R0065
October 2000

Suzuki Ignis

Featured model: 1.3GA 3-door

IT'S DIFFICULT TO PIGEONHOLE THE Ignis. It's sort of supermini estate car meets mini 4x4, except that it's front-wheel drive only – at least for the moment. Suzuki dubs the tall and chunky newcomer a "multi-compact", but whatever you call it it's an endearing little hatchback that's fun to drive.

A large part of the enjoyment is derived from the way it performs, thanks to the new twin-cam, all-alloy engine that pumps out a generous 82bhp. In combination with the quick and light (if somewhat clunky) gearchange, it zips the Ignis along remarkably swiftly. But despite its wheelspinning, rev-happy nature, it's usefully tractable in the higher gears and cruises quietly.

Less appealing is the ride on anything other than smooth roads. On bumpy surfaces it's firm and jiggly, and displays the odd touch of short-wheelbase choppiness. But it's nothing if not nimble. Light electric power steering, a compact turning circle and well-controlled roll give it nip and tuck handling to match its peppy performance, with reassuring brakes to bring everything safely to a halt.

There are no steering wheel adjustments or seat height resettings, but the relatively high driving position gives an "in command" feel. There's a clear view of the large main dials, the pedals, switches and gear lever are well placed and all-round vision is excellent – no rear head restraints on the GA. You don't get a dipping mirror, adjusters for the door mirrors or central locking, either. These are standard on the GL, however. Dove-grey plastic abounds, but it's smoothly moulded and cleverly contoured to incorporate numerous cubby holes, shelves and drinks holders.

On this three-door Ignis, only the front passenger's seat slides when tilted, thus more or less enforcing (safe) kerbside entry and exit. Passengers sit even higher in the back, so they benefit from good thigh support that complements lots of foot space and adequate headroom. As a bonus, the 50/50 split backrests have a six-notch recline mechanism, and there's sufficient hiproom for three adults – just.

Beyond the tailgate lives a wide, high-floored boot, the volume of which doubles when the rear seatbacks are flipped forward, to open up a square, flat load platform. Under the lift-out floor panel (which can double as a table), there's a concealed storage tray above the spare wheel well.

VERDICT

The little Ignis is a rarity : a family runabout that puts a smile on your face. It's neat and nimble, quick and economical – and has a practical side, too. True, the GA has a pretty basic spec, but do without the GL's toys and you've got yourself a bargain. We were sorry to see it go.

AT A GLANCE: GA

considering size, price and rivals

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

SPECIFICATION

engine 1328cc, 4-cylinder, petrol; 82bhp at 5500rpm, 81 lb ft at 3500rpm; chain-driven double overhead camshafts, 16 valves
transmission 5-speed manual, front-wheel drive; 19.8 mph/1000rpm in 5th, 16.9 in 4th
suspension front: MacPherson coil spring/damper struts. Rear: torsion beam axle, coil springs and Panhard rod
steering electric power assistance; 3.2 turns lock-to-lock; 10.35m diameter turning circle between kerbs (16.3m for one turn of the wheel)
brakes ventilated discs front, drums rear. ABS not available
wheels/tyres 4½in steel with 165/70R14S tyres (Dunlop SP10 on test car); full-size spare

LIKES AND GRIPES

ease of parking and manoeuvring
L-shaped load area, if required
origami-inspired nylon load cover
handy tray under boot floor "table top"

no footrest space alongside clutch
some warning lights miniscule
small, fiddly radio controls
unoccupied passenger's seat rattles

THE IGNIS RANGE

body high roof, MPV-style estate car
trim levels GA, GL
engines petrol: 4 cylinder/1.3 litre/82bhp
diesel: none
drive front-wheel drive, 5-speed manual (4-speed automatic available on GL)

