How to Take Test Drive of a Car: A Checklist

Before you decide on taking a test drive, based on your budget, finalise the specifications and features you absolutely must have on the car. The feature could be as basic as a power steering to something as non-essential as a Bluetooth sound system. Logon to www.carwale.com and research the car models and variants that fit these aspects.



1. Walk Around

- [ ] Do a walk around of the car and observe the styling, looks and overall appearance
- [ ] Observe paint, panel gaps, door handles, build quality, overall fit & finish etc.
- [ ] Check out the boot for space inside, height, width and depth of it and how usable it is. If you carry large luggage more often than not, try estimating if the boot would be able to accommodate it or not.
- [ ] Open the doors (front and rear both) to know how wide they open and how confidently they close.
- [ ] Check how comfortable getting in and coming out of the car is, especially if you are going to be traveling with elder folks.
- [ ] It's not just about your comfort, remember. So, get in the rear and see if there's enough leg- and headroom. If you have kids, take them with you to test out the space.
- [ ] Take a minute to see how you feel sitting in the front seat. Get a sense for the space.

2. Getting Prepared for the Test Drive

- [ ] Before actually driving the car examine the car properly. Explore compartments, push buttons and adjust dials.
- [ ] Play with the gadgets, see if the radio, aircon and its vents and other controls like that for the wiper, horn etc are easy to use. Connect your USB/iPod or play a CD to test the sound system (if applicable).
- [ ] heck how comfortable the driving position is, because you will be spending a lot of time stuck in jams in that position. Check if you can adjust the steering wheel enough and get the seat into a comfortable position. You should be able to reach

the steering, the gear lever and the foot pedals

- [ ] Check driver's visibility. Since some cars have low seating, or if the driver isn't tall enough for the model, look for the seat height adjustability. Good visibility is a must-have for safety reasons. All ground checks are done and it's time to drive now! :)

3. The Test Drive

- [ ] Go around the route suggested by the salesperson once to get acquainted with the car. Also, if you are not happy with the distance or the type of route, ask for a longer or different route.
- [ ] Never feel shy from asking for more; it's your hard earned money at stake here after all. Go around the route again, and this time round, begin with feeling the steering. Twirl it left and right to see how it feels and whether you enjoy it and how much effort is needed to turn it quickly.
- [ ] Next, get a feel of the brakes. See if these are too weak or strong. If these feel too powerful, it's good and you will get used to it and these brakes will need less effort to use.
- [ ] Check the mirrors - see if there's good vision for the rear. See how much these adjust.
- [ ] Get a feel of the engine and the acceleration. Rev the car to about 4000rpm to get an idea if the car is quick or not; if it's loud or quiet; and whether the engine sounds nice or coarse.
- [ ] Try driving at various speeds in different gears, ranging from 20kph to 80-100kph (within legal speed limits) and note cabin NVH (Noise, Vibrations and Harshness) due to traffic, wind and tyre noise etc.
- [ ] Use the gearbox. See, if the clutch is light to use or requires a lot of effort. Also, check if the clutch needs slipping to get a move on. A worn out clutch can prove expensive later on. Feel the gearshifts. Check if these are hard or easy.
- [ ] If you can manage to drive the car on a rough road, try noticing the ride quality, suspension performance, cabin rattles and squeaks etc.
- [ ] Try reversing into a parking space to check you have good rear visibility. And change lanes while driving to check the visibility at the sides.
- [ ] Check the AC. Switch on the AC when you are driving at 80kmph and see the drop in the speed. Also check of the AC cuts off, if the engine is revved hard and for how long. It's important to examine how long it takes the car to heat up or cool down, especially on a hot summer day.
- [ ] Observe AC fan / blower noise at various speed levels.

4. After the Test Drive

- [ ] Discuss with the sales executive any doubts/ concerns that may have come up during the test drive. The test drive cars are not in perfect shape always and there is a chance that the issue you observed is with this particular car and not in general.
- [ ] However, beware, if a problem exists in the test drive car, it could probably show up in the car you buy sooner or later. Also, note the odometer reading of the test drive car.
- [ ] Take the car brochure, price-list etc. the sales person had brought along. Fill the feedback form, if the sales person asks you to.
- [ ] Don't be afraid to ask for another test drive if you're still unsure.

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