

Driven: The nifty and capable Ford Figo Freestyle



By Imran Salie

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In 2020 the first-ever Ford Figo Freestyle was introduced to the South African market. The Freestyle is a sub-B segment compact utility vehicle (CUV) that is based on the popular Figo hatchback. Two models are available for this car, the Trend and the Titanium series. I tested the Titanium model over a period of seven days. Here's what I think about it.



The Freestyle has a three-cylinder 1.5-litre petrol engine that provides 91kW of power and 150Nm of torque to the front wheels through a manual transmission.

Because of its compact size and light kerb weight, the Freestyle is extremely agile around tight corners and in medium traffic. I was surprisingly able to whizz past other drivers effortlessly on the N1 without the engine over-revving.

The three cylinders handle city roads adequately and I had no problems navigating my way through Cape Town's CBD. It also handled steeply inclined roads without having to increase the weight of my foot on the accelerator pedal.

The exterior

The outside features fog lamp bezels that are standard on both models, front and rear skid plates, 15-inch alloy wheels, tinted windows, decals, roof rails, and a ground clearance of 190mm - which is 16mm higher than the standard Figo.



It's available in six colour choices, including the new Canyon Ridge that is unique to this model, along with Diamond white. Metallic paint options comprise Smoke Grey, Moondust Silver, Ruby Red and White Gold. I'm not a fan of the Canyon Ridge colour, and I feel it makes the Freestyle less appealing aesthetically. Luckily, buyers can decide which colour they prefer.

The overall design on the exterior along with its features are not magnificent to me and there isn't anything in particular that I love about it. To be fair, I've never been a fan of the Figo design. However, Ford accomplishes its goal of designing a CUV that fits the bill.

The interior

On the inside, there's a neatly laid out dashboard and door accents, a blended seat trim design with striped elements, black trim panels on the sides, and contrast stitching. The quality of the inside and its materials were decent, nothing felt overly cheap. It also comes with a boot space of 256l that can be made bigger by folding down the rear seats.



Source: new.quickpic.co.za

What I really liked about the inside of the Freestyle was the amount of space available. There's ample legroom and headroom for all seats. It certainly didn't feel like a compact vehicle on the inside to me and I had no complaints from my family at the back.

Added features

The Freestyle comes equipped with a reverse camera, a multifunction steering wheel, the Ford Sync 3 system, Android Auto and Apple Car Play, an automatic aircon, a soft-feel gear shifter, and a keyless push-start button.

The standard safety and security package on the Trend model incorporates driver and passenger airbags, ABS brakes, remote central locking with drive-away locking function, electric windows all around, as well as a perimeter anti-theft alarm and engine immobiliser.



Source: new.quickpic.co.za

The Figo Freestyle Titanium is equipped with side and curtain airbags, along with the innovative Ford MyKey that allows owners to programme a key for younger drivers that can inhibit incoming phone calls, restrict top speed, reduce audio system maximum volume and disable the audio system altogether if occupants are not using safety belts.

I found the picture quality of the reverse camera to be satisfactory. The position of the push-to-start button is placed awkwardly by the steering wheel but this is not a major issue as I got used to it after my second day.

Model range and recommended retail prices

- Figo Freestyle 1.5 Trend Hatch 5MT - R226,700
- Figo Freestyle 1.5 Titanium Hatch 5MT - R247,500

The Ford Figo Freestyle should not be underestimated because of its looks, it more than makes up for it with its nifty three-cylinder engine and spacious interior.

The drive experience the Freestyle offers is worth its price and I found it an absolute joy to drive. I was genuinely surprised by its ability to keep up with more powerful cars.

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