

# Fiat Multipla

Featuring 1.6 ELX



## SCORECARD

Overtaking / pulling power

●●●○○

Fuel economy

●●○○○

Handling / steering

●●●●○

Comfort / ease of control

●●●○○

Interior space / practicality

●●●●○

Accident / injury avoidance

●●●○○

Costs in service

●●●○○

Depreciation prospects

●●○○○

It may have the looks that only a duck-billed platypus could love, but beneath the Multipla's gawkily styled body (mounted on an unusual space frame, incidentally) lies a cleverly adaptable six-seater with three-abreast seating.

Extra width (which the driver has to get used to) means ample room for everybody and their luggage, because you can pile things high at the back and also slide or tilt the back seats forward for additional space. But the snag is that the Multipla is "first generation" MPV in the way that you have to unclip and relocate the hefty 16kg seats into the various floor sockets, or heave them out altogether to achieve its huge load-lugging potential. It's a hassle that the Vauxhall Zafira cunningly avoids.

Otherwise this is a clever design. Only the front seats slide fore and aft, but with the back seats in their rearmost mounting slots, legroom and kneeroom in the light, airy cabin are excellent. When unoccupied, the centre seatbacks fold forward to form table-tops.

It doesn't feel too cramped with a full house, even for the driver sitting with two companions, because the centre front

seat can be set back to prevent shoulder contact. It's an odd experience, nevertheless, but no odder than the zany fascia with its four-way air vents, big pod-mounted speedometer sensibly angled towards the driver, and a handy, high-mounted gear lever that leaves clear floor space. The shift works with a quick, positive action, but some gear whine is audible. Remove the three rear head restraints and all-round vision is superb, aided by the square back, "trucker's" door mirrors, and tar-melting main beams.

Although fuel consumption is nothing special, performance is surprisingly brisk considering this is only a 1.6-litre engine in a big body. Handling is more nimble than you might expect, too, with light, responsive steering and well-controlled cornering roll complementing a firm ride that's nevertheless nicely compliant over broken surfaces.

If you can live with its looks, you'll be amazed at the Multipla. It's funky, innovative, sprightly and comfortable – enjoyable to drive, as well. Just make sure you can cope with the extra width and the effort of moving the furniture.

## HOW THE MULTIPLA COMPARES

	Engine cap/power (cyl/cc/bhp)	Revs at 70mph (rpm)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (m/kg)	Maximum legroom - front (cm)	Typical leg/kneeroom - rear (cm)	Steering turns/ (p) circle (m)	Overall length (cm)
<b>FIAT MULTIPLA 1.6</b>	4/1581/103	3800	12.7	29.2/20.6	29	27½/20*	106	114/83	2.8/11.1	399
<b>Citroën Multispace 1.8</b>	4/1761/90	3070	12.4	28.1/20.7	33	29/18	109	107/74	3.3/11.1	411
<b>Daihatsu Grand Move 1.6</b>	4/1590/90	3375	10.8	28.1/20.0	35	28/16	103	109/75	3.7/9.5	410
<b>Mitsubishi Space Star 1.8</b>	4/1834/121	3150	10.6	27.1/20.4	38	27½/18*	109	103/75	3.1/10.0	403
<b>Renault Scenic 1.6RT 8v</b>	4/1598/90	3450	13.7	28.4/21.0	34	29/30*	105	102/76	3.5/10.5	414
<b>Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 16v</b>	4/1598/100	3630	13.1	27.0/18.8	35½	24½/18*	103	102/75	3.2/11.0	432

\* with ABS

(p) all power assisted

## PERFORMANCE

### Acceleration time in seconds

mph	30	40	50	60	70
<b>THROUGH THE GEARS</b>		2.1	4.6	8.4	12.7
<b>IN 5TH GEAR</b>		6.9	13.6	21.1	29.2
<b>IN 4TH GEAR</b>		4.9	10.1	15.3	20.6

