

Toyota Yaris

Featured model: 1.3 CDX 5-door



WE'VE ALREADY TESTED AND praised the pint-size and perky 1.0-litre Yaris (see R9921). It's a great little town-and-around car, but open-roaders are more likely to gravitate to this livelier and longer-legged 1.3 version.

It has all the clever attributes of its smaller-engined stablemate, but under the bonnet is a punchier four-pot motor developing a useful 85bhp. This means that the 1.3 is 3sec quicker through the gears from 30 to 70mph and top speed is up by a considerable, if academic, 10mph.

More significantly, it's only 2mpg heavier on fuel and cruises with 450 fewer revs on the tachometer at 70mph. A good job, too, because smooth and sweet-revving through the engine is, it's decidedly boomy at 4000rpm. That said, the car covers the ground deceptively quickly.

The engine is complemented by a somewhat notchy yet slick gearchange. Indeed, all the controls respond to a light touch, which makes the Yaris so easy to handle, while the lack of rear overhang takes the guesswork out of reverse parking. Who needs proximity sensors?

With no changes to the suspension, the Yaris still doesn't suffer rougher roads gladly. It's always firm, but at least the ride is more compliant at speed on open roads. Tyre and wind noise are often all too apparent, though.

Both the lofty driver's seat and steering wheel can be adjusted for height (you can place the wheel where you like, it won't obscure that rather eerie but crystal-clear

central digital display), but rearward vision is severely hampered by the big (removable) head restraints.

The fascia is a mess (a mess, even) of bulgy, swoopy curves in which all the switches and knobs are in easy reach. It takes a while to remember which does what, though, but the small trip computer's screen is conveniently in view.

We've a lot of respect for Toyota's reliability and build quality, but have to say that in this case the surfeit of cheap-looking, hard grey plastic (some of it ill fitting) lets the Yaris down. It's also a pity that there are no heater ducts for the rear passengers, who are otherwise treated to plenty of leg-stretching space and footroom.

Slide the back seat forward 15cm and you'll chop their legs off, but at least boot space will then be increased from a slot for shopping bags to a reasonable sized boot. This can be further transformed into a spacious cargo area simply by double folding the divided back seats.

VERDICT

You pay £500 for the Yaris's bigger engine – not a bank-breaking sum considering that it provides extra pep and more relaxed cruising while putting only a small dent in the fuel economy. It gives this versatile and talented little supermini a rather more grown up feel, too, without it losing its fun factor or detracting from its chic and cheerful character.

AT A GLANCE

considering size, price and rivals

Overtaking ability	☆☆☆☆○
Space/practicality	☆☆☆☆○
Controls/displays	☆☆☆☆○
Safety	☆☆☆☆○
Handling/steering	☆☆☆☆○
Comfort	☆☆☆☆○
Fuel economy	☆☆☆☆○

SPECIFICATION

engine 1299cc, 4-cylinder, petrol; 85bhp at 6000rpm, 91 lb ft at 4400rpm; belt-driven double overhead camshafts, 16 valves

transmission 5-speed manual, front-wheel drive; 20.6mph/1000rpm in 5th, 17.3 in 4th

suspension front: independent MacPherson coil spring/damper struts, anti-roll bar. Rear: torsion beam, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar
steering hydraulic power assistance; 3.2 turns lock-to-lock; 10.2m diameter turning circle between kerbs (15.8m for one turn of the wheel)

brakes ventilated discs front, drums rear, with standard anti-lock (ABS) and brake force distribution (EBD) controls

wheels/tyres 5in alloy with 175/65R14T tyres (Bridgestone B391 on test car); temporary (steel) spare

LIKES ...

twin trip and mpg meters almost spot-on
instant mph to kph speedo conversion
radio/CD sound quality
leg-stretching space alongside clutch
plastic-protected door sills

and GRIPES

no rear heater ducts
dim interior light (centre roof only)
no intermittent rear wiper
lazy tailgate gas struts
stiff handwheel to adjust seat cushion

THE YARIS RANGE

size and type 3- and 5-door (mid-priced) supermini
trim levels S, GS GLS, CDX, T Sport
engines petrol: 4 cylinder/1.0 litre/68bhp, 4/1.3/85, 4/1.5/105; diesel: none
drive front-wheel drive, 5-speed manual; (4-speed stepped automatic available on 1.3GLX and CDX)

OVERTAKING ABILITY ★☆☆○○					
<i>Engine super-smooth, whether pulling (lethargically) from low revs or rushing to the red line. Lively when gunned but boomy from 4000rpm (82mph in top). Cruises deceptively quickly on a motorway - officer!</i>					
acceleration in seconds	through gears*	④ th gear	⑤ th gear		
20-40mph	3.5	10.9	14.9		
30-50mph	4.5	10.3	14.1		
40-60mph	5.8	10.7	14.3		
50-70mph	7.5	11.3	15.6		
30-70mph	12.0	21.6	29.7		
eed in each gear (*using 6400rpm for best acceleration)					
gear	①*	②*	③*	④	⑤
speed (mph)	32	60	87	106	108

