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August 2008

which?

car



IN-DEPTH REPORT

Toyota Yaris

(2006 -)

➤ What it's like to drive

➤ What it's like to own

➤ Practicality and safety

➤ Real-life reliability

NEW £8,000 - £14,150

USED £5,295 - £10,295

The Lowdown



FOR

- Good build quality
- Versatile and roomy
- Good safety
- Strong brakes

AGAINST

- Firm ride
- Engine harshness
- Fiddly switchgear
- Expensive to buy

KEY RIVALS

Honda Jazz (2002-), Mitsubishi Colt (2004-), Nissan Micra (2003-), Volkswagen Polo (2002-)

KEY TO RATINGS

(All ratings out of 5 stars)

- 5★ excellent
- 4★ good
- 3★ average
- 2★ below average
- 1★ poor

ROAD TEST SUMMARY

The Yaris feels stable in a straight line and suffers only slight understeer when tackling corners.

However, it doesn't come with potentially life-saving stability control, even as an option, which is very disappointing on what is still a relatively recently designed car.

Very light steering makes cornering and manoeuvring easy, however it is rather too light to provide the sort of positive feel we'd like, and it's too vague. While the suspension is on the hard side, with bumps making the cabin shake a little, the Yaris is a generally a comfortable car to be in.

RIDE AND HANDLING	★★★
DRIVE PERFORMANCE	★★★★
NOISE AND REFINEMENT	★★★★★
BRAKES	★★★
BEHIND THE WHEEL	★★★
VISIBILITY AND PARKING	★★
GETTING IN AND OUT	★★★★
SEAT SPACE AND COMFORT	★★★
BOOT AND STORAGE	★★★
HEATING AND VENTILATION	★★★

ROAD TEST SCORE 57%

Safety and security



n/a

EuroNCAP crash test (occupants)	★★★★★
EuroNCAP crash test (child protection)	★★★
EuroNCAP crash test (pedestrians)	★★
Theft of car (out of ten)	★★★★
Theft from car (out of ten)	★★

Driving



The Yaris is a competent, if unexceptional, performer in most areas. Its small petrol engines provide acceptable acceleration at the expense of some refinement, with the diesel option perhaps a better all-rounder. This is an easy car to drive, with a generally smooth gearbox, light steering, predictable handling and strong brakes.

RIDE AND HANDLING ★★★

The Yaris feels stable in a straight line and suffers only slight understeer when tackling corners. However, it doesn't come with potentially life-saving stability control, even as an option, which is very disappointing on a brand new model.

Very light steering makes cornering and manoeuvring easy, however it is rather too light to provide the sort of positive feel we'd like and it's too vague. While the suspension is on the hard side, with bumps making the cabin shake a little, it's a comfortable car to be in.

DRIVE PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

The 1.0- and 1.3-litre petrol engines do not pull particularly well and you need to use high revs to overtake. This really brings home how rough-sounding they can be, especially on the motorway. There is also a 1.4-litre D-4D diesel engine, which is stronger low down in the rev range.

Gear change quality is acceptable, but engaging reverse is sometimes noisy. The 1.3 petrol and 1.4 D-4D diesel can also be ordered with MultiMode transmission that enables automatic and manual-sequential gear changes.

BRAKES ★★★★★

Braking is particularly good, allowing you to stop quickly. The brake pedal is very responsive and sensitive, while standard anti-lock braking is a welcome feature.

NOISE AND REFINEMENT ★★★

The cabin is well insulated against noise up to motorway speeds, but at fast cruising speeds or under hard acceleration, the engine note is intrusive.

All the bodywork looks and feels well screwed together, as does the solidly built interior. However, we'd like to see some protective rubbing strips on the doors to make the Yaris more practical around town and in car parks.

BEHIND THE WHEEL ★★★

One of the main problems with the Yaris is its switchgear and controls. The ignition switch is hidden behind the wiper lever, the steering wheel is too low (even in its highest position) and centre console switches for the heating and so on are fiddly to operate. The optional satellite navigation system is complicated to use, too, while the instruments are located out of the direct line of sight (the centrally-mounted digital speedo has been retained from the old Yaris). On the plus side, the column controls for the headlights and wipers are easy to use, while the CD-radio can be operated from the steering wheel.

VISIBILITY AND PARKING ★★

Rear visibility is affected by wide pillars, while the front of the car cannot be seen from the driver's seat – so this is a car you need to learn to judge. Large door mirrors are electrically adjustable but xenon headlights are not available. A very tight turning circle helps parking manoeuvrability.

COMFORT AND PRACTICALITY

Passengers will find plenty of space in the Yaris. There's lots of room up front and, for two passengers, the sliding rear seat offers generous accommodation. The boot is on the small side but accessibility is good and the load platform is flat when the split rear seats are folded.

GETTING IN AND OUT ★★★★★

Getting into the front would be more comfortable if the steering wheel were not so low. Reaching the back is relatively easy in the five-door version. Top-spec T-Spirit models have a keyless entry system that unlocks the doors automatically when the door handles are pulled.

