

## VOLKSWAGEN GOLF 2010



The two biggest changes for this “new” generation, the sixth, are the return of the Golf name and the arrival of a station wagon version. Otherwise, the exterior and cabin are restyled and several mechanical elements such as the 2.5-litre engine, steering, and suspension have been reworked. The Golf is offered in three- and five-door body styles and as a station wagon.

### **Interior and trunk**

Front access is easy, but the wide doorsills attract grime. The seats are very comfortable, and the driver can easily obtain a good driving position thanks to a telescoping steering column and height-adjustable seat. The slide lever for the seats should be on the door side or, better still, run the width of the seat to make it easier to adjust before getting in. The passenger has to angle their legs to the left in order to stretch them completely. Headroom and legroom are good, even with the sunroof.

In the case of the GTI, access to the seats is more difficult because the side bolsters are very pronounced. On the other hand, occupants, if they fit into the seats, are held very snugly in place.

Access to the back is difficult: space is very limited at foot level between the B-pillar and the seat cushion. The bench seat is comfortable for two adults only; even a child won't appreciate the “comfort” in the middle. Legroom is good, but headroom is tight for tall people. The 60/40 split-fold seatback offers a ski pass-through. It folds with a slight up and forward angle, not level with the floor of the trunk (or the cargo area, in the case of the station wagon).

As is typical for a Volkswagen, the trunk is spacious and the liftgate opens wide. Cargo area dimensions are quite generous in the station wagon: 106 cm behind the rear seatback in the upright position, 178 cm behind the front seats with the rear seatback down, 100 cm wide and 74 cm high. Except for height, there's actually more room than in the Tiguan. All that's lacking is the Tiguan's folding front passenger seatback. Two practical bins lodge under the floor of the station wagon.

### **Convenience and safety features**

Finish is excellent, and materials are of very good quality. Soundproofing is quite acceptable, and an improvement over the former generation. There are a number of

storage spaces but overall capacity, especially of the centre console, is unimpressive. The station wagon features some well-designed storage spaces in the back.

The gauges and controls are logically laid out, and absolutely everything is illuminated at night. The light from the turn signals on the outside mirrors can be a problem for some drivers, especially at night, by giving them the impression that another vehicle is approaching. The click of the turn signals is inaudible.

The TDI's heating system heats up the interior slowly, as is often the case with diesel-powered vehicles, but it provides plenty of heat. It's not as slow with the other engines. The climate and audio controls are simple to use, but those mounted on the steering wheel are rather small, especially for gloved hands.

The windshield washer nozzles are under the edge of the hood, and snow can easily block them. The washer fluid tank contains just three litres, which is a disappointment, especially in a vehicle with a rear wiper and washer. The windshield wipers have an unusual feature: after the engine's switched off, the wipers can be positioned vertically simply by pushing down on the lever, to make it easier to remove snow from the windshield. Another push of the lever returns the wipers to their normal position. It's a great feature, as long as you remember to use it. Not so great are the recessed roof pillars that allow snow to build up, especially towards their base. The accumulation can prevent the wipers from reaching their full scope and force the wiper motor.

Safety equipment includes six airbags (dual front, side and curtain; rear side airbags are optional in the station wagon and five-door), four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, and five head restraints (active in front). Stability control is either standard or optional, depending on the model. Hatchback models offer very good visibility in all directions, except to the rear on a three-quarter angle. Rear visibility is very good with the station wagon. In all models, the chrome trim of the side air vents reflects off the front door windows on a level with the outside mirrors. Whether they're halogen or xenon, the headlights lack range, especially in the low-beam position, and the halogens also lack intensity.

In U.S. government crash tests, the five-door Golf obtained four out of five stars for front-occupant protection in a frontal impact, and five stars for all-occupant protection in a side impact. It earned four stars for rollover resistance. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety awarded the Golf a Good rating, its highest, for all of the following: roof strength, driver protection in a frontal offset impact, all-occupant protection in a side impact and all-occupant protection in a rear impact.

## **Engine and transmission**

The 2.5-litre 5-cylinder outputs 170 horsepower and 177 pound-feet of torque, moving the Golf along briskly. This engine is well suited to the vehicle, and with the improvements to engine management, it feels smoother and more energetic, making it more pleasant than before.

Needless to say, with the 2.0-litre 4-cylinder turbocharged direct-injection engine (200 hp and 207 lb-ft of torque), acceleration and pickup are vigorous. At launch, the GTI is not explosive but it's pretty fast just the same. Pickup is very quick and

instantaneous. In average acceleration or more, the engine is pleasantly sonorous. Though not as rapid as several competitors, the GTI is still fast enough to keep fans of affordable sport models happy.

The 2.0-litre 4-cylinder common rail turbo-diesel engine develops 140 horses and 236 pound-feet of torque. For a diesel, acceleration and pickup are energetic. And, of course, the very generous torque typical of this type of engine eases driving while ensuring relatively lively pickup. This engine, too, is well suited to the vehicle, and it offers a way to pair fuel efficiency (6 L/100 km during the road test) with very satisfactory performance. It runs smoothly and quietly, and diesel odour should be almost totally absent, at least for the first several thousand kilometres. After that, the smell may be more perceptible.

The DSG twin-clutch six-speed automated transmission climbs through the gears with immense smoothness. Shifts are simply imperceptible. However, in sharp deceleration or coming to a stop, you can feel the downshifts as well as small, irritating jerks. In sport mode, shifts occur at higher engine speeds, and in manual mode, shifts are quicker. You cannot drive off in second gear.

