



### Performance ★★★★★

Petrol buyers can choose from 59bhp and 81bhp 1.25-litre units, a 95bhp 1.4 and a 118bhp 1.6, while the diesel line-up consists of a 67bhp 1.4 and a 89bhp 1.6 that's available in standard and ultra-efficient Econetic form. The 1.4 petrol version strikes the best balance between performance and affordability.

### Ride & handling ★★★★★

Effectively, there are two types of Fiesta – a standard set-up with more compliant suspension and speed-sensitive steering, and the firmer Zetec S, which has consistently weightier steering. Either way, it's superb. The suspension shrugs off mid-bend craters with disdain and remains unfazed by all but the worst town bumps. The car is wonderfully agile and involving – especially so in its Zetec S guise

### Refinement ★★★★★

The Fiesta sets the benchmark for refinement in this class. The engines are extremely smooth and there's only a hint of wind noise down the side of the car at the national limit. As for road and suspension noise, they're so well contained that you'd swear you were in a much larger car.

### Buying & owning ★★★★★

The Fiesta is easy on fuel, cheap to insure and should hold its value reasonably well. The Econetic model is the cleanest car on sale in Britain, with CO2 emissions of 98g/km – better than any hybrid – so you'll pay no road tax and a lower rate of 'benefit in kind' tax if it's a company car.

### Quality & reliability ★★★★★

Ford has put plenty of effort into making the Fiesta's interior as distinctive as its exterior, but you can't help feeling that a few corners have been cut. Most models get black plastic door pulls that look and feel cheap, while the plastics lower down the dash, and on the rear door panels, have a decidedly low-rent feel. Ford has a good record in our reliability surveys, though.

### Safety & security ★★★★★

All Fiestas come with five airbags, including a driver's knee 'bag, but it's disappointing that curtain airbags and stability control aren't fitted as well – they're cost options across the range. Deadlocks and a visible VIN make life difficult for thieves.

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**Behind the wheel ★★★★★**

The big-car refinement of the Fiesta is matched by big-car comforts in the front of the cabin. There's loads of seat travel, plenty of support for your back, and two-way steering adjustment so that most people can find the ideal driving position. The funky, mobile phone-inspired dash works pretty well, too, although the on-screen menus that need scrolling through to access minor functions could be more intuitive.

**Space & practicality ★★★★★**

Rear knee space is tight for anyone out of junior school, and the Fiesta isn't particularly versatile. There's a decent boot, albeit with a high lip, but when you want to enlarge it the backrests merely flop onto the bases, leaving an untidy split-level floor.

**Equipment ★★★★★**

Ford offers five main trims, plus unique Econetic (high economy) and Zetec S (sporty) models. Entry-level Studio cars are pretty spartan, but upgrading to Style adds remote locking and front electric windows. Style+ cars and above get air-conditioning. We'd go for the Zetec, though, as it's still reasonably affordable, but features niceties such as alloy wheels.



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