

MINI Hatchback 1.6 Cooper 3d (04)

BEHIND THE WHEEL

★★★★★★☆☆

One of the best interiors in the business - for a car of any price. Many of the details are sublime, harking back to Mini's 1960s roots. That's why there's a large speedometer in the centre of the dash, cute toggle switches and lashings of chrome. Despite the retro looks, MINI is reasonably equipped with driver-focused electronic aids. Visibility could be better, as it can be tricky to see out of the back with four on board. The driving position is comfortable (the car is geared more towards the driver than passengers) and it also harks back to the original car, as you sit upright and close to the ground.



HANDLING

★★★★★★☆☆

This is MINI's strongest suit: it's a hoot to drive. It may be bigger in every respect compared to the original, and is a far more substantial car, but the engineers who developed MINI managed to maintain its unique handling traits. That means it corners superbly, has sharp steering and feels controllable at all times. A lot of this has been achieved with clever on-board electronics that are a world away from the original car - like ABS, traction control and brake assist - which make the car safer as well as more enjoyable to drive.

Wheelbase:

2467 mm

SAFETY

★★★★★★☆☆

Gets a four-star Euro NCAP rating, which is very good for a design of this size and age. In addition every MINI gets 'intelligent' driver and passenger airbags that react according to the severity of an impact, ABS on all models, optional run-flat tyres, plus strong locks, remote central locking and excellent security.

Euro NCAP

Adult occupant rating:

★★★★☆

Child protection rating:

n/a

Pedestrian rating:

★☆☆☆

COMFORT

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

MINI's biggest failing is the lack of rear space. It's well suited to single people and couples - if they mainly use the rear seats for shopping - but not so good for small families unless they have very young children. The seats are fine for short about-town trips, but lack support for longer motorway jaunts.

Length:	3635 mm
Width:	1688 mm
Height:	1408 mm
Weight:	1075 Kg
Noise:	74 dB



PRACTICALITY

★★★★☆☆☆☆

You may find yourself using the rear seats as luggage space, especially if you've been on a shopping spree, as the boot space is quite limited. It's a conventional Compared to the old Mini, it's huge. But next to its peers it's poor. The boot space is tiny and there isn't much storage space inside.

Braked towing weight:

800 kg

Luggage capacity (seats up):

150 litres

Turning circle:

10 m

Unbraked towing weight:

500 Kg

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RELIABILITY



Reliable build, provided it's well looked after and serviced. Initial trim and electrical gremlins have been ironed out. Run-flat tyres are a useful option.

- Car check body:** Watch out for paintwork as there have been some problems with its durability. Also watch out for discolouring of the plastic wheel arches.
- Car check engine:** Initial gremlins saw engines and gearboxes replaced in early cars. Shouldn't be a problem now.
- Car check other:** Faulty audio equipment can drain battery, rattling trim. Early models suffered more problems particularly with trim and electrics, but most issues have been resolved.

RUNNING COSTS



MINI isn't a cheap car to run for its size, but if you see it as a mini-BMW, then it is. Depreciation has been slight (especially if it's fitted with a few choice options - see 'Buying Used'), which is Fuel consumption isn't brilliant and insurance is expensive. The service package is exceptional and there's no reason not to opt for it. Originally £100 bought five years servicing. From January 2005, this was offered for £150. There's also an 'xl' package which is eight years servicing for £450.

PERFORMANCE



The 1.6-litre engine come in two states of tune: the One is 90bhp, while the Cooper has 115bhp. Opt for the One D diesel and there's 75bhp on offer (88bhp from 2005). The 1.6 - whilst not being the most refined petrol engine in this class - feels peppy, and acceptably quick as a Cooper. It's a similar story with the 1.4-litre D. Although it's a little rough around the edges, it's easy and punchy to drive around town, even at low revs. However, get it on a open road, and it feels disappointingly weak and struggles with overtaking. An 88bhp version was offered from 2005, giving improved performance. The six-speed gearbox needs to be worked hard to get the most from it; you'll find yourself changing gear surprisingly often.

BHP:	115
Engine capacity:	1598 cc
Cylinders:	4
Fuel delivery:	Multi point fuel injection
Gears:	5 Speed
Top speed:	124 mph
Torque:	111 lb/ft
Torque:	150 Nm
Transmission:	Manual
Valves:	16
Zero to sixty:	8.8 seconds

Insurance group:	8
Click here for an insurance quote	
Miles per gallon:	40
Fuel capacity:	50 litres
Euro emissions standard:	4
CO2 emissions:	166 g/km

Vehicle excise duty for cars registered on or after 1st March 2001, is now based on the fuel type and carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions levels of individual vehicles.

VED Tax Band:	E
VED for 12 months:	£150
VED for 6 months:	£75

Company car tax for the year 2005/2006; for tax purposes the list price of a car includes delivery charges but not road tax and new car registration fee.

Annual tax at 22%:	£537
Annual tax at 40%:	£976

autotrend.co.uk

UNIT 2
12 EMERY ROAD
BRISLINGTON
BS4 5PF

TEL: 01179 332742

sales@autotrend.co.uk
<http://www.autotrend.co.uk>