The six-speed automatic mated to the 2.5-litre engine always functions very smoothly. Gears are well spaced, and the transmission allows you to drive off in second.

### **On the road**

The four-wheel independent suspension is tuned to blend firmness and suppleness for a generally comfortable ride on practically all surfaces. Some pavement breaks can set off a firm reaction, but not a harsh reaction. Handling is very good on all types of pavement. The suspension has a solid, imperturbable feel that is unmatched by many larger, more expensive cars.

With the GTI, handling is ramped up a few notches, and comfort drops a bit. Despite the firmer suspension, the ride is still very civilized. In turns, the GTI is more stable and flat, with a more tenacious hold. Simply put, it straightens out twisty roads.

The electromechanical power steering is well weighted except in the TDI, where it is a bit heavy. It is stable, precise and relatively fast (fast in the GTI). Unfortunately, it transmits little in the way of road sensation. The turning circle is tight. The brakes are powerful, resisting well to fade after several high-speed panic stops.

### **Inspection**

In an inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre, we saw that the Golf has a sturdy underside that is well protected against corrosion. The wiper fluid tank is close enough to the radiator expansion tank to be confusing. The overhead camshafts of the gasoline engine are chain driven (belt driven in the TDI).

### **Conclusion**

With its wide range of models and trims, there's a Golf for many different types of buyers. They'll no doubt appreciate the refinement of the "new" generation along with its

ever-present comfort, practicality and driving pleasure. Unfortunately, the 2.0-litre turbocharged gasoline engine is not available in the station wagon. Because of its higher price and more stringent maintenance requirements, you need to accumulate more kilometres on an annual basis than the average driver, ideally on long trips, for the purchase of a diesel engine to be worthwhile.

**PROS:** comfortable front seats, handling and ride, efficient turbo-diesel, lively engine (GTI), choice of models, fit and finish

**CONS:** insufficient cabin storage, wide doorsills collect grime, slow heating (diesel), headlights rather weak, jerks with DSG transmission, small wiper fluid tank

## 2010 VOLKSWAGEN GOLF

**Engine:** 16-valve, 2.0-litre 4-cyl. turbodiesel; 20-valve, 2.5-litre 5-cyl.; 16-valve, 2.0-litre 4-cyl. turbo

**Horsepower:** 140 hp at 4,000 rpm; 170 hp at 5,700 rpm; 200 hp from 5,100 to 6,000 rpm

**Torque:** 236 lb-ft from 1,750 to 2,500 rpm; 177 lb-ft at 4,250 rpm; 207 lb-ft from 1,700 to 5,000 rpm

**Transmission:** 5 or 6-speed manual; 6-speed automatic

**Suspension:** fully independent

**Brakes:** disc/disc

**Wheelbase:** 257.8 cm

**Length:** 455.4 cm (Wagon: 455.6 cm; GTI: 421.3 cm)

**Width:** 178.1 cm

**Height:** 145.9 cm (Wagon: 150.4 cm; GTI: 146.9 cm)

**Weight:** 1,346 to 1,511 kg

**Tires:** 195/65R15; 205/55R16; 225/45R17; 225/40R18

**Maximum towing capacity:** 454 kg

**Airbags:** dual front, plus two side and two curtain airbags (Rear side airbags in option or standard according to models)

### Fuel consumption with 2.5-litre and automatic transmission:

Natural Resources Canada rating:

City: 9.2 L/100 km (31 mpg)

Highway: 6.9 L/100 km (41 mpg)

- Test result: 8.4 L/100 km (33 mpg)

Test temperature: - 7°C to 6°C

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** 3,772 kg/20,000 km

**Fuel tank capacity:** 55 litres

**Fuel requirement:** 2.0-litre TDI: diesel; 2.5-litre: regular grade gasoline; 2.0-litre turbo: premium grade gasoline

### Acceleration with 2.5-litre and automatic transmission

0–100 km/h: 8.6 seconds

60–100 km/h: 5 seconds

**Competition:** Acura CSX, Dodge Caliber, Ford Focus, Honda Civic, Hyundai Elantra, Kia Forte, Mazda3 and Mazdaspeed3, Mitsubishi Lancer and Evo, Nissan Sentra, Subaru Impreza and WRX, Toyota Corolla et Matrix, Volvo S40 and V50

**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 (2.5-litre model):**

- Rear bumper: \$937
- Front brake disc: \$102
- Brake pads: \$80
- Muffler: \$404
- Front fender: \$239

**Price according to trim level:**

- 2.5L 3-door: Trendline: \$20,175; Sportline: \$23,900
- 2.5L 5-door: Trendline: \$21,175; Comfortline: \$22,575; Highline: \$26,475
- TDI 5-door: Comfortline: \$24,975; Highline: \$28,775
- 2.5L Wagon: Trendline: \$22,675; Comfortline: \$24,074
- TDI Wagon: Comfortline: \$26,875; Highline: \$30,475
- GTI 3-door: \$28,675; 5-door: \$29,675

**Main options:**

- Automatic transmission: \$1,400
- Sunroof: \$1,400 (Wagon: \$1,780)
- Multimedia package: \$1,300
- ESP system: \$450

**Price as tested:** 2.5L 5-door: \$27,875; TDI Wagon: \$28,275; GTI 5-door: 31 075 \$

**Freight and preparation:** \$1,365

**Dealers:** Quebec: 41      Canada: 129

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