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Latest Nissan Juke – Road Test

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STILL SETTING THE PACE? THE NEW NISSAN JUKE

David Miles (Miles Better News Agency) tells all...

Launched over a decade ago the first generation Nissan Juke sold in huge numbers with over 1.5 million finding global homes. It brought the then aspirational idea of five door SUV styling to the masses of car buyers who previously had opted for supermini sized hatchbacks.

Although prior to Juke there had been small boxy shaped SUVs/4x4s from mainly Japanese



manufacturers like Mitsubishi, Suzuki and Daihatsu because of their 'K' class popularity in traffic and people congested Japan, it was the quirkily styled Juke that opened up a whole new market sector bring SUV/Crossover styling to the motoring masses.



The original Juke spawned the likes of the Renault Captur, Vauxhall Mokka X/Crossland X, Peugeot 2008, Citroën C3 Aircross, VW T-Cross/T-Roc, Audi Q2, MINI Countryman, Skoda Kamiq, SEAT Arona, Fiat 500X and many more including the current trend to apply taller suspension and plastic SUV body cladding to run-of-the-mill small family hatchbacks. And there are still more compact SUVs to come with Alfa Romeo about to capitalise on their partnership with the PSA Group and use platforms and technology from models such as the Peugeot 2008/C3 Aircross for their version and Toyota will bring a small SUV to market, based on their Yaris supermini.



Still built in Britain the new five door Nissan Juke is larger, retains its sporty styling and now includes a wider choice of those all-important personalisation options. It also offers new driving support technologies such as Nissan ProPilot and connected services and over-the-air updates making it the most connected Nissan ever, says the manufacturer.

Initially the new Juke is available with just one choice of engine - a new 1.3 litre DIG-T 117 hp three cylinder turbo petrol engine with manual and seven speed dual clutch automatic transmissions choices. There are no 4WD models.

The specification line-up is well known throughout the Nissan range of other models. Visia starts the range off at £17,395 followed by Acenta from £18,995, N-Connecta from £20,995, Tekna from £22,495, Tekna+ from £23,895 and Premiere Edition at £23,995. All versions apart from Visia are available with the auto gearbox option, adding £1,400 to the prices quoted above.

The new Juke uses the latest Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance CMF-B platform also used for the new Renault Captur. It retains many of the classic original styling features but now less contrived to be different. It is also a shade larger so it is more user-friendly for those owners with children although adults will still find it a squeeze for headroom in the rear due to its sharply rising waistline and lower coupé roofline in front of the steeply raked forward rear tailgate.

The new Juke retains the iconic signature circular headlamps which now feature a Y-shaped LED signature which complements Nissan's trademark V-Motion grille. The 19-inch wheels give a bold and athletic stance whilst a 'floating' roof design and sharply-creased side panel details add a higher level of kerb appeal. The vehicle retains its hidden rear door handles in the rear pillars.

Personalisation options are big selling points in today's market and the new Juke is available with a choice of 11 body colours in combination with three roof contrasted colours.

The new Juke's interior retains some of its previous styling but re-worked to create a more



modern stylish appearance with a higher level of quality materials and of course equipment and connectivity functions. Having said its rear seat headroom is not ample it is however roomier with rear seat knee room increased by 58 mm (2.28 in), rear headroom by just 11 mm (0.43 in) and with 20% more luggage capacity with a boot capacity of 422 litres (14.90 cu.ft) and up to 1,305 litres (46.09 cu.ft) with the split rear seat backs folded down.

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The improved interior design has been finished with up-market materials and ambient lighting. New soft-touch materials on the dashboard, door trim and foot-wells give a more up-market feel. The seats with a single-piece backrest provide a sporty look and can be trimmed in Alcantara and leather depending on the spec level. On selected grades there is the Bose Personal Plus audio system option that can be controlled via the 'floating' 8-inch

infotainment display which provides access to the Nissan Connect Services.



My new Juke actual test drive model was the probable best-selling version with Tekna spec and with the easy to live with seven speed dual clutch auto gearbox. This is priced at £23,895 but it also had the £975 Fuji Red roof colour option with matching door mirror cappings and shark fin roof antenna over the main Pearl Black body colour - a nice combination.

