Like its close cousin—if not twin—the Hyundai Accent, the Rio has been completely redesigned for this year. In addition to its new platform, the Rio5 has a longer wheelbase (9 cm) than the former generation and is higher (3 cm) and wider (2 cm). The overall length, however, has shrunk by 25 cm. The 1.6 litre four-cylinder engine is new and more powerful.

**Interior and trunk**

Access to the front seats is less than spectacular for taller people because there is little space available between the seat, B pillar, and steering wheel. Despite the absence of an adjustable lombar support, the seats are very comfortable. The driver's seat is equipped with two rollers to adjust the height and angle of the cushion. Headroom and legroom are pretty generous.

The easy-to-access rear bench is comfortable for two adults, with good headroom and legroom. It folds down in a 60/40 split and each section can be tilted back an extra five degrees.

The trunk offers ample storage space with a flat floor and a small receptacle on each side. The liftgate opens wide and the sill is relatively low.

**Convenience and safety**

The interior is very well finished with good quality materials. The soundproofing against engine noise is poor, but honest for other types of noise. There are numerous storage spaces, including storage pockets in the rear doors, something very few other vehicles offer.

Photo: Kia
The instruments and controls are well placed, but certain controls and the glove compartment are not lit up at night. The heating and air conditioning are efficient, but the fan is noisy at the third and fourth speeds. There are two dome lights—one in the front and one in the back—which is unusual, especially in this car category.

Safety-wise, the Rio5 offers two front airbags, four lockable head restraints, very good visibility, and good headlights. Unfortunately, the Canadian model, unlike its American counterpart, does not come with side airbags, inflatable side curtains, or ABS brakes. The head restraints are not high enough to protect taller people in the front or rear passengers of medium height. The windshield wipers are a bit slow, especially at the second speed.

In U.S. government tests, the Rio received four out of five stars for driver protection and five stars for front passenger protection in a head-on collision. Its rollover resistance earned it four stars.

**Engine and transmission**

The new 1.6 litre four-cylinder engine generates 110 horsepower and 107 pounds of torque. Acceleration and pickup are honest for this type of car. The engine is powerful enough to maintain good speed on mountainous terrain, provided you play a little with the gearshift, of course. However, the engine is almost always noisy.

The manual gearshift is easy to handle, but the shifter travel is a bit long and imprecise. The gears are well spaced, except for first and fifth, which are a tad short. In fifth gear, the engine revs 500 rpm too fast.

**On the road**

The Rio’s suspension provides a nice smooth ride on all types of surfaces. Certain bumps cause firm reactions, but nothing that undermines passenger comfort. Road handling is good, especially considering the modest tires. The car is, however, sensitive to cross winds.

The power steering is well calibrated, stable, accurate, and relatively quick, but transfers little roadfeel. The turning radius is tight. The brakes are powerful and resistant to fading after a few emergency stops. Let’s hope they are durable, because they are expensive.

At a CAA-Quebec Technical Inspection Centre, we noted that the Rio is well built with a robust undercarriage and very well protected against rust.
Conclusion

More modern than the former generation, the new Rio stands out mainly for its consistency. Apart from the noisy engine, everything else is well balanced and performs well. We also noted an improvement in overall quality. Lastly, it’s important to remember the generous 5 year/100,000 km basic warranty.

**PROS:** Comfortable front seating, roominess, assembly and finish, enjoyable steering, generous warranty, road behavior

**CONS:** Noisy engine, slow wipers, sensitivity to cross winds, head restraints too low, unavailability of side airbags, inflatable side curtains, or ABS brakes, engine revs too fast in fifth gear

### 2006 KIA RIO

**Engine:** 4 cyl., 1.6 litre, 16 valves  
**Horsepower:** 110 hp at 6,000 rpm  
**Torque:** 107 lb-ft. at 4,500 rpm  
**Transmission:** 5 speed manual; 4 speed automatic  
**Suspension:** Independent/semi-independent  
**Brakes:** Discs/drumns  
**Length:** 424 cm (Rio5: 399 cm)  
**Width:** 169.5 cm  
**Height:** 147 cm  
**Wheelbase:** 250 cm  
**Weight:** 1,104 to 1,136 kg  
**Tires:** P175/70R14; P185/65R15  
**Towing capacity:** Not recommended  
**Air bags:** Standard

#### Fuel consumption with manual transmission

Transport Canada rating:  
- City: 7.4 L/100 km (38 mpg)  
- Highway: 6.2 L/100 km (46 mpg)  
- Test result: 7.6 L/100 km (37 mpg)  
- Test temperature: 3°C to 19°C

**Fuel tank capacity:** 45 litres  
**Fuel requirement:** Regular

**Acceleration:**  
- 0–100 km/h: 10.2 seconds  
- 60–100 km/h: 6.7 seconds
**Competition:** Chevrolet Aveo, Honda Fit, Hyundai Accent, Pontiac Wave, Suzuki Swift+, Toyota Yaris

**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 kilometrage
- Emissions control system: 5 years/100,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module, and onboard diagnostic system)

**Factory replacement parts:**
- Rear bumper: $287
- Front brake disc: $174
- Brake pads: $91
- Muffler: $427
- Front fender: $171

**Average insurance premium (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, male or female driver 30 to 40 years old):** $812 to $1,122

**Price according to trim line:**
- Rio EX: $13,595
- Rio5 EX: $13,995

**Main options:**
- Automatic transmission: $1,000
- Convenience Package: $1,700
- Sport Package: $2,300

**Price as tested:** $15,695

**Freight and preparation:** $1,250

**Dealers:** Quebec: 48 Canada: 147

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