



Toyota Corolla

Featuring 1.4GS 3-door Hatchback



What's different?
New all-alloy 1.4-engined Corolla with surprising power output and a surprisingly low starting price.

THIS LATEST COROLLA WAS ALL NEW IN mid-1997, but now there's a distinctive new "face" for the new millennium plus new engines under-bonnet. The 1.6 version's vital statistics are little changed from the 1997 test car's (see R9779), so it's reasonable to assume that performance and economy won't be much different, either.

There *are* differences, however – new features such as an all-alloy block and cylinder head, an interesting reversion to chain drive for the camshafts and the introduction of variable valve timing, for instance. All these features apply to the 1.4, as well, and here, maximum power and torque benefit significantly.

Our track tests revealed that the smaller-engined Corolla can no longer be regarded as a wimp – just so long as you're prepared to give it plenty of revs. It

handles low-speed pulling without complaint, as well, but acceleration in the gears is less impressive than when you give it its head. To some, higher overall gearing would be welcome, but on the whole, better noise control than on previous Corollas means that any cruising speed within the legal limit (and beyond) is acoustically acceptable.

Perhaps taller gearing would give better fuel economy at such higher speeds, but our results are on the right side of average for this size of car. The tank's effective range is better nowadays, too, thanks to a less alarmist gauge and warning light.

In fact, Toyota has dealt with several of the niggles we mentioned in our 1997 tests. For example, the heater output is no longer uneven side-to-side, the latest column stalks have a nicer feel, the wipers now clear away the washer fluid and the revised facia switches for the air conditioning and the heated back window have unmissable warning lights above them.

When you opt for the three-door hatchback, rather than the five-door Liftback, you're putting style before practicality. There's even less rear leg and kneeroom (the Liftback is already tight for both), and it's much harder to get in and out of the back because the front seats' cushions

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PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds

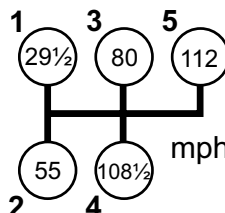
mph	30	40	50	60	70
THROUGH THE GEARS		2.1	4.3	7.2	10.8
IN 5TH GEAR		6.7	13.2	20.3	28.5
IN 4TH GEAR		4.9	9.8	15.2	20.6

20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES	13.5/10.2		13.6/10.2		
		13.2/9.8		15.3/10.8	

Maximum speeds

REVS PER MINUTE	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
	6500*	6500*	5650		

* for best acceleration



FUEL CONSUMPTION

Type of use – with air conditioning off*	mpg
Urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	27
Suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	33
Motorway (70mph cruising)	39½
Cross-country (brisk driving/20 miles from cold start)	42
Rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	49
Typical mpg overall	40½
Realistic tank range (not nominal tank capacity)	43 litres/380 miles

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

FOR THE TECHNICAL

ENGINE

Type transverse four in line with all-alloy block and head; five main bearings

Size 79.0 x 71.3mm = 1398cc

Power 95bhp at 6000rpm

Torque 96 lb ft at 4800rpm

Valves chain-driven twin overhead camshafts, actuating four valves per cylinder

Fuel/ignition electronic multi-point petrol injection with integrated direct ignition (no plug leads). Three-way exhaust catalyser and 50-litre tank, with low-level warning light

TRANSMISSION

Type five-speed manual, front-wheel drive

Mph per 1000m 19.8 in 5th, 16.7 in 4th

CHASSIS

Suspension front: independent damper/struts with integral coil springs and L-shaped lower arms. Rear: independent struts with coil springs and twin transverse lower links. Anti-roll bars and telescopic dampers all round.

Steering rack and pinion with hydraulic power assistance. 3.3 turns between full locks. Turning circle diameters average 10.3m between kerbs, with 16.1m circle for one turn of the wheel

Wheels 5½in steel with 175/65R14H tyres (Michelin on test car). "Space saver" temporary spare

Brakes ventilated discs front, drums rear with vacuum servo; electronic anti-skid with brake force distribution (ABS + EBD) standard

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Seatbelts

front height-adjustable pre-tensioning with load limiters
rear 3 lap and diagonal inertia reel

Airbags

driver ☒
passenger ☒
others ☒

Head restraints

front height adjustable ☒
rear 2 only – removable ☒

Other features

no ABS on 1.4S – other safety features remain

Euro NCAP crash test results

front and side impact rating

★★★★

Pedestrian test rating

★★★★

Door locking

central locking? ☒

remote control? ☒

auto window closure? ☒

deadlocks? ☒

Luggage

secure from interior/hidden from view ●●●○○○

Ignition switch/immobiliser

●●●○○○

Alarm

on GLS only

●●●●● assessment of effectiveness and convenience – the more black blobs the better

☐ factory fitted optional extra

☒ standard on this model

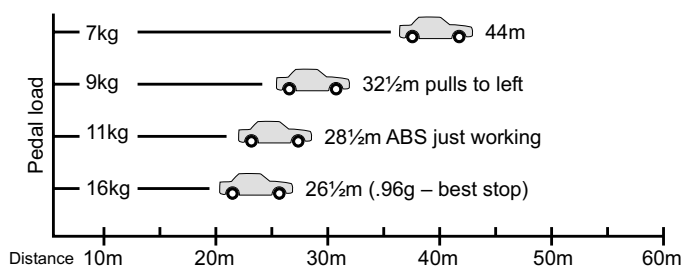
☒ not available on this model

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:

