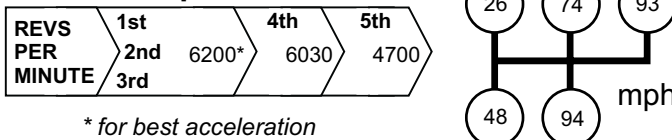
## PERFORMANCE

### Acceleration time in seconds

mph	30	40	50	60	70
<b>THROUGH THE GEARS</b>		2.3	5.4	9.5	15.1
<b>IN 5TH GEAR</b>		6.8	14.1	22.0	31.8
<b>IN 4TH GEAR</b>		4.7	9.6	15.0	21.6

20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
<b>5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES</b>		13.8/9.5		15.2/10.	
			14.1/9.6		17.7/12.

### Maximum speeds



## FUEL CONSUMPTION

Fuel grade: unleaded Premium, 95 octane	
<b>Type of use - (air conditioning not fitted)</b>	<b>mpg</b>
In the city - heavy traffic	26
In the country - quiet driving	46
<b>Typical mpg overall</b>	<b>36</b>
Realistic tank range†	48 litres/380 miles

†based on fuel gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience - not nominal tank capacity

\*with air conditioning switched on, consumption will increase by 2-4% in winter and 4-8% in summer

## FOR THE TECHNICAL

### ENGINE

**Type** front-mounted, transverse four cylinder with alloy block and head; five main bearings

**Size** 75.0 x 77.0mm = 1360cc

**Power** 75bhp at 5500rpm

**Torque** 82 lb ft at 3400rpm

**Valves** single (belt-driven) overhead camshaft actuating two valves per cylinder via rockers

**Fuel/ignition** electronic multi-point petrol injection integrated with distributorless (direct) ignition. 55-litre fuel tank, with low-level warning lamp

### TRANSMISSION

**Type** five-speed manual; front-wheel drive. No automatic option

**Mph per 1000rpm** 19.8 in 5th, 15.6 in 4th

### CHASSIS

**Suspension** front: independent by MacPherson damper/struts, coil springs and lower arms. Rear: independent, by trailing arms and torsion bars. Telescopic dampers front and rear

**Steering** rack and pinion with hydraulic power assistance; 3.3 turns between full locks. Turning circles average 11.1m between kerbs, with 17.7m circle for one turn of the wheel

**Wheels** 5½J steel with 175/70R14 84T tyres (Michelin Energy XT1 on test car); full-size spare wheel

**Brakes** solid discs front, drums rear, with vacuum servo. Electronic anti-lock control (cost option on all models)

## SAFETY AND SECURITY FEATURES

Assessed on their effectiveness and convenience (the more black blobs the better)

### Seatbelts

front ●●●●○ rear ●●●●○

### Door locking

central locking?   
remote control?   
auto window closure?   
deadlocks?

### Head restraints

front ●●●●○ rear ●●●●○

### Interior

safety padding ●●●●○  
driver's airbag?   
other airbags?   
side impact protection ●●●●○

### Luggage

secure from interior/hidden from view ●●●●○

### Alarm

engine immobilised?

### Fuel anti-spillage

●●●●○

standard on test car  factory fitted option  not available

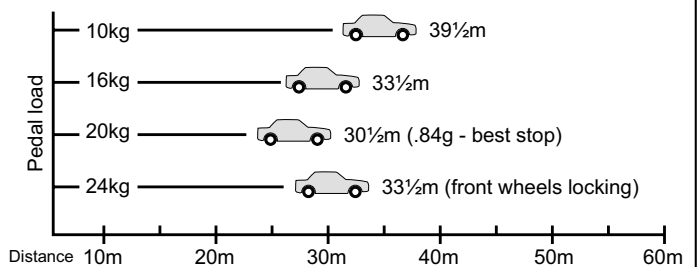
Euro NCAP crash test results - not available

## BRAKES

Pedal feel ●●●●○ Behaviour in an emergency ●●●●○ Handbrake ●●●●○

Dry road stopping distance from 50mph (without ABS)

A good-to-average best stop is about 28m at 20-30kg pedal load

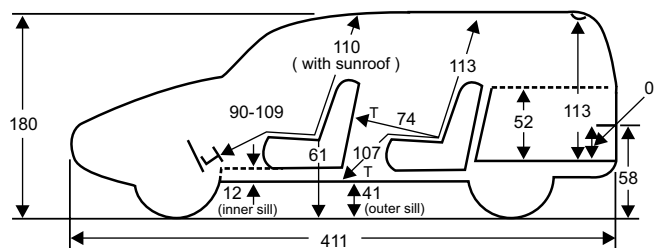


Fade test: pedal load required for a moderate (34m/.75g) stop: 13kg at start of test, 16kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

