

2007 KIA RONDO EX



The Rondo is an all-new vehicle offering seating for five or seven passengers, depending on the trim line. It is similar in size to the Mazda5. However, the Rondo has hinged rather than sliding rear doors, and a V6 engine in two of its versions. In the other versions, a four-cylinder powers the front wheels. The four-cylinder engine is mated to a four-speed automatic transmission, whereas the V6 gets a five-speed.

Interior and cargo area

The front seats are easily accessible and very comfortable, despite the lack of adjustable lumbar support. The driver's seat offers 8 cm of height adjustment. The driving position is good but a telescoping steering wheel would make it better: When the seat is adjusted for the pedals, the wheel is a bit too far away.

The back bench provides comfortable seating for two. Each section of the 60/40 split seatback reclines to four different angles and folds flat to the floor. When folded, however, they leave a gap behind the front seatbacks that is dangerous for pets. Headroom and legroom are surprisingly generous.

Cargo space is commendable with the rear bench in place and becomes very good when the bench seatback is folded. The five-passenger version has two roomy bins under the floor. The rear hatch opens wide.

Convenience and safety features

Finish inside the cabin is very good, and materials are of good quality. We could hear a few creaks in our test vehicle. Sound isolation is adequate, and there are lots of storage compartments.

Gauges and controls are well positioned, and everything is illuminated at night. The turn signal lever emits a cheap sound when it clicks back into place. The climate control system is efficient and has a choice of intermediate air-distribution settings.

The roof rails are flush to the roof, which means cargo cannot be tied down securely and that nothing can be carried on the roof without crossbars.

The Rondo is generously equipped for safety, with dual front, side and curtain airbags, active front head restraints, four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, traction control and stability control. The three rear head restraints sit a bit too far from the head and are too low for tall people. Visibility is good, but the wide pillars, especially A and C pillars, can bother some drivers. The headlights are efficient.

In U.S. government crash tests, the Rondo obtained five out of five stars for front-occupant protection in front and side collisions. It earned four stars for rear-occupant protection in a side crash, and four for rollover resistance.

Engine and transmission

The 2.4L 4-cylinder engine develops 162 horsepower and 164 pound-feet of torque, providing dependable and near-lively acceleration and pickup. It proves well adapted to the vehicle, even under average load, and it meets strict Tier2/Bin5 emissions control standards.

The four-speed automatic transmission shifts very smoothly. Its gear ratios are well staged, and it allows the vehicle to be driven off in second.

On the road

The fully independent suspension provides a firmly controlled, very comfortable ride. Rough patches are readily absorbed with no harsh reaction. With its sound grip, stability and minimal body lean, the Rondo lets you slip through turns in a satisfactory manner. You get an impression of solidity behind the wheel of this vehicle.

The power steering though a bit heavy is steady, precise and relatively quick. It provides little in the way of road feel, and has a short turning circle. The four-wheel disc brakes are powerful and resist well to fade. Hopefully they'll last, because they're very expensive.

Inspection

Our inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre showed that the Rondo is built on a sturdy platform that is well protected against corrosion. However, dirt easily enters the engine compartment, the lower part of the fuel filler pipe is exposed to damage, and debris can get through an opening under the front bumper and hit the air-conditioner condenser. The four-cylinder's overhead camshafts are chain driven.

Conclusion

The Rondo is a very attractive vehicle with a spacious interior, comfortable ride, good driving behaviour and a choice of engines and versions. It is an unpretentious vehicle that responds as expected in urban traffic as well as on the highway. Too bad a manual transmission is not available.

PROS: roomy interior, smooth transmission, comfort, ride and handling, storage, choice of versions

CONS: no adjustable lumbar support, wide roof pillars, opening under front bumper, steering a bit heavy, cost of brakes, no manual transmission

2007 KIA RONDO

Engine: 16-valve, 2.4-litre 4-cylinder; 24-valve, 2.7-litre V6

Horsepower: 162 hp at 5,800 rpm; 182 hp at 6,000 rpm

Torque: 164 lb-ft at 4,250 rpm; 182 lb-ft at 4,000 rpm

Transmission: 4-speed automatic; 5-speed automatic

Suspension: fully independent

Brakes: disc/disc

Wheelbase: 270 cm

Length: 454.5 cm

Width: 182 cm

Height: 165 cm

Weight: 1,511 to 1,592 kg

Tires: P205/60R16; P225/50R17

Maximum towing capacity: 907 kg

Airbags: dual front, plus two side and two curtain airbags

Fuel consumption with 4-cylinder:

Transport Canada rating:

City: 11 L/100 km (26 mpg)

Highway: 7.5 L/100 km (38 mpg)

Test result: 9.5 L/100 km (30 mpg)

Test temperature: 14°C to 26°C

Fuel tank capacity: 60 litres

Fuel requirement: regular grade gasoline

Acceleration:

0–100 km/h: 10.7 seconds

60–100 km/h: 7.3 seconds

Competition: Chevrolet HHR, Chrysler PT Cruiser, Honda Element, Mazda5, Pontiac Vibe, Toyota Matrix

Warranty:

- Full basic coverage: 5 years/100,000 km
- Powertrain: 5 years/100,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 3 years/60,000 km
- Perforation damage: 5 years/unlimited km
- Emissions control system: 5 years/100,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module, onboard diagnostic system).

Factory replacement parts:

- Rear bumper: \$956
- Front brake disc: \$239
- Brake pads: \$199
- Muffler: \$592
- Front fender: \$313

Average insurance premium (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, male or female driver 30 to 40 years old): \$713 to \$897

Price according to trim level:

- LX: \$19,995
- EX: \$21,995
- EX V6: \$22,995
- EX Premium: \$23,995 (7-seater)
- EX V6 Luxury: \$25,995 (7-seater)

Main options: none

Price as tested: \$21,995

Freight and preparation: \$1,495

Dealers: Quebec: 48 Canada: 147

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