

Hyundai Amica

Featured model: GSi 5sp Manual



AT A GLANCE

considering size, price and rivals

Overtaking ability	★★★★○
Space/practicality	★★★★○
Controls/displays	★★★★○
Safety	★★○○○
Handling/steering	★★○○○
Comfort	★★★★○
Fuel economy	★★★★○

SPECIFICATION

engine 999cc 4 cylinder petrol. 55bhp at 5500rpm; 61 lb ft at 3100rpm. Belt-driven single OHC, 12 valves. Multi-point injection/integrated spark timing
transmission 5-speed manual, front-wheel drive. 18.7 mph/1000rpm in 5th, 16.0 in 4th
suspension front: independent damper/struts, coil springs. Rear: torsion beam axle, coil springs, Panhard rod
steering hydraulic power assistance; 3.0 turns lock-to-lock, 9.6m diameter turning circle between kerbs (13.9m for one turn of wheel)
brakes ventilated discs front, drums rear with wear squeal shims (ABS optional extra - not fitted)
wheels/tyres 4½in alloy with 155/70R13T (Hankook on test car); full-size spare

LIKES AND GRIPES

improved RDS radio/cassette
 town parking so easy
 better cruising engine refinement
 ideally placed left footrest

horn buttons easy to press by mistake
 sharp-edged tailgate has less headroom
 bumpers glamorous but less durable
 c/locking works only from OSF door

THE AMICA REPRESENTS Hyundai's second thoughts on the subject of providing the most interior space and convenience within the smallest kerb (or garage) space. The Atoz + (which continues) is the ultimate no-nonsense holdall, but observers tend to deride its Postman Pat looks, while the owner needs a pair of steps to wash the roof.

Amica is basically the same car, but it's 3.5cm lower, its profile has been rounded and some glamorous touches, such as (less durable) painted bumpers and a toothy chrome grille, have been added. In fact, the only interior dimensions to suffer are headroom and luggage height above the load cover, with a lower open tailgate, as well – not as good if you're tall.

Like Atoz, Amica's higher seats and lower door sills are a godsend to the less agile, and the loftier driving stance lessens lower back-strain, too.

The still-boxy shape and light power steering, with a clear view, make it easy to get into kerb spaces that most can't manage. It's also a narrow car – a blessing around country lanes, but a bit too chummy with a portly passenger alongside.

In fact, the model's ride and cornering responses aren't at all bad, with some improvement in composure over broken surfaces compared with our earlier Atoz.

The little one-litre engine's noise control has been measurably improved and with

the top three gears higher, main road progress is now impressively subdued; it's always been a paragon around town and will waffle along well below 30mph in top, if you like.

At the back, kneeroom is the problem, but if there's enough, the latest centre-split cushions and backrests provide reasonable support and ready load-adaptability. They can't be easily removed, however, so the Amica lacks ultimate mini-MPV-style credentials.

This GSi's kit includes air-conditioning, alloys, key-fired central locking and power steering, as well as the split rear seat, so the £1000 premium is good value. A four-speed auto is imminent, which should help narrow the 10mpg disparity we experienced on the three-speeder.

VERDICT

The Amica – an Atoz with make up – will still tackle domestic chores with relish. It's the antithesis of a Fiat Seicento or Ford Ka; they're great fun to take out, but not half so accommodating. Whether or not you like its appearance, the boxy shape makes a major contribution towards its success.