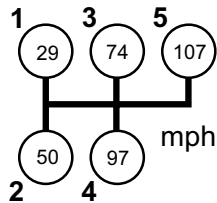
20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
<b>5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES</b>		13.8/10.2		14.2/10.4	
			13.6/10.1		15.6/10.5

### Maximum speeds

REVS PER MINUTE	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
		6250*		6250*	5775

\* for best acceleration

Gearing gives 18.5mph per 1000rpm  
in top gear = 3800rpm at 70mph



## FUEL CONSUMPTION

Fuel grade: unleaded Premium, 95 octane	
<b>Type of use - air conditioning off*</b>	<b>mpg</b>
In the city - heavy traffic	19
In the country - quiet driving	38
<b>Typical mpg overall</b>	<b>29</b>
Realistic tank range†	NA litres/NA miles

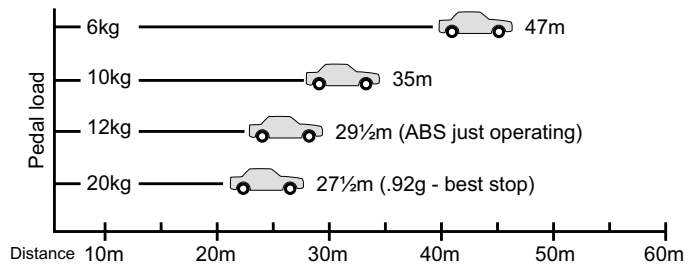
† based on fuel gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience - not nominal tank capacity

\*with air conditioning switched on, consumption will increase by 2–4% in winter and 4–8% in summer

## BRAKES

Pedal feel ●●●●○ Behaviour in an emergency ●●●○○ Handbrake ●●●○○

Dry road stopping distance from 50mph (with standard ABS)  
(A good to average best stop is about 26m at 15-20kg pedal load)

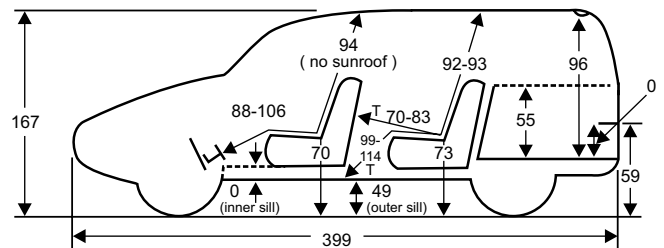


Fade test: pedal load required for a moderate (34m/.75g) stop:  
10kg at start of test, 12kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

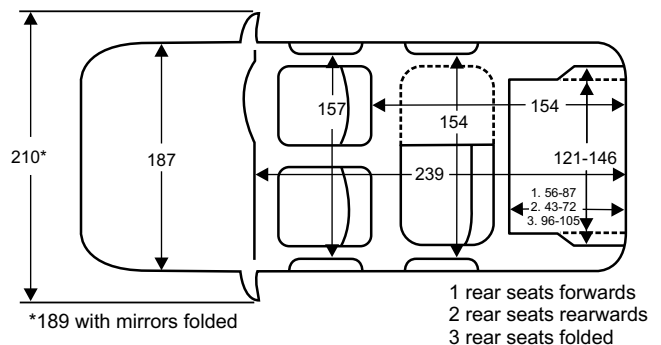
## MEASUREMENTS

Centimetres

Five-door



T: typical back seat space behind medium-sized front occupants



1 rear seats forwards  
2 rear seats rearwards  
3 rear seats folded

## LIKES AND GRIPES

Handbrake (adjacent to door) works well	...	but lever is too close to seat
All-round vision superb (provided rear head restraints are removed)	...	but passenger's wiper leaves a huge unswept triangle at top corner of screen
Good thigh support from back seats	...	but they are rather shapeless at shoulder level
Double-sized front passengers' airbag available	...	but there are hard, sharp edges to facia
Convenient gear lever with precise shift	...	but hinders access to heater control
Generous rear footroom under driver's seat	...	but not under passenger's (oddments drawer impedes)