

2009 VOLKSWAGEN TIGUAN



The Tiguan is an all-new vehicle from Volkswagen. Its name is a combination of *tiger* and *iguana*. The Tiguan is VW's first incursion into the popular compact sport-utility market. It borrows mechanical and platform features from the Passat, Rabbit and Jetta. It is similar in size to the Ford Escape. The Tiguan is offered in three trim levels. The entry-level model is front-drive, with four-wheel drive available as an option; the other two come with standard all-wheel-drive.

Interior and cargo area

The Tiguan is high enough to ease access for tall individuals without complicating access for shorter people. The doorsills are wide, but the lower part of the door covers the sill and keeps it clean. There are no rain gutters, so rain and snow can land on the seats and occupants. The front seats are very comfortable, with adjustable height and lumbar control. The passenger seat has a fold-flat backrest. Headroom and legroom are generous.

The high-backed rear bench seat is comfortable for two. The seat is split 60/40. Both sides slide forward and back individually, and the backrests recline to several different angles. Flipping down the centre armrest creates a ski pass-through. Folding the backrests and sliding the bench as far back as it will go leaves a gap behind the front seatbacks. Sliding it completely forward forms a gap with the cargo floor. The seatbacks fold with a slight forward slope.

With the seatbacks up and the bench completely back, cargo space is a bit limited (82 cm). Sliding the bench forward frees up 97 cm of space; there's 168 cm with the backrests folded. The cargo area is 100 cm wide and 78 cm high. The sill is a bit high, but the hatch opens high as well.

Convenience and safety features

Interior finish is excellent and the quality of materials is good. Road and wind noise could be better suppressed. There is an abundance of good small-item storage.

The gauges and controls are well displayed and very easy to use. In fact, you don't often enjoy such a user-friendly environment. Everything is lighted at night. The click of the turn signals is barely audible. The heating system warms up fairly quickly and supplies plenty of heat. The base-model audio system sounds cheap.

The washer nozzles placed under the edge of the hood can easily be blocked by snow and ice, especially since it is difficult to remove snow that collects under the hood around the wipers. The rear wiper has only an intermittent cycle,

Safety features include dual front, side and side-curtain airbags; four-wheel antilock disc brakes; stability control; five head restraints; and good headlights. Visibility is generally good, but the C-pillars create blind zones on a three-quarter-rear angle. It is difficult to judge distances when backing up.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety awarded the Tiguan a Good rating, its highest, for driver protection in a frontal offset impact and for side- and rear-impact protection of all occupants.

Engine and transmission

The excellent, omnipresent 2.0-litre direct-injection four-cylinder engine develops 200 horsepower and 207 pound-feet of torque, for vigorous acceleration. Pickup is lively and nearly instantaneous with maximum torque production between 1,700 and 5,000 rpm, which also ensures engine flexibility by virtually eliminating turbo lag. The engine is well suited to the vehicle though a bit growly at times.

The six-speed automatic transmission always shifts very smoothly, with barely perceptible gear changes. There are only five speeds in Sport mode; gearshifts occur at higher engine speed and the transmission holds the gears longer. Truly effective. Manual mode is relatively quick. The all-wheel-drive system directs 90% of torque to the front wheels and 10% to the rear, in normal driving. As conditions require, it can split torque 50/50. The system functions well at all times. It is only available with the automatic transmission.

On the road

The four-wheel independent suspension provides a very smooth ride. Some road asperities will invoke a firm reaction, but no more, because the firmness is tempered by just the right degree of compliance to ensure comfort on all road surfaces. Roadholding is good and even a bit sporty for this type of vehicle.

The variably assisted power steering is very well calibrated, stable, precise and relatively quick, but it transmits little in the way of road sensation. The turning circle is relatively small. The brakes resist well to fade but lack power in emergency braking. They are adequate in normal driving.

Inspection

An inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre showed that the Tiguan's platform is sturdy, with very good corrosion protection, as attests its 12-year perforation warranty. The suspension is solid. Grime easily enters the engine compartment. The washer fluid tank is placed front and left, which unsafe for roadside fill-ups. The engine's overhead camshafts are chain driven.

Conclusion

Volkswagen has successfully produced a versatile, comfortable, agile and relatively spacious vehicle on its first foray into the compact SUV market. The Tiguan also possesses the driving dynamics that make Volkswagen vehicles so much fun to drive. Too bad, though, that all-wheel drive is not available with the manual transmission.

PROS: comfortable seats, lively engine, smooth automatic transmission, efficient AWD system, road compartment, simple controls

CONS: perfectible soundproofing, washer nozzles under hood edge, long emergency braking, three-quarter rear visibility, snow hard to remove, no rain gutters

2009 VOLKSWAGEN TIGUAN

Engine: 16-valve, 2.0-litre 4-cylinder, turbo

Horsepower: 200 hp from 5,100 to 6,000 rpm

Torque: 207 lb-ft from 1,700 to 5,000 rpm

Transmission: 6-speed manual; 6-speed automatic

Suspension: fully independent

Brakes: disc/disc

Wheelbase: 260.4 cm

Length: 442.7 cm

Width: 180.9 cm

Height: 168.6 cm

Weight: 1,541 to 1,647 kg

Tires: 215/65R16; 235/55R17; 235/50R18

Maximum towing capacity: 998 kg

Airbags: dual front, plus two side and two curtain airbags (rear side airbags optional)

Fuel consumption with automatic transmission and 4Motion:

Natural Resources Canada rating:

City: 11.6 L/100 km (24 mpg)

Highway: 8.3 L/100 km (34 mpg)

Test result: 11.5 L/100 km (25 mpg)

Test temperature: -15°C to -1°C

CO₂ emissions: 4,848 kg/20,000 km

Fuel tank capacity: 63.5 litres

Fuel requirement: premium grade gasoline recommended

Acceleration:

0–100 km/h: 8.1 seconds

60–100 km/h: 5.9 seconds

Competition: Dodge Nitro, Ford Escape, Honda CR-V, Hyundai Santa Fe, Jeep Liberty, Mazda Tribute, Mitsubishi Outlander, Nissan Rogue, Saturn Vue, Subaru Forester, Suzuki Grand Vitara, Toyota RAV4

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: \$798
- Front brake disc: \$102
- Brake pads: \$120
- Muffler: \$404
- Front fender: \$293

Price according to trim level:

- Trendline: \$27,575
- Comfortline: \$33,975
- Highline: \$38,375

Main options:

Automatic transmission: \$1,400 (Trendline)

Automatic transmission and 4Motion: \$3,400 (Trendline)

Technology Package: \$3,450 (Comfortline and Highline)

Price as tested: \$31,425

Freight and preparation: \$1,575

Dealers: Quebec: 41 Canada: 129

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