

Daihatsu Cuore

Featuring 3-door Automatic



SCORECARD

Overtaking / pulling power

●●●○

Fuel economy

●●●○

Handling / steering

●●○○

Comfort / ease of control

●●●○

Interior space / practicality

●●○○

Accident / injury avoidance

●●●○

Costs in service

●●●○

Depreciation prospects

●●○○

DAIHATSU HAS BEEN MAKING SMALL, three-cylinder hatchbacks for a long time. First we saw Domino, then Mira; Cuore is essentially an update of the same design. Automatic transmission is a first, however and this is the cheapest “proper” three-door auto you can buy, married to the larger Sirion’s three-pot engine, but without its fourth gear ratio.

The result is surprisingly eager getaway and overtaking in the mid-speed range, with the plucky engine revving its socks off in second gear all the way to 60mph on the clock. Despite the high revs, it will also cruise up to 70mph with less stress on the ear than the 4800rpm on the tacho might suggest – that’s the benefit of having one cylinder less. This sort of frenzy does no favours to fuel consumption, however.

Manual steering makes the car ungainly rather than desperately heavy when parking, but proves acceptable once you’ve got going, though Cuore lacks some of the other small cars’ love of being hustled; its ride is choppy one up, but settles down with more passengers aboard.

Getting to them in is harder than into the five-door version – the front seats “forget” their previous settings

when tilted and the rear seatbelts lurk in the way, too. The space and seat comfort make the effort worthwhile, however – although only two belts are provided. This is a car that has a preference for passengers rather than luggage – until you tilt the (one-piece) backrest forward and use it as a two-seater; to be fair, there’s no awkward rear load sill, but we missed a boot lamp and disliked the painted, untrimmed inner tailgate.

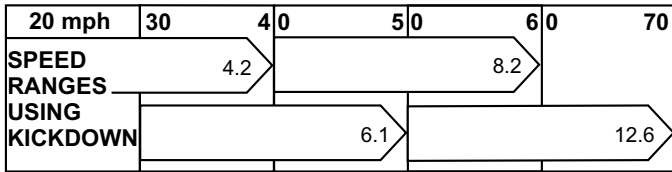
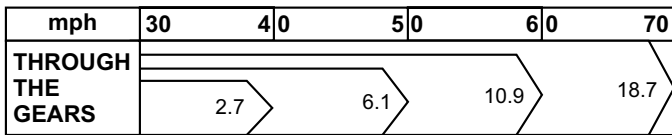
Up front, Daihatsu has struck the best compromise with the driving position – there are only seat rake and fore-and-aft adjusters, but most average-sized drivers seem happy at the (fixed) wheel. There’s an excellent heater that avoids stuffiness yet swathes feet in warmth, standard safety features include twin airbags and front seatbelt pretensioners, while all aspects of vision – whether over the shoulder or through the front wiper arcs – couldn’t be better.

At its low price and with signs of Japanese build quality evident in several aspects, this Cuore Automatic makes a convincing case for itself. It’s a revamped design from yesterday, admittedly, but it looks increasingly suitable for tomorrow.

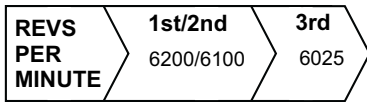
HOW THE CUORE COMPARES	Engine cap/power (cyl/cc/bhp)	Revs at 70mph (rpm)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (m/kg)	Maximum legroom - front (cm)	Typical leg/kneeroom - rear (cm)	Steering turns/ (p) circle (m)	Overall length (cm)
DAIHATSU CUORE AUTO	3/989/54	4800	18.7	40	25½/13	103	94/67	3.7/9.0	341
Hyundai Atoz Auto	4/999/55	4800	20.7†	35½	28/18	99	101/62	3.0/9.6(p)	350
Seat Arosa Auto	4/1390/60	3530	17.2	36½	28½/18	105	93/62	2.9/10.1(p)	354
Suzuki Wagon R Auto	4/1171/69	3600	19.6	35	26/27	101	91/62	3.5/9.5(p)	341
Daihatsu Sirion Plus (Manual)	3/989/54	3660	19.6	47	27½/18*	103	93/67	3.6/9.3(p)	368
			† using manual hold		* with ABS			(p) power assisted	

PERFORMANCE

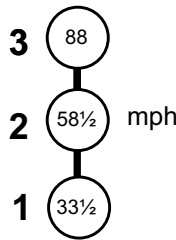
Acceleration time in seconds
- using accelerator kickdown



Maximum speeds
using accelerator kickdown



4800rpm observed at 70mph on level track = 14.6mph per 1000rpm



FUEL CONSUMPTION

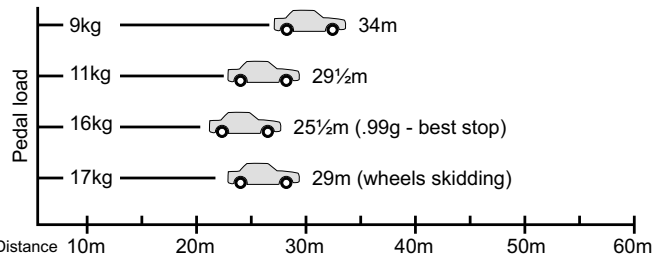
Type of use - air conditioning not fitted*	mpg
Urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	31
Suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	37
Motorway (70mph cruising)	29
Cross-country (brisk driving/20miles from cold start)	43
Rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	50
Typical mpg overall	40

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

BRAKES

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

Dry road stopping distance from 50mph (no ABS)
(A good-to-average best stop is about 28m at 20-30kg pedal load)

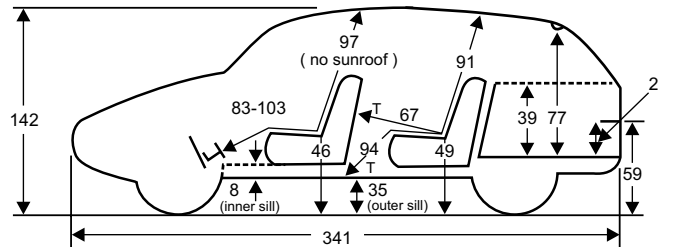


Fade test: pedal load required for a moderate (34m/.75g) stop:
9kg at start of test, 12kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

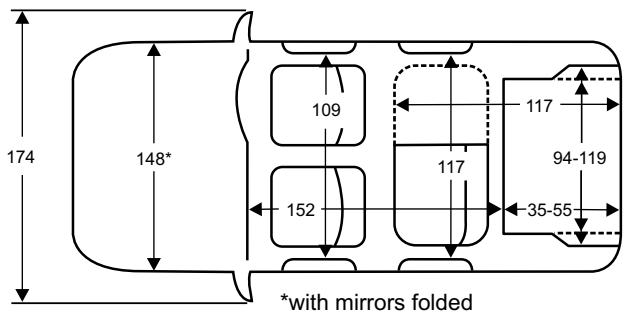
MEASUREMENTS

Centimetres

Three door



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



LIKES AND GRIPES

- | | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Stalk-controlled front wash/wipe | ... | but tailgate control rockers badly placed |
| Smooth auto gear selector with "head-up" display | ... | but shorter drivers find it hard to see |
| Generous tank capacity | ... | but squandered by pessimistic gauge (no warning lamp) |
| Easy back seat folding with protected rear surface | ... | but not flat and no protection against sliding cargo |
| No rear load sill | ... | but only "space-saver" spare wheel |