OVERTAKING ABILITY ✪✪✪✪✪

Surprisingly lively for its type and size – the supermini estate that thinks it's a sports car! Pulls well in the mid range despite its appetite for revs. Loud when extended, quiet when main road cruising

acceleration in seconds	through gears*	④th gear	⑤th gear
20-40mph	3.1	10.5	13.5
30-50mph	3.9	10.4	13.8
40-60mph	5.2	10.7	15.0
50-70mph	7.0	11.3	16.7
30-70mph	**10.9**	**21.7**	**30.5**

max speed in each gear *(*using 6400rpm for best acceleration)*

gear	①*	②*	③*	④	⑤
speed (mph)	30	54	81	104	101

SPACE AND PRACTICALITY ✪✪✪○○

Five-door model overcomes three-door's awkward rear entry and exit. Roomy interior considering outside dimensions. Modest luggage space until rear backrests are flipped forward on to fixed cushion

in centimetres (3-door estate)

outside	
length	361
width - *inc mirrors*	188
- *mirrors folded*	160
height *(no roof bars)*	154
load sill height *(inside/outside)*	0/74
steering	
turns lock-to-lock	3.2
turning circle *(metres)*	10.35
easy to park/garage?	✪✪✪✪✪

inside *(† with no sunroof)*

front - legroom	88-105
- headroom	98 †
rear - typical leg/kneeroom	100/66
- headroom	95
- hiproom	122
load space *(all seats in use)* *(litres/cu ft)*	235/8.4
load length	49-122
full length to facia	207
load width	131
load height *(to shelf/ to top of aperture)*	32/71

CONTROLS AND DISPLAYS ✪✪✪○○

Most controls (except radio/cassette's) well sited and convenient, but right stalk works indicators and some warning lights too small. Handy info centre shows date, time, average speed and running time

SAFETY ✪✪✪○○

Twin airbags, front seatbelt pretensioners and load limiters get the thumbs up, but no ABS option available. Rear centre seatbelt lap-type only and no rear grab handles or head restraints on GA

braking

pedal feel	✪✪✪✪○
in emergency	✪✪○○○
handbrake	✪✪✪○○

dry road stopping distance

from 50mph **pedal load**	*(with no ABS)* **distance**
10kg	34
12kg	**27½ *best stop***
+4kg ie 16kg	30m *fronts locked*

EURO NCAP CRASH TEST RATINGS

Ignis not yet tested

SECURITY FEATURES: GA

central locking	×	alarm	0
remote control	×	immobiliser	✓
auto window closure	×	luggage security	✪✪○○○
deadlocks	×		

✓ *standard* 0 *dealer option* × *not available*

HANDLING AND STEERING ✪✪✪✪○

A smart take-off and nimble handling make Ignis great for ducking and diving in town traffic. Light electric power steering and a tight turning circle combine to make parking a doddle

COMFORT ✪✪○○○

Frisky ride away from smooth A-roads when unladen. Front seats (with lever-type adjusters) could use a little more lumbar support. Reclining back seats comfortable, with lots of leg/foot room

FUEL ECONOMY ✪✪✪○○

Go gently on the throttle and almost 60mpg is possible, but you don't have to try hard to record 50+ mpg. Small fuel gauge but reasonable range from easy-fill tank; interior filler flap release

AA test results (*mpg*)		**official figures (*mpg*)**	
worst (hard/urban)	28	urb an	33.2
best (gentle/rural)	58	extra urban	54.3
overall mpg on test	**44**	**combined**	**44.1**
realistic tank capacity	34 litres	CO_2 emissions	150g/km
typical range	330 miles	car tax band	A

HOW THE IGNIS COM PARES

	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 from 50-mph (m/kg)	maximum legroom - front (cm)	typical leg/ kneeroom - rear (cm)	steering turns/ circle (m)	overall length (cm)
SUZUKI IGNIS 1.3	**4/1328/82**	**3530**	**10.9**	**30.5/21.7**	**44**	**27½/12**	**105**	**100/66**	**3.2/10.35**	**361**
Daewoo Matiz	3/796/50	4300	21.8	45.6/29.0	44½	25½/27	105	101/66	3.2/9.3	350
Hyundai Amica	4/999/55	3740	17.6	35.0/26.5	46	29/17	99	99/63	3.0/9.6	350
Skoda Fabia 1.4	4/1397/68	3310	15.3	31.8/21.5	40	24½/27*	108	100/72	2.8/10.25	396
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
Vauxhall Agila 1.2	4/1199/75	3720	14.7	34.2/24.7	42	28/27	107	98/68	3.3/10.35	350

* with ABS

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