



# Citroën Picasso



## AT A GLANCE

considering size, price and rivals

<b>Controls/displays</b>	★★★★○○
<b>Handling/steering</b>	★★★★○○
<b>Comfort</b>	★★★★○○
<b>Space/practicality</b>	★★★★○○

## THE PICASSO RANGE

**body** mid-size MPV  
**trim levels** LX, SX  
**engines** petrol: 1.6/90bhp, 1.8/117bhp  
 diesel: 2.0Di turbo/90bhp  
**drive** front via 5-speed manual 'box (no automatic option)  
**notable features** ABS brakes, 4 airbags, 5 lap-and-diagonal belts, multiplex wiring, modular shopping trolley, trip computer, heat-resistant windscreen

## LIKES AND GRIPES

"bay window" fascia shelves  
 uncluttered rear seat/belts  
 head restraints give good rear view  
 walk-through-to-rear access

digital instruments hard to read  
 bad windscreen reflections  
 cramped pedal layout  
 noisy (optional) sunroof

## VITAL STATISTICS (cm)

<b>length x width</b> (with mirrors folded)	428x175
<b>front</b> - legroom	83-106
- headroom (with s/roof)	96-102
<b>rear</b> - typical legroom	95
- typical kneeroom	74
- headroom	94
- hiproom	137
<b>load space</b> (all seats in use) (litres/cu ft)	525/18.6
<b>load length</b> (seats up/folded)	79/235
<b>load width</b>	116
<b>load sill height</b> (inside/outside)	1/56
<b>boot/load aperture height</b>	57/90

## ALTERNATIVES

**Renault Scenic** the one that leads the trend  
**Vauxhall Zafira** seven rather than five seats; rear pair fold away into floor  
**Fiat Multipla** seats six by being wide  
**Colt Space Star** cheaper, more compact

**C**OMPACT MULTI-PURPOSE vehicles (MPVs) make sense for families, small businesses or anyone serious about leisure pursuits. However, most still lack the visual fear of a hatchback or even a well-styled estate car.

Nevertheless, sales are booming, much to Renault's delight and Ford's embarrassment – it doesn't offer a small MPV yet. Fiat has the practical if ungainly six-seater Multipla, and Vauxhall's Zafira manages seating for seven, on demand.

Now Peugeot-Citroën is ready to take on domestic rival Renault's Scenic with its own Xsara-based five-seater.

Five-seater, note – not a seven-seater like the Zafira; Picasso has three seats across the back, all of which are removable but only the centre one slides fore and aft.

They all tilt forwards, of course (giving up to 235cm of load length), though in normal use, there's still an impressive 18.6cu ft (525 litres) below the load cover – with a clever plastic wheelie-trolley strapped in there, as well. The absence of significant sills and the fact that the seat cushions are set at a height of 58-64cm, make getting in and out easy for the less agile.

Inside, the gear lever's location (it sprouts from the lower fascia) and the front seats' layout make front-to-rear access feasible. These front seats are comfortable, too, although those in the rear (with rake-adjustable backrests) are a

bit slab-like and flat in profile and there's no foot-stretching space under the front seats.

All this lofty practicality can result in a motor that feels distinctly van-like to drive, with pronounced tilt round the bends and unresponsive steering and handling.

The otherwise-pleasant 1.8 petrol version we tried was less convincing than the 2.0 litre diesel in its responses – the latter weighs 55kg more, which makes it feel more "settled" in ride over undulating roads, as well. It's PSA's best installation yet for its recently launched direct-injection diesel.



## VERDICT

**This diesel version feels so good on the road that it would be our reason for preferring the Picasso to its rivals. Its vibe-free flexibility from below 30mph in top and its effortless cruising at motorway speed are exemplary – even before its mpg and free shopping trolley are taken into account.**