

Citroën Xantia 1.9LX Turbo-diesel



MOST ROAD TEST REPORTS ON DIESEL cars concentrate on comparisons with rival diesels, treating them as a race apart from petrol alternatives. This Xantia defies this kind of demarcation on several counts.

For a start, it's outstandingly quiet and mechanically well mannered. True, you know it's a diesel on start-up or when it's ticking over in traffic – but never to an embarrassing or intrusive degree. Again, when revved between 3000 and the 4500rpm self-imposed limit that we discovered was best for acceleration, it rumbles with that muted clatter characteristic of a diesel. However, when trickling about at 30mph or cantering along at 70, we swear that it's quieter as

well as more relaxed than the petrol versions. Part of the reason is that it's the only model in the Xantia line-up with a proper, long-legged "overdrive" top gear – down from 3425rpm to 2750 at 70mph – and it *feels* much more relaxed, too. Even the non-turbo diesel uses the petrol versions' shorter legs, to make up for its lack of puff.

Pros and cons

However, the Xantia is a bigger, heavier car than the ZX that also hosts this engine and has similar tall gearing, and it shows in terms of performance and economy – both are listed in our comparison table. You'll also see that this Xantia's fuel consumption is

no better than that of the super-economy Vauxhall Cavalier E-Drive petrol version, yet this Citroën diesel is quicker!

A close look at this table will also reveal that the traditional assumptions about diesel and petrol advantages can no longer be taken for granted. This applies to the attributes that manifest themselves in everyday use, as well as the statistics that emerge from careful and meaningful performance and economy tests.

So, the Xantia LX Turbo-diesel is lively, especially in fourth gear overtaking, remarkably refined (to match its suspension's smoothness), yet not particularly frugal. Is that success or failure? We leave you to decide.

Costs

Look closely at the asking price – at the time of writing, this 1.9TD LX costs exactly the same as the 2.0i LX; however, you'll discover that the petrol version, as well as boasting 123bhp, comes with some extra interior fittings and equipment, lacking on both our 1.9TD and the 1.8i LX petrol. They include twin horns, an oil level gauge, extra interior lighting, velour seat trim and rear door and seat pockets. As we indicated in our 1.8 test, the 2.0-litre engine will take a second off the 30–70mph acceleration time through the gears, rather more in top and fourth, but further erode petrol economy by perhaps 2mpg.

VERDICT

The Xantia's "same but different" personality is emphasised even more by this turbo-diesel. It's a very accomplished, integrated character; the power unit's smooth and easy nature perfectly complements the suspension and the model's general approach to life. In spite of the mediocre mpg (by diesel standards) we love it, and suspect that it will hold its value well, too, especially in this nicely turned out LX guise.

Citroën Xantia 1.9TD LX

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds

STANDING START	0-30mph	0-60mph	1/4 mile
	3.8	12.4	19.0

mph	30	40	50	60	70
THROUGH THE GEARS		2.1	5.0	8.6	13.5
IN 5TH GEAR		9.9	17.3	23.1	29.0
IN 4TH GEAR		5.7	9.8	13.9	18.7

20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES	23.3/12.9		13.2/8.2		
		17.3/9.8		11.7/8.9	

Maximum speeds

REVS PER MINUTE	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
		4500*		4500*	4300

*for best acceleration

1 22 3 65 5 109
2 40 4 91 mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Fuel grade for tests: diesel

Normal range	mpg
Hard driving, heavy traffic	33
Short journeys in the suburbs	37
Motorway – 70mph cruising	41½
Brisk driving, mixed roads	43
Gentle driving, rural roads	52
Typical mpg overall	43
Realistic tank range*	58 litres/550 miles

