

2007 VOLKSWAGEN CITY GOLF



Volkswagen has re-named the present Golf generation the City Golf. The City is an entry-level car that is more affordable than the Rabbit, the Golf's replacement. It is available as a four-door hatchback model only, in one version to which options or option packages can be added. A 2L 4-cylinder gasoline engine is the only one offered, and it powers the front wheels via a five-speed manual or a four-speed automatic transmission.

Interior and trunk

Access to the front is easy. The seats are firmly comfortable even after a long day of driving for people of average height or less. Heavily built or tall people will find the seats a bit narrow and the cushions a tad short. Thanks to the seat adjustments and tilt/telescoping steering wheel, drivers easily find a good driving position.

This Volkswagen has a rather unusual design problem. Because the front doorframes cover the A-pillars, snow accumulates under the frame to plop down on your hand or cascade inside when you open the door.

Entering and especially exiting the back requires a bit of flexibility. The bench seat is relatively comfortable for two adults, but only if they are of average height or less, because of the limited head- and legroom. Already quite spacious, trunk capacity can be expanded by folding the 60/40-split seatback. When the seatback is folded down on the cushion, the floor inclines sharply upward towards the front. To get a flat floor in this area, you have to flip the cushion and remove the head restraints before folding the seatback.

Convenience and safety

The cabin is very well finished in good materials. Despite the efficient soundproofing, you can hear the engine at highway speeds. There are few storage spaces and above all, no real centre console.

Gauges and controls are well laid out, except for the heating and radio controls, which are much too low. At night, everything is illuminated except the glove compartment.

The heating system provides good heat but slowly, and the blower lacks power to circulate it. The doors lock automatically as soon as the car reaches 15 km-h, with a rather loud, cheap-sounding clunk.

The windshield washer nozzles are located under the edge of the hood, and snow can easily block them. With a capacity of only 2.5 litres, the wiper fluid tank is ridiculously small.

From a safety standpoint, the City Golf comes equipped with dual front airbags, five head restraints, and four-wheel antilock disc brakes. Side and curtain airbags are available as options. The rear head restraints are too far back from the head. Visibility is very good in all directions, except on a $\frac{3}{4}$ rear angle because of the C-pillars, and rearward because of the bench seat's three head restraints. The headlights do not have enough range, particularly in the low-beam position.

In U.S. government tests, the City Golf with side and curtain airbags obtained five out of five stars for front-occupant protection in a frontal collision, and four stars for all-occupant protection in a side crash. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety awarded this Volkswagen a Good rating, its highest, for driver protection in an offset frontal collision.

Engine and transmission

The 2.0L 4-cylinder engine puts out 115 horsepower and 122 pounds of torque. Acceleration and pickup are relatively sedate, especially at low and average speeds. However, generous torque and the progressiveness of the engine contribute to driving pleasure, even though acceleration is a bit disappointing. This engine's biggest problem is its noise level, particularly above 3,500 rpm. The accelerator, on the other hand, is a model of progressiveness.

The automatic transmission usually shifts smoothly and is well suited to the engine. However, when coming to a complete stop or braking sharply, you clearly feel it downshift. At highway speeds, the transmission lets the engine run at least 500 rpm too fast. You cannot start off in second gear.

On the road

Suspension performance is very good, combining authentic comfort and relatively sporty road holding. Despite its firmness, the Golf never jostles its occupants yet displays a tenacious grip in turns while remaining stable and predictable. The Golf has a solid, big-car feel, an invitation to hit the open road.

The well-tuned power steering is steady, precise and relatively quick, with a short turning circle typical of many European cars. However, it is a bit too discrete when it comes to relaying information on the relation between the tires and the road. With four-wheel disc brakes and ABS, braking is powerful, smooth and fade resistant.

An inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre showed that the Golf is very well assembled and robust looking. What's more, Volkswagen does not skimp on rust proofing, which is more than generous, and offers a 12-year perforation warranty.

Conclusion

Even if it dates back to 1999, this Golf still has the earmark of a good touring car, though headlight range leaves much to be desired. Its interior looks dated, too, but the reduced prices make this easier to accept. On the other hand, the lack of a diesel engine, which was a popular choice, may be a turn-off to some buyers.

PROS: road compartment, large trunk, comfortable front seating, careful assembly, quality/equipment/price ratio, steering and brakes

CONS: noisy engine, insufficient storage, front-door design, weak headlights, slow heating, windshield washer nozzles under the hood

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF CITY 2007

Engine: 8-valve, 2.0-litre 4-cylinder

Horsepower: 115 hp at 5,200 rpm

Torque: 122 lb-ft at 2,600 rpm

Transmission: 5-speed manual; 4-speed automatic

Suspension: independent/semi-independent

Brakes: disc/disc

Wheelbase: 251.1 cm

Length: 418.9 cm

Width: 173.5 cm

Height: 144.4 cm

Weight: 1,246 to 1,336 kg

Tires: P195/65R15

Maximum towing capacity: 907 kg

Airbags: dual front. Two side and two curtain airbags optional.

Fuel consumption with automatic transmission:

Transport Canada rating:

City: 9.6 L/100 km (29 mpg)

Highway: 7.2 L/100 km (39 mpg)

Test result: 10 L/100 km (28 mpg)

Test temperature: -25°C to -10°C

Fuel tank capacity: 55 litres

Fuel requirement: regular grade gasoline

Acceleration:

0–100 km/h: 10.9 seconds

60–100 km/h: 7.4 seconds

Competition: Chevrolet Optra, Ford Focus, Hyundai Accent, Kia Rio, Nissan Versa, Suzuki SX4, Toyota Yaris

Warranty:

- Full basic coverage: 4 years/80,000 km
- Powertrain: 5 years/100,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 4 years/80,000 km
- Perforation damage: 12 years/unlimited km
- Emissions control system: 4 years/80,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module, onboard diagnostic system).

Factory replacement parts:

- Rear bumper: \$519
- Front brake disc: \$102
- Brake pads: \$102
- Muffler: \$343
- Front fender: \$224

Average insurance premium (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, male or female driver 30 to 40 years old): \$596 to \$696

Price according to trim level: \$14,900

Main options:

- Automatic transmission: \$1,150
- Air conditioning: \$1,350
- Convenience Package: \$740
- Luxury Package: \$1,600
- Cold Weather Package: \$205
- Side Curtain Protection Package: \$410
- Electronic Stabilization Program: \$450

Price as tested: \$17,605

Freight and preparation: \$1,500

Dealers: Quebec: 57 Canada: 167

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