



Weekend roadtest: Hyundai Santa Fe Premium SE

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The Hyundai Santa Fe has been the bedrock of the brand since launched in 2001, but it's no dinosaur.



The fourth generation of this highly popular large SUV is packed with the latest features and choices to please any family with the emphasis on enjoyment and living.

Split over four trim levels the price range is £33,425 to £43,295 and there are 15 versions of the Hyundai Santa Fe with five or seven seats. They use a 200ps four-cylinder 2199cc turbo-diesel engine and have six-speed manual and automatic transmissions as well as an eight-speed auto. with 2WD and 4WD models.

Using a common modern turbo-diesel engine to keep down costs, the owner can select between front or four wheel drive, manual or two automatic transmissions and there is a simple graded trim structure and all get the very good five-years unlimited mileage warranty, for reassuring ownership once you drive out of the showroom.



We tested the range-topping model on this occasion and the beefy and economical 2.2 litre engine with its eight-speed sequential automatic and manual mode proved very miserly and yet delivered good performance for something weighing almost 1.9tonnes.

The engine could be noisy when its four-cylinders were pushed to perform but generally it was quiet and always very smooth, both in power delivery and through the eight gears. Moving to manual mode made little difference except when you held a ratio for overtaking and changes were still silky up or down the transmission.



We averaged just over 40mpg but at times on motorways it was nudging 50mpg without stress or strain. When you wanted to get moving on main roads the economy dropped to mid-30s.

The Santa Fe Premium SE is a big car but it has all the aids to give it small car agility. Steering and brakes are faultless, its turning circle is good, and there are many sensors and cameras to ease parking.



On the move a comprehensive safety package includes radar protection for traffic warnings to the front and sides, active cruise control, traction assistance and hill descent as well as uphill assist.





The ride quality is very good despite the 19-inch alloys at each corner, but they do generate noises on bad surfaces.

Offroad it's a competent car which will be limited more by the driver's nerves and

ability rather than the car's capabilities.



The plethora of secondary controls need familiarisation but the most commonly used are close to hands and fingers on the wheel-spokes or central console and the main instruments' display can be changed at will to emphasise modes and they are all reasonably large and very clear. A multi-function infotainment display atop the fascia is big and clear.



The heating and ventilation is really up to task of filling the big cabin with selected air and distribution and it's backed up with powered windows and sunroof on the Premium SE specification, and it's a surprisingly quiet H&V system when working.

Oddments room is good for a family car with big bins and console compartments and even those in the back should have no trouble storing items.



The big loadbed opens from just about knee-height, is flat and wide and its length simply increases with the offset split rearmost back seats folded away. They are not particularly easy to erect



or climb into and legroom they give is modest and suitable only for children but the five-seat configuration is very roomy.

Access to front and middle row seats is very good once you get used to stepping up into the cabin, head and shoulder room is good and visibility is excellent, helped by very good, wide and long range headlights, turning sidelights, follow-me delayed dipped lights and big wipers both ends. The wash was also powerful.



Ride quality was uniformly good over any surface save the very worst potholes which would challenge any car, it gripped well and had a near neutral balance to the handling while it responded quickly and safely to direction changes.

The fit, finish and quality inside the Hyundai Santa Fe Premium SE is a worthy rival to the best from the UK, Sweden or Germany and demands consideration when the time comes to change your SUV.

FAST FACTS

Hyundai Santa Fe Premium SE



Price:£43,295	Mechanical:200ps 4cyl 2.2 litre turbo-diesel, 8sp AWD
Max Speed: 127mph	0-62mph: 9.3 sec
Combined MPG: 40.3 on test	Insurance Group: 28
C02 emissions:164 g/km	VED band: 33%, £1,140X5, £140SR
Warranty:5yrs/ unlimited miles	Sizes:L4.77m, W1.89m, H1.71m
Bootspace:547 - 1625 litres	Kerb:1,895 kg

For: Very comfortable, roomy, easy to drive, good power and economy, refined and sophisticated with good trim and finish

Against:Expensive to buy and tax, rear access restricted, some road noises and busy engine at high revs.