



Suzuki Wagon R

Featuring 1.2GL Automatic



SCORECARD

Overtaking / pulling power

●●●○

Fuel economy

●●○○

Handling / steering

●●○○

Comfort / ease of control

●●●○

Interior space / practicality

●●●○

Accident / injury avoidance

●●●○

Costs in service

●●○○

Depreciation prospects

●●●○

REMEMBER CITROËN'S 2CV? DESIGNED TO do the job with little thought about appearances, this Wagon R similarly rolls into view with an uncompromising commitment to the practicalities of everyday motoring.

Even its shape makes sense – just like square fridge boxes that save shelf space compared with round ones, the boxy Wagon R finds room in just over 3.3 metres of kerb space that you wouldn't have thought possible. What's more, its taller build and loftier seats eliminate gymnastics when you get in and out – just raise a leg and sit down. Even the seatbelts stay clear in absurdly easy seat folding, and further rearrangement of the furniture will achieve over two metres of load length for a roll of carpet or a length of timber, twin, full-length loungers or a cavernous cargo area. The practicality even extends to novel stowage areas dotted all over, including a square plastic bucket (yes, really!) that sits beneath the front seat cushion.

The Wagon R we tried was the dearer 1.2 with smooth automatic transmission that does a lot of gearchanging. Like most of its kind, it does no favours to acceleration or fuel economy, but expect about 43mpg overall from the manual version. Nevertheless, the auto 'box makes the Wagon R a superb town (or country lane) conveyance, backed up by a lofty but comfortable driving position that also makes it so easy to park. The back seat passengers sit even higher, so they have a good view forward, as well ; only legroom is limited – you could wear a top hat without any problem.

Go faster and the car grows noisier (and thirstier) past 60mph, and faster cornering provokes noticeable tilt and complaints from the passengers, although the car itself remains stable under duress, in forward or reverse gear. It rides well unless fully laden, but the pleasant (electric) power steering can't prevent some dithering in strong crosswinds or along uneven roads.

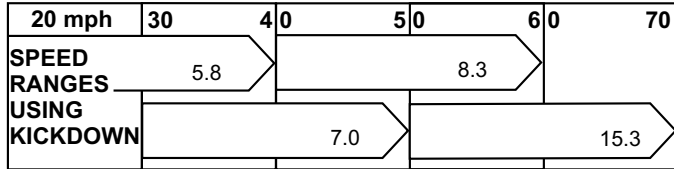
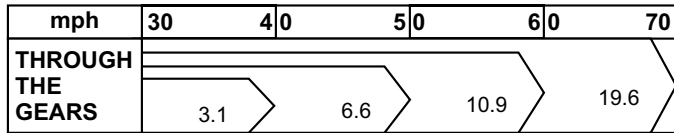
HOW THE WAGON R AUTO COMPARES	Engine cap/power (cyl/cc/bhp)	Revs at 70mph (rpm)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (m/kg)	Maximum legroom - front (cm)	Typical leg/kneeroom - rear (cm)	Steering turns/ circle (m)	Overall length (cm)
SUZUKI WAGON R 1.2 (AUTO)	4/1171/69	3600	19.6	(AUTO)	35	26/27	101	91/61	3.5/9.5(p)	341
Hyundai Atoz (Auto)	4/999/55	4800	20.7†	(Auto)	35½	28/18	99	101/62	3.0/9.6(p)	350
Daewoo Matiz SE (Manual)	3/796/50	4300	21.8	45.6/29.0	44½	25½/27	105	101/66	3.2/9.3(p)	350
Seat Arosa 1.4 (Auto)	4/1390/60	3530	17.2	(Auto)	36½	28½/18	105	93/62	2.9/10.1(p)	354
Peugeot 106 1.1 (Manual)	4/1124/60	3790	14.1	29.6/20.8	46½	29/27	106	89/64	4.1/9.7	368

† using manual hold

(p) power assisted

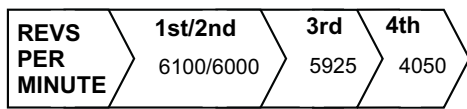
PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds - using accelerator kickdown

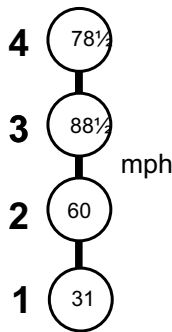


Maximum speeds

Using accelerator kickdown



3600rpm observed at 70mph on level road = 19.4mph per 1000rpm



FUEL CONSUMPTION

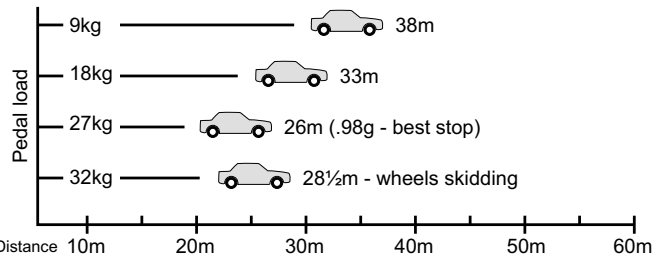
Type of use - air conditioning not fitted*	mpg
Urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	26
Suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	31½
Motorway (70mph cruising)	30
Cross-country (brisk driving/20 miles from cold start)	37
Rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	42½
Typical mpg overall	35

*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 ●●●●○

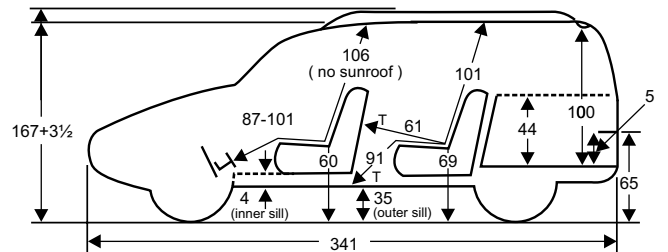
Dry road stopping distance from 50mph (no ABS)
(A good-to-average best stop is about 28m at 20-30kg pedal load)



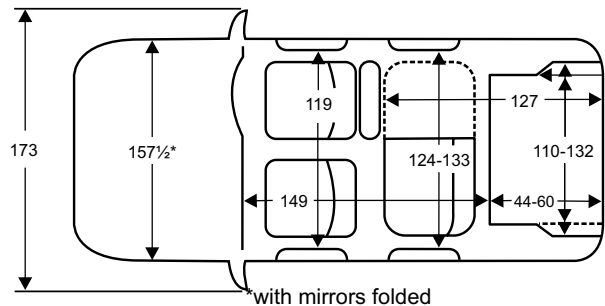
Fade test: pedal load required for a moderate (34m/.75g) stop:
17½kg at start of test, 18kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

MEASUREMENTS

Centimetres



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



LIKES AND GRIPES

- | | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Easy, well-sited major controls | ... | but rear wiper should be on left stalk (with longer blade, too) |
| Unusually comfortable, unrestricting front belts | ... | but only two fitted to back seat |
| Auto smooth with nice selector | ... | but too easy to inadvertently trigger top-gear inhibitor |
| Air flows to screen and facia vents together | ... | but no flow to rear footwells |
| Truthful displays and gauges | ... | but no low-level fuel lamp |
| Key-operated central locking | ... | but only from driver's door |
| Excellent progressive brakes | : | expensive parts prices |