*based on fuel gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience

HOW THEY COMPARE

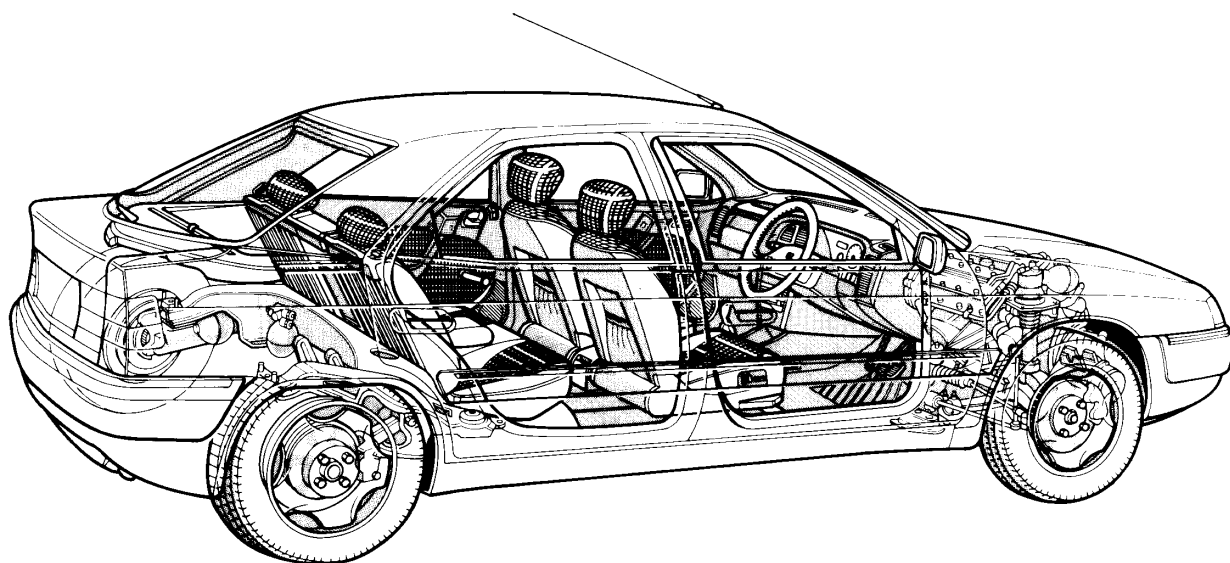
	Engine cap/power (cc/bhp)	Max speed (mph)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (%g/lb)	Maximum legroom – front (in)	Typical leg/kneeroom – rear (in)	Steering turns/circle (ft)	Overall length (in)
Citroën Xantia 1.9TD (D)	1905/92	109	13.5	29.0/18.7	43	94/25	42¼	40½/29	3.2/34¾ (p)	174¾
Citroën ZX 1.9TD (D)	1905/92	112	11.7	23.9/16.0	47½	92/40	42	39¾/27½	3.3/34¾ (p)	161
Vauxhall Cavalier 1.6 E-Drive (P)	1598/94	103	15.7	45.5/29.3	43½	88/35	42½	39½/28¼	3.4/34 (p)	171¼*
Vauxhall Cavalier 1.7TD (D)	1686/82	111	14.6	36.8/22.0	51½	88/35	42½	39½/28¾	3.4/34 (p)	171¼*
Toyota Carina E 1.6 (P)	1587/106	115	11.0	30.4/22.0	40	100/27	43	42½/30	3.2/35½ (p)	174½

(D) diesel

(P) petrol

(p) power assisted

* Hatchback



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Same as for 1.8i (see R9339) except for:

ENGINE

Type and size	front-mounted, transverse 4 in line; water-cooled. 83mm bore x 88mm stroke = 1905cc. Iron block and alloy head; 5 main bearings
Compression ratio	21.8:1
Valve gear	belt-driven overhead camshaft, actuating two valves per cylinder via bucket tappets
Fuel system	indirect injection with distributor-type mechanical injection pump and turbocharger with intercooler; no catalyser. Tank capacity: 65 litres (14.3 gallons) with low-level lamp. Fuel required: diesel
Ignition system	compression ignition, with electrical preheating for cold starting
Maximum power	92bhp at 4000rpm
Maximum torque	148 lb ft at 2250rpm

TRANSMISSION

Clutch	8in diaphragm-spring, single dry plate; cable operated. Pedal load/travel: 25 lb/5in
Gearbox	ratios: first 3.46, second 1.87, third 1.15, fourth 0.83, top 0.66 and reverse 3.33:1
Final drive ratio	4.06:1
Mph per 1000rpm	25.3 in top, 20.1 in 4th
Rpm at 70mph	2750 in top gear

CHASSIS

Wheels	5½in steel with 185/65R14 86H tyres (Michelin MXV 3A on test car)
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