SEAT SPACE AND COMFORT ★★★

With its high roofline and generous width, there is a great feeling of space up front. Equally, rear passengers (even tall ones) will find plenty of head- and legroom, although it gets more cramped with a third rear passenger in place.

BOOT AND STORAGE ★★★

With a volume of 272 litres, this model's boot is nearly 70 litres bigger than its predecessor's, but it's still fairly small overall. Sliding the rear seat back reduces boot volume further. Once the split/fold rear seats are folded down, the luggage capacity rises to 737 litres and there's a completely flat load floor, with compartments for small items beneath. The hatchback is easy to open and loading luggage is easy because there is no protruding boot sill.

HEATING AND VENTILATION ★★★

The base T2 model does not have air conditioning as standard, however all other grades do. The heater is adequate in the front but it's a little weak in the back and the temperature adjustment could do with finer calibration.

Running costs

**INITIAL COST AND DEPRECIATION**

Prices start at around £9,000 for the Yaris 1.0 T2 three-door, rising to around £13,500 for the range-topping 1.4 D-4D MMT automatic five-door. These prices are higher than some mainstream rivals', so look out for Toyota's good value 'special edition' versions.

When resale time comes, you can expect to recoup around 40 to 45 per cent of the original list price (after the first three years and 36,000 miles), with the petrol models slightly better at holding their value than the diesels. The Yaris has stronger resale values than some rivals, such as the Ford Fiesta and Nissan Micra, but it's not as rock-solid as on the class-leading Honda Jazz and Mini.

FUEL AND EMISSIONS

We achieved an overall average of 41.5mpg for the Yaris 1.3 five-door in our test, which is merely average for this class and some way behind the official combined figure of 47.1mpg. The official figure for the 1.0-litre Yaris is 52.3mpg and, for the 1.4 D-4D, an impressive 62.8mpg.

Although the Yaris diesel should save you cash at the pumps, there's a fair price premium for it, and this harms its company car tax bills. While a lower-rate tax payer can run most petrol Yaris models from around £300 to £400 a year, the tax bill for running a diesel will be at least £450.

INSURANCE AND TAX

The 1.0-litre entry-level Yaris is among the very cheapest cars to insure, the T2 slotting into group 1 and the T3 into group 2. Depending on trim grade, both the 1.3 petrol and 1.4 diesel D-4D are in either group 3 or 4. Most expensive are the SR models, which are in groups 5 or 7.

Road tax is also cheap: both the smaller petrol-engined cars fall into band C (currently £120 a year), while the low-CO2 diesel is in band B (just £35 a year).

SERVICING

Servicing costs are reasonable, if not the very cheapest. Buyers of petrol models can expect bills of around £350 over the first three years and 36,000 miles, while diesel owners will probably need to allow for around £30 more.

Reliability



n/a

OVERALL BRAND RELIABILITY

MODEL RELIABILITY

		2000-2002	2003-2005	2006-2008
PETROL	Breakdowns	n/a	n/a	★★★★★
	Faults	n/a	n/a	★★★
	Niggles	n/a	n/a	★★★★★
DIESEL	Breakdowns	n/a	n/a	★★★★★
	Faults	n/a	n/a	★★★
	Niggles	n/a	n/a	★★★

TROUBLESPOTS

A lengthy list of troublespots includes the fuel system, engine management, non-engine electrics and the braking system.

2000-2002

n/a

2003-2005

n/a

2006-2008

Other interior equipment, Seats

Dealerships



DEALER SALES SERVICE

A decent 68 per cent of readers told us they were very satisfied with buying from a Toyota franchised dealer. This is significantly above average for all car manufacturers.

DEALER SERVICING AND REPAIR

67 per cent of our readers told us they were very satisfied with after-sales service from a Toyota franchised dealer. This is average for all car manufacturers.

Owner satisfaction



PERFORMANCE

Petrol ★★ ★

Diesel ★★ ★★ ★

HANDLING

★★★ ★

RIDE QUALITY AND COMFORT

Petrol ★★ ★★ ★

Diesel ★★ ★★ ★

DRIVING POSITION

★★★ ★★

DASH LAYOUT

★★★ ★★

BUILD QUALITY

★★★ ★★

SPACE IN FRONT

★★★ ★★

SPACE IN REAR

★★★ ★

BOOT SPACE AND STORAGE

Saloon n/a

Hatchback ★★ ★

Estate n/a

NOISE

Petrol ★★ ★★ ★

Diesel ★★ ★

HEATING AND VENTILATION

Petrol ★★ ★★ ★

Diesel ★★ ★★

OWNERS RECOMMENDATIONS

A very respectable 79 per cent of owners told us they'd happily recommend the Yaris to a friend

OVERALL CUSTOMER SCORE

About the Which? Car survey



Our ratings for reliability, dealerships and ownership are based on views of real-life owners - collected in the huge Which? Car survey. In 2008, we received responses for 89,762 cars of which 696 related to the Yaris.

For the latest news, reviews and price guides, sign up to www.which.co.uk/cars-email