SPACE AND PRACTICALITY ★☆☆○○			
<i>Tiny boot until 60/40 divided back seat is slid forward by up to 15cm - to detriment of otherwise generous rear knee/legroom. Back seat also double-folds to open up a big cargo area. Storage spaces galore</i>			
<i>in centimetres (5-door hatch)</i>		inside	(† with sunroof)
outside		front - legroom	86-105
length	362	- headroom	91-96†
width - inc mirrors	187	rear - typical leg/	90-102*
- mirrors folded	166	kneeroom	55-70*
height (no roof bars)	150	- headroom	91
load sill height	20/70	- hiproom	128
<i>(inside/outside)</i>		load space (all seats in use)	
steering		(litres/cu ft)	315/11.1 - 230/8.1*
turns lock-to-lock	3.2	load length	42-57*
turning circle (metres)	10.2	full length to fascia	208
easy to park/garage?		load width	97
	★☆☆○○	load height (to shelf/	58/
* back seat forwards/rearwards		to top of aperture)	90

CONTROLS AND DISPLAYS ★☆☆○○	
<i>Unique 3-D digital display works well (though tacho/fuel gauge small) and simple trip computer useful. Light if somewhat clunky gearchange and all the controls handy. Good vision/parking easy</i>	
	

HOW THE YARIS 1.3CDX COMPARES	engine cyl/cap/power (no/cc/bhp)	revs at 70mph (rpm)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	fuel economy (mpg)	brakes - best stop from 50mph (m/kg)	maximum legroom - front (cm)	typical leg/ kneeroom - rear (cm)	steering turns/ circle (m)	overall length (cm)
TOYOTA YARIS 1.3CDX	4/1299/85	3400	12.0	29.7/21.6	44	24½/18*	105	102/70	3.2/10.2	362
Daihatsu Sirion 1.3SL	4/1298/102	3450	9.5	25.9/20.5	47	27½/13*	105	93/65	3.6/9.3	368
Fiat Punto 1.2 16v	4/1242/80	3210	11.7	29.7/20.2	41	27/12	108	96/67	2.8/10.8	384
Ford Ka 1.3	4/1229/60	3490	17.3	31.0/21.4	42	28/22	105	92/67	2.8/10.1	362
Nissan Micra 1.4CVT (auto)	4/1348/82	2640	12.1	auto	41	25½/18*	100	92/67	2.8/10.6	375
Renault Clio 1.4 16v †	4/1390/98	3490	11.2	27.5/18.0	42	27½/12*	107	94/64	2.8/10.9	381

† performance figures for 2001 model * with ABS

SAFETY ★☆☆○○	
<i>Yaris fared well in Euro-NCAP tests. Standard safety items include ABS, two front airbags, head restraints all round, front seatbelt pretensioners, but only a lap belt for centre back seat passenger</i>	
braking	dry road stopping distance
pedal feel ★☆☆○○	from 50mph (with standard ABS)
in emergency ★☆☆○○	pedal load
handbrake ★☆☆○○	unhurried 10kg 35m
	sudden 18kg 24½m best stop
	+4kg ie 22kg 26m ABS on

EURO NCAP CRASH TEST RATINGS (tested Sep 2001)	
front impact 81%	side impact 89%
overall 85% ★☆☆○○	pedestrian rating ★☆☆○○

SECURITY FEATURES	
central locking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	alarm 0
remote control <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	immobiliser <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
auto window closure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	luggage security ★☆☆○○
deadlocks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> standard	0 dealer option <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not available

HANDLING AND STEERING ★☆☆○○	
<i>Effortless to drive in town or on twisty country roads, thanks to light steering/controls and car's compact size and nippy, nimble feel. Thumpy wheelspin if you pull away too fast on a wet road</i>	
	

COMFORT ★☆☆○○	
<i>Firm ride, particularly at low speed, but avoids harshness. Too much road noise, though. Easy to enter and leave and small front seats unexpectedly adequate. Back seat erect, but plenty of space for two</i>	

FUEL ECONOMY ★☆☆○○	
<i>A real fuel-stretcher if you're gentle - and economical even if you're not. Trip computer no longer dumps all its data when the engine is switched off. Yaris is in lowest tax band and group 5E (for CDX) insurance</i>	
AA test results (mpg)	official figures (mpg)
worst (hard/urban) 27	urban 36.7
best (gentle/rural) 60	extra urban 56.5
overall mpg on test 44	combined 47.1
realistic tank capacity 38 litres	CO ₂ emissions 144g/km
typical range 370 miles	car tax band A