THE ATOZ/AMICA RANGE

body mini/city 5 door. Amica has 3.5cm-lower roofline and external styling differences
trim levels Atoz +: (higher level) only
 Amica: Si and GSi
engines petrol 1.0/55bhp
drive front via 5-speed manual or 4-speed auto with torque converter (optional)

OVERTAKING ABILITY			★★★★○		
Raised higher gears mean it's slower in top than early Atoz – but goes better through the gears, and more relaxed on main roads					
acceleration in seconds	through gears*	④ th gear	⑤ th gear		
20-40mph	4.4	11.6	14.8		
30-50mph	6.0	11.4	14.6		
40-60mph	8.1	12.5	16.4		
50-70mph	11.6	15.1	20.3		
30-70mph	17.6	26.5	35.0		
max speed in each gear (*using 6000 rpm for best acceleration)					
gear	①*	②*	③*	④	⑤
speed (mph)	23	42	67½	88½	89

SPACE AND PRACTICALITY ★★★★○				
<i>Tight rear kneeroom but otherwise a clever piece of packaging; new lower roofline and tailgate hinge, though</i>				
<i>in centimetres (5-door hatch)</i>				
outside	inside	<i>(† no sunroof)</i>		
length	350	front - legroom	84-99	
width - inc mirrors	176	- headroom	102†	
- mirrors folded	155	rear - typical leg/	101	
height (no roof bars)	158	kneeroom	62	
load sill height	9/63	- headroom	93	
(inside/outside)		- hiproom	124	
steering		load space (litres/cu ft)	95/	
turns lock-to-lock	3.0	(all seats in use)	270	
turning circle (metres)	9.6	load length	50-103	
easy to park/garage?		full length to fascia	No	
		load width	99-118	
		load height (to shelf)	50	
		(to top of aperture)	91	

CONTROLS AND DISPLAYS ★★★★○				
<i>High-set seat gives commanding view, but not much legroom. Very light clutch, steering and accelerator - latter provokes leg ache, however</i>				
				

HOW THE AMICA COMPARES *	engine cap/power (no/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)
HYUNDAI AMICA	4/999/55	3740	17.6	35.0/26.5	46	29/17	99	101/62	3.0/9.6	350
Daewoo Matiz	3/796/50	4300	21.8	45.6/29.0	44½	25½/27	105	101/66	3.2/9.3	350
VW Lupo 1.0	4/999/50	4100	18.5	29.6/22.3	43	26½/18	104	92/65	2.9/9/9	353
Ford Ka 2	4/1299/60	3490	17.3	31.0/21.4	42	28/22	105	92/64	2.8/10.1	362
Peugeot 106 1.1	4/1124/60	3790	14.1	29.6/20.8	46½	29/27	106	89/64	3.7/10.7	368
Toyota Yaris 1.0	4/998/68	3850	14.8	32.5/23.3	47	26½/12	105	102/70	3.3/10.1	362
(p) all with PAS										

SAFETY ★★○○○				
<i>"Curate's egg" mix of results - good side impact protection and handbrake powerful. Brake fade under duress</i>				
braking				
pedal feel	★★★★○			
in emergency	★★○○○			
handbrake	★★★★○			
dry road stopping distance				
from 50mph	(no ABS option)			
pedal load	distance			
10kg	36½m			
17kg	29m best stop			
+4kg ie 21kg	33m skids to right			

EURO NCAP CRASH TEST RATINGS (Atoz test)				
front impact 25%		side impact	78%	
overall 53%	★★★★○	pedestrian rating	★★○○○	

SECURITY FEATURES				
central locking	✓	alarm	×	
remote control	×	immobiliser	✓	
auto window closure	×	luggage security	★★★★○	
deadlocks	×			
✓ standard	○ factory option	×	not available	

				
COMFORT ★★★★○				
<i>A reasonable ride, but it's the ease of entry/egress that's endearing, with good front seat support once you're in. And you can wear your hat!</i>				

FUEL ECONOMY ★★★★○				
<i>Respectable mpg and a reasonable range - improved over Atoz tested partly due to higher gearing</i>				
type of use (air conditioning off)	AA test (mpg)			
urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	34½			
suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	41			
motorway (70mph cruising)	40			
cross-country (brisk driving/20 miles from cold start)	48½			
rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	55			
typical mpg overall	46			
realistic tank capacity/range	32 litres/325 miles			
official mpg (urban/extra urban/combined)	35.3/52.3/44.8			
CO ₂ emissions 151 g/km	car tax band B			