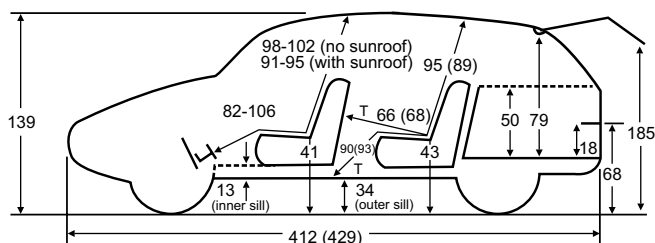
8kg at start of test, 8½kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

MEASUREMENTS

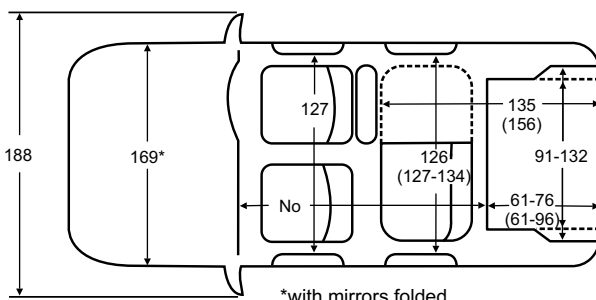
Centimetres

Three-door hatch

(Five-door Liftback in brackets where different)



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



*with mirrors folded

kerb weight: 1030 – 1130kg for 3 door (maker's figures) (+35g for 5 door)

are fixed and they can't "remember" and resume their former settings afterwards. There's a loss of 20cm of load length, too – so be sure you're doing the right thing before being lured by the hatchback's stylish profile.

The five-door Liftback's price premium is a modest £500. And if you do want the extra luxury of powered windows and door mirrors, the extra cool of air conditioning, the extra safety of ABS (and paint on your bumpers), the GS version will oblige – for £1900 more. But by that stage, a further £350 will clinch the 1.6-litre engine.

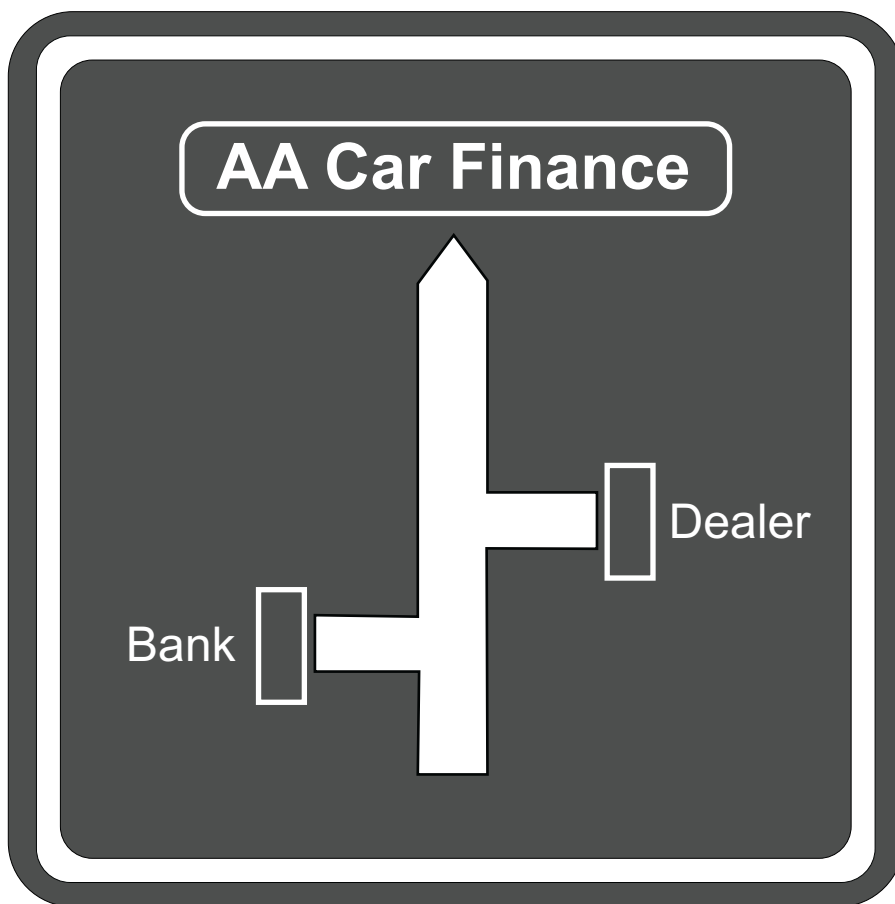
VERDICT

In fact, its less than ideal back seat comfort and folding arrangements are now the only serious impediment to our thoroughly recommending the Corolla 1.4S five-door as the ideal budget-priced family hatchback. It's always been a paragon of reliability and it's nice to see how minor niggles have been attended to on this face-lifted version. In this latest form, with its significantly improved mechanicals, the cheapest Corolla is also really good value, as well as being enjoyable to drive.



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