

Honda FIT Hybrid eCVT: How to fit in

 By [Alan Duggan](#)

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I'll take the unusual step of providing my overall impression of the Honda FIT Hybrid eCVT before getting into the nitty-gritty of my review: it's a lovely little car.



That established, I must admit to an abiding dislike of vehicles with CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission), largely because they sound as if the clutch is slipping and also because I prefer to make my own decisions about the best time to swop cogs. It's a control thing, and some drivers will get it. Don't judge me.

If you know and enjoy the Jazz, you'll recognise the FIT: it's essentially the same, but better. This car is fun to drive, it performs like a star, and it features all manner of techie stuff that will bring joy to your heart, including – and this is a personal favourite – a chain drive for the camshaft that should last the lifetime of the car.

The FIT's hybrid drivetrain features a conventional 1.5l petrol engine plus two electric motors linked to a substantial lithium-ion battery pack. One functions as the traction motor and the other as a generator that delivers the necessary electricity. An intelligent power controller keeps it all working smoothly, switching between EV Drive and Hybrid Drive to match road conditions and the driver's whim, or calling in Engine Drive to connect the engine directly to the front wheels. The battery is charged by the generator or via regenerative braking.

How does it perform in the urban mayhem? For starters, it makes rush-hour driving a breeze, and I would suggest that the FIT Hybrid is aimed primarily at the city commuter rather than the family motorist who needs a fair bit of luggage space for those weekend getaways. Albeit impressively flexible, if it has four people on board, luggage could present a problem.

In town, the electric motor's instantaneous torque delivers sufficiently brisk acceleration to keep up with the hordes of food delivery scooter riders who delight in traffic light drag races and appear honour-bound to dart ahead of absolutely every other vehicle when the light changes to green. I'm an occasional two-wheeler myself, so I get it.

I came to enjoy gentle pull-offs that didn't invoke the petrol engine – not recommended when another car is behind you, or when a pedestrian needs to hear you coming – for the simple satisfaction of the silence. Although there's a subdued drone from the CVT, it never becomes intrusive. At highway speeds, the FIT Hybrid feels like any conventionally powered car.

As I said earlier, a fair bit of advanced technology is packed into the FIT's compact body, including a collision-mitigating braking system, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, electric parking brake, a rearview camera, front and rear parking sensors, electronic brake-force distribution, forward collision warning, and much more.

Oh, and then we have "Magic Seats", a clever concept that allows you to configure the seats in four different ways: Tall (as the name suggests, this is for squeezing something tall, such a bicycle sans front wheel, between the front and back rows), Utility (for maximising luggage capacity behind the front row), Long (perhaps to accommodate a couple of surfboards) and Refresh (allowing a rear-seat passenger to stretch out their legs).



Cabin space is generous and the seating is comfortable in both rows. The two-spoke steering wheel features essential menu controls, and there's a touchscreen infotainment system compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. USB ports are provided front and rear for charging phones and entertaining kids with the attention span of that cartoon fish whose name escapes me.

If you like the idea of driving a hybrid (you know, save the planet) and can live with a price tag of just under half a mil, Honda's FIT eCVT could work for you. Although I drove it for barely a week, it worked for me.

Honda FIT Hybrid eCVT: Just the facts

- Price: R484,000

- What makes it go: 1,5l i-VTEC petrol engine with chain-driven cam, plus two electric motors and a battery pack
- Power: 72kW at 5,600 to 6,400 r/min
- Torque: 127Nm from 4,500 to 5,000r/min
- Transmission: e-CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission) with single fixed-gear ratio
- Top speed: 175km/h
- Acceleration: Zero to 100km/h in under 10 seconds
- Fuel consumption: 3.7l/100km (combined cycle, claimed). A bit optimistic.
- Safety: Front, side and curtain airbags
- Non-hybrid alternatives: FIT 1.5 Comfort CVT (R329,500), FIT 1.5 Elegance CVT (R370,700), FIT 1.5 Executive CVT (R401,600)
- Warranty: Five-year/200,000km. Hybrid system: Eight-year/200,000km
- Service plan: Four-year/60,000km

ABOUT ALAN DUGGAN

Alan Duggan was the founding editor of *Popular Mechanics* in South Africa and is a former motoring correspondent for the *Sunday Times* and other publications.

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