Some of the Tekna standard spec items are intelligent emergency braking with pedestrian and cycling recognition, intelligent driving lane intervention, driver alert, blind spot alert, vehicle driving dynamic control, traffic sign recognition linked to cruise control, auto lights/wipers, privacy glass, rear spoiler, multifunction steering wheel, bottle holders and ample storage compartments, heated front windscreen, heated front seats, 8-inch touchscreen plus 7.0-inch combination screen in the driver's instrument binnacle, sat-nav



with TomTom Traffic, intelligent all-round monitor with moving objects detection, rear view camera, rear cross traffic alert and forward collision warning, drive mode selector with Eco/Standard/Sport settings, Connected Services and Wi-Fi plus the Nissan ProPilot safety package of traffic jam pilot, lane keep assist and intelligent cruise control.



Of course electrically operated windows and door mirrors are included as is air-con and thankfully separate heating and ventilation controls which do not have to be operated via the touchscreen. I would have preferred to have a space-saver spare wheel rather than the standard fit tyre repair kit just for peace of mind driving.

That's a whole lot of sensible spec for the popular Tekna level so I wouldn't be looking higher up the range. But when it comes to the engine so far there is only one choice, the new Renault/Nissan 1.3 litre, three cylinder DIG-T turbo petrol unit with 117 hp and 200 Nm (148 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm. This unit is quiet, smooth and provides ample performance in this sensible SUV/Cross class. The seven speed dual clutch auto gearbox, even in Eco mode, I found on occasions to snatch its gearchanges. The ratios were all well spaced and used the ample torque available impressively to provide good mid range acceleration and it coped well at cruising speeds. It was less lively during lower speed acceleration, as the 11.1 seconds taken for the zero to 62mph duration shows. Top speed is a modest 112 mph but when will that ever be necessary?



Much more important are running costs. The official WLTP Combined Cycle fuel economy figure is 44.1 mpg and my week of motoring covering long and short journeys returned 42.1 mpg. It would have been closer to the official figure but 70 mph motorway cruising dented



the overall figure somewhat, as tends to happen with hard-working three cylinder engines.

The VED tax costs with the 116 g/km figure are £170 First Year rate followed by £145 Standard rate and Benefit-in-Kind company car tax is 27% now but 28% for new cars registered from April this year. Insurance is an attractively low Group 13E rating and warranty is a less attractive and ungenerous three years/60,000 miles.

The large 19-inch alloy wheels provided an unsettled ride quality at times but generally the handling was sharp and the steering well-weighted and precise during cornering, and despite its tall design body-roll around bends was minimal. Visibility to the front and sides was good but limited for the driver to the rear quarters due to the design of the pillars. However the rear view and all-round cameras with parking sensors helped during parking.

VERDICT

Whilst the original Juke was the leader of the pack for the flood of me-too compact SUV/Crossover competitor models which followed, after a long and successful first generation life-span the new Juke is now playing catch-up to what its newer competitors already offer. It is a tough and more competitive market place now but the latest Juke still retains its quirky styling appeal, perhaps more moderate than before, so it will be interesting to see whether previous younger single/couples and older child-free empty nesters take to it. Being built in Britain, now we are out of the EU, should bring in an element of patriotic appeal as well.

For: Very well equipped with driving support, safety and connectivity functions, retains its iconic styling but in a more refined and upmarket way, improved interior trim/upholstery quality, low running costs, competitively priced.

Against: It's still 'cosy space' for rear seat passengers, only one engine choice for now, no 4WD version, firm ride, no spare wheel, ungenerous warranty.



Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Nissan Juke Tekna 1.0 DIG-T 117 hp, seven speed automatic, compact Crossover.

Price: £23,895 (£24,870 as tested).

Engine/transmission: 1.0 litre, three cylinder, turbo petrol, 117 hp, 200 Nm (148 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, seven speed dual-clutch automatic, front wheel drive.



Performance: 112 mph, 0-62 mph 11.1 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 44.1 mpg (42.1 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 116 g/km, VED First Year road tax £170 then £145 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 27% (28% from April).

Insurance Group: 13E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000-miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,210 mm (13.81 ft), W 1,800 mm (5.91 ft), H 1,595 mm (5.23 ft), wheelbase 2,636 mm (8.65 ft), boot/load space 422 to 1,305 litres (14.90 to 46.09 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,250 kg (2,756 lb), five doors/five seats.