

## Volkswagen Golf Hatchback

### WhatCar? verdict



**For:**

Refined and comfortable, but fun to drive. The cabin is classy and practical, and the driver environment is excellent. A desirable image guarantees strong residual values and every version has lots of safety kit

**Against:**

The entry-level engines don't have a lot of power and the styling is conservative - inside and out. Prices are high compared with some mainstream rivals



### On the road verdict

#### Performance



All but cheapest versions have plenty of power  
 The cheapest petrol-engined Golf – a 1.4-litre - makes do with a measly 79bhp. The 1.6 has a more respectable 101bhp, but our favourite is the punchy 120bhp turbocharged 1.4 TSI. A 158bhp version of this engine – with a supercharger – gives almost hot-hatch pace. There are currently 109 and 138bhp 2.0-litre diesels, and the latter is impressively smooth and flexible.

#### Ride and handling



Brilliant blend of comfort and fun  
 No other small family car blends fun and comfort as well as the Golf. It's incredibly composed on demanding roads thanks to lots of grip, tight body control and well-weighted steering, yet you can enjoy driving it. It's also effortless around town. The ride is smooth and controlled at all times, which makes the optional adaptive suspension system seem unnecessary.

#### Refinement



Smoother and quieter than most rivals  
 The Golf's hushed cabin makes it an excellent cruiser, with minimal wind, road or engine noise intruding at speed. The engines are smooth and quiet, with the 2.0 TDI diesel particularly impressive. All of the major controls work with slick precision, which enhances the Golf's credentials as a real smoothie.

### In the cabin verdict

#### Behind the wheel



Absolutely nothing to fault

### Ownership verdict

#### Buying



Not cheap, but worth every penny  
 Okay, so the Golf isn't the cheapest family hatch there is, but it's definitely worth the money. Reasonable discounts are available to take the sting out of the purchase, and you'll be secure in the knowledge that the car's swanky image will protect your investment with strong residual values. Running costs are pretty good for the class, too.

#### Quality



As swanky as a hatchback gets  
 The Golf is about as swanky as small family hatches get. Many of the surfaces are soft to the touch, and many of those that aren't are rubberised for a better texture. Even tucked-away plastics are fairly good. The switches feel slick and the build is generally solid, but Volkswagen has disappointed in our reliability surveys in recent years.

#### Safety and security



Most boxes checked  
 It's hard to think of a box that the Golf doesn't tick. You get stability control to help you prevent having a crash in the first place, and if you can't avoid it, you have front, side and curtain airbags to keep you safe, along with another airbag to protect the driver's knees. Side airbags can also be fitted in the back for a nominal fee. On the security front, you get deadlocks, a visible VIN and plenty of marked parts.

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Cars and commercial	Finance lease	Timesheets	Supagard	Scatches	Fixed
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Drivers get comfortable using simple adjusters for the seat and steering wheel. Visibility is good all round the car, too. The dash is minimalistic, and the little switchgear that is present is well sited. The stereo has chunky buttons, or if you're willing to pay extra, you can have touchscreen controls.

### Space and practicality



Plenty of space for passengers  
 There aren't many family hatchbacks that provide more passenger space than the Golf. Bags of head- and legroom means there's plenty of space for four adults to travel comfortably, and decent shoulder room means carrying five isn't out of the question. The boot is big and well shaped, but, disappointingly, the rear seats do not fold flat.

### Equipment



SE is the way to go  
 Buyers choose from three trims. The entry-level S includes air-conditioning, electric front windows, a CD player and remote central locking. Step up to SE for alloys, cruise control, electric rear windows, an upgraded stereo and automatic headlights and wipers. Sporty GT trim is available with the most powerful engines and includes lowered suspension, plusher interior trim and sports seats.

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