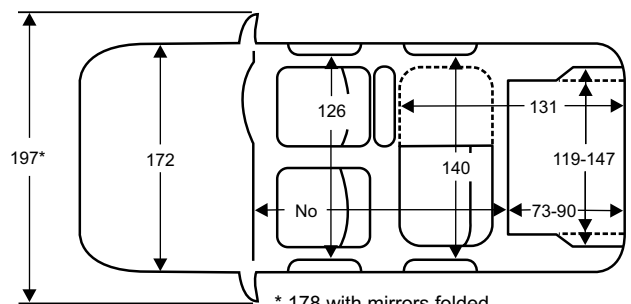
## MEASUREMENTS

Centimetres

Three-door MPV



T: typical back seat space behind medium-sized front occupants



eclipses many a car costing twice its price. The lofty, compliantly sprung cabin does lean a fair bit round the twisty bits, but the Multispace feels surprisingly wieldy and, aided by light (if not especially communicative) steering, it sticks to the tarmac with safe, surefooted reassurance. A smooth, easy clutch and slick, snappy shift make gearchanging anything but a chore, but although the brakes prove nicely weighted and responsive in normal use, our test track tortures revealed their ultimate stopping capability to be a mite disappointing.

Climbing aboard the Berlingo is aided by loftier-than-usual seating and large, wide-opening doors, though the three-door-only layout inevitably makes filling the back seat a more protracted affair, despite front seats that do their best to tilt-and-slide well out of the way. The back seat, like the front ones, offers ample space; headroom in particular goes from impressive to ... well, infinity, with the optional (£350) full-length electric sunroof specified.

The one-piece, double-folding back seat lacks versatility compared with the moveable, take-out or table top-forming items in the Scenic, Multipla and Zafira. However, split-folding is available on the options list at a very reasonable £70, and what the Multispace lacks in furniture-moving permutations, is partly offset by the sheer space on offer. The serious amount of load space (even with the back seats in use) is sheltered in wet weather by a large, lift-up tailgate and protected by a durable, hose-clean rubber mat. There's also a roller-blind cover to conceal the contents from prying eyes. The cargo hold increases to a whopping 99cu ft (or 2800 litres for those who prefer metric measures) with the back seat double flipped forwards.

The Multispace may not have any underfloor storage locker tricks up its sleeve, but as well as the anticipated collection of cup and bottle holders, there's a wealth of places to stow everyday clutter; these include a pair of gloveboxes (though the upper one is sacrificed when the

passenger's optional airbag is fitted), expandable luggage nets above *and* below the back seat side windows, and front seatback map pockets. Most useful of all, though, is a commodious full width shelf above the sun visors, providing convenient yet out-of-the-way storage for all manner of maps, travel guides and vehicle-related documents.

All models sport metallic paint, a driver's airbag, power steering, tilt-adjustable steering, a trio of rear head restraints and an "in-key" transponder immobiliser as standard, but there's no central locking. An inconvenient omission at times, this can, however, be added via a (£350) Comfort Pack, which includes (remote-controlled) central locking, electric front windows and heated door mirrors, with electric adjustment for the mirror on the passenger's door. ABS (£420) and air conditioning (£750) are also available on the options list, but with wind-in-the-hair motoring available for all via that huge, roll-back sunroof, do you really need chilled air? The 1.8 engine attracts a modest £350 premium over the 1.4, with the diesel engine adding a further £210.

#### VERDICT

**Postman Pat looks, a three-door-only bodystyle and jazzy inside-and-out colour schemes may not suit everyone's taste, but if you can live with these minor limitations, the Multispace makes a very appealing bargain-basement junior MPV. It's hugely roomy, surprisingly refined and rides as well as many cars costing twice its price. We must also confess to being quietly impressed at just how well the Berlingo performs with a "mere" 1.4-litres under its bonnet, albeit that, for just £350 extra, the 1.8 goes better still.**

**The Berlingo Multispace isn't, in all honesty, in quite the same league as the Scenic, Zafira and Multipla for street cred, style and all-round**

<b>HOW MULTISPACE COMPARES</b>	<b>Engine cap/power (cc/bhp)</b>	<b>Revs at 70mph (rpm)</b>	<b>30-70mph through gears (sec)</b>	<b>30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)</b>	<b>Fuel economy (mpg)</b>	<b>Brakes best stop (m/kg)</b>	<b>Maximum legroom - front (cm)</b>	<b>Typical leg/kneerom - rear (cm)</b>	<b>Steering turns/ (p) circle (m)</b>	<b>Overall length (cm)</b>
<b>CITROËN BERLINGO MULTISPACE 1.4</b>	1360/75	3535	15.1	31.8/21.6	36	30½/20	109	107/74	3.3/11.1	411
<b>Daihatsu Grand Move 1.6</b>	1590/90	3375	10.8	28.1/20.0	35	28/16	103	109/75	3.7/9.5	410
<b>Mazda Demio 1.3</b>	1323/72	3450	14.4	32.1/24.0	39½	25/14	104	105/70	3.1/9.6	381
<b>Renault Megane Scenic 1.6 8v</b>	1598/90	3450	13.7	28.4/21.0	34	29/30*	105	102/76	3.5/10.5	414
<b>Suzuki Wagon R 1.2 (auto)</b>	1171/69	3600	19.6	NA	35	26/27	101	91/61	3.5/9.5	341
<b>Citroën Berlingo Multispace 1.8</b>	1761/90	3070	12.4	28.1/20.7	33	29/18	109	107/74	3.3/11.1	411
						* with ABS			(p) all power-assisted	