

Audi A4 Saloon

WhatCar? verdict



For:

The A4 is roomy and is good to drive. Ownership costs are competitive and resale values should be high.

Against:

The looks are unadventurous and the dash fussy. BMW's 3 Series is more fun to drive.



On the road verdict

Performance



Plenty of power from all engines

There are plenty of petrol and diesel engines to choose from, however we'd plump for either the higher-powered 1.8 petrol or the 120bhp 2.0-litre diesel. The 2.7 V6 diesel's CVT gearbox is a little slow to react, but it soon picks up. The 3.0 V6 diesel and 3.2 V6 petrol channel their prodigious power through all four wheels.

Ride and handling



Balanced, grippy and generally comfortable

Although it doesn't live up to Audi's billing as the sportiest car in its class, the A4 is good to drive, with well balanced handling and lots of grip. The steering weights up nicely at speed, but has a rubbery feel. Ride comfort is reasonable, although larger bumps can upset the A4's composure.

Refinement



Quiet, but less wind noise would be welcome

On the whole, the A4's cabin is quiet. Road and suspension noise aren't a problem. Most of the engines are quiet too, but the 1.8 petrol becomes gruff when worked hard. The large door mirrors also create a little too much wind noise at speed.

In the cabin verdict

Behind the wheel



Fussy dash, pedals are off-set

Ownership verdict

Buying



Competitive on price and running costs

Audi generally undercuts its rivals from BMW and Mercedes on list price and that's true of the A4. Discounts might be limited, but resale values should be high. The 2.0 TDI falls into the lowest company car tax band and returns over 50mpg, so running costs are sensible. The V6 four-wheel-drive versions will hit your wallet harder, though.

Quality



As faultlessly finished as you'd expect

Audi's reputation hinges on quality so the A4 is a bit of a disappointment. At first glance it looks great, but the cabin just doesn't feel as special as it should. The plastics aren't as dense and the carpets aren't as thick and some of the switchgear doesn't feel substantial. The previous model only finished 10th out of 13 cars in its class in our 2007 JD Power customer satisfaction survey. As a brand, Audi didn't fare particularly well in our latest Reliability Survey.

Safety and security



Plenty to keep you and your belongings safe

The A4 ticks all the boxes for safety kit, with six airbags and stability control as standard. Rear side airbags are available as an option, as are lane-departure- and blind spot-warning systems. Deadlocks and an alarm are fitted as standard to guard against theft.

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Vehicles	Finance	Tracking	Valeting	S.M.A.R.T	Maintenance
New and Used Cars and commercial SuperCars Part Exchange	Contract hire Finance lease Hire purchase Conditional purchase	Live vehicle tracking Timesheets Site reports Mileage	Internal and external Supagard Autoglym DiamondBrite	Dents Scatches Alloy Wheels Repairs	Pay as you go Fixed Fleet support Breakdown recovery

A wide range of adjustment for the seat and steering wheel means that the A4 caters for drivers of all shapes and sizes, however the pedals are heavily off-set to the right so it can be difficult to get comfortable. Forward visibility is fine, but the rear view is compromised. Controls are logically arranged and Audi's MMI control system is fairly intuitive to use, but the A4's dash layout is busy and can be confusing at times.

Space and practicality



One of the most practical cars in its class
 The A4 accommodates four passengers and luggage better than most of the cars in its class. There's plenty of headroom throughout and rear legroom is particularly generous. The boot is larger than those in both the BMW 3 Series and Mercedes C-Class. It's a usefully regular shape, too, and split-folding rear seats come as standard.

Equipment



Single trim level includes lots of kit
 Our favourite SE trim offers lots of equipment. There's the usual creature comforts: a CD player, alloy wheels and four electric windows. On top of that, rear-seat climate control, a 10-speaker stereo system, leather-trimmed multifunction steering wheel and automatic headlights and wipers come as standard.

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