

Nissan Almera Tino

Featured models: 1.8 SE+ and 2.2 Diesel SE



FULL-SIZED MPVs LIKE THE Galaxy and Espace are all well and good, but the ever-popular Scenic showed right from the off that smaller, more affordable MPVs would find many more buyers than those with seven or eight seats – even if they can't muster quite as many perches for the school run.

Drawing heavily on the Astra-sized Almera platform, Nissan's pert people-carrier not only mimics the Scenic in size and make-up, but bears more than a passing resemblance to its French rival, too. This is rather an irony given that Renault now owns a big slice of Nissan; or was the tie-up a canny ploy to have two feet in the mid-sized MPV camp?

Either way, the strictly five-seat Tino, propelled by 1.8- or two-litre petrol power, or a 2.2-litre turbo-diesel, offers an appealing alternative to the all-conquering Scenic. There's a seamless, continuously variable (CVT) automatic option, too (mated to the two-litre petrol engine), but you can't have one without the other.

We haven't sampled the self-shifter, but both the 1.8 and the 2.2 turbo-diesel take life at a languid, rather laid-back pace, with relaxed, long-legged gearing (on the diesel, especially), a comfortable, airy cabin and ample creature comforts supporting a restful, "what's-the-rush?" approach to things.

Not the peppiest of performers, then, but the 1.8 petrol engine is amiable enough. The turbo-diesel is a bit more raucous, and our test car's marked "hole" in low-speed pick-up proved

distinctly irksome at times.

Accept the Tino's more relaxed way of life, however, and its qualities begin to shine through. Apart from the usual MPV appeal of a loftier view on life, the Tino's soft, cossetting ride, supportive, quality-feel seats and smooth, nicely weighted (if not especially responsive) steering, outshine many in this class if comfort comes before boisterous bend-swinging on your list of priorities.

Like most in this class, the individual back seats slide, fold and take out in almost limitless combinations, with Scenic-style underfloor storage space tucked away beneath them. The Tino's seats aren't the lightest to lug in and out, however, and some folding operations can be a bit fiddly.

Although ample up front, leg-stretching space is a little cosier behind. Boot space comes up a shade sort, too, marred by intrusive suspension towers, but we do like the Tino's handy luggage nets – ideal for keeping small shopping items or loose nick-nacks firmly in their place.

VERDICT

The Tino doesn't better many benchmarks in this class, but thanks to its refined, understated composure, it still has plenty to offer. The distinctive facia, quality fit-and-feel, cossetting ride and versatile interior all count as assets, even if its diesel power unit and a few details, here and there, don't.

AT A GLANCE

considering size, price and rivals

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

SPECIFICATION

engine 1.8 petrol: 1769cc, 4 cylinder, 114bhp at 5600rpm, 117 lb ft at 2800rpm; 2.2 diesel: 2184cc, 4 cylinder di turbo-diesel; 114bhp at 4000rpm, 173 lb ft at 2000rpm

transmission 5-speed manual, front-wheel drive; 1.8: 22.1mph/1000rpm in 5th, 17.5 in 4th; 2.2D: 29.4 in 5th, 22.7 in 4th

suspension front: independent MacPherson damper/struts, coil springs. Rear: multi-link beam, coil springs

steering hydraulic power assistance; 3.2 turns lock-to-lock; 10.7m diameter turning circle between kerbs (16.9m for one turn of the wheel)

brakes ventilated discs front, solid discs rear with anti-lock, brake force distribution and brake-assist controls standard

wheels/tyres 6in steel with 195/65R15 91H tyres on S and SE (6in alloys on SE+; 6.5in x 16 alloys with 205/55R16 tyres on SE²); temporary spare

LIKES AND GRIPES

steering wheel-mounted radio controls solid, well-made fit and feel home-from-home comfort/practicality optional "Birdview" GPS satnav system **and GRIPES**

wipers not suited to right-hand drive light-coloured facia reflects in screen back seat cosy/rear vision restricted lacks appeal for keener drivers

THE ALMERA TINO RANGE

body lower medium (mid-priced) MPV **trim levels** S, SE, SE² and SE+ **engines** petrol: 4 cylinder/1.8 litre/114bhp, 4/2.0/136 (auto only); 4/2.2/114 turbo-diesel **drive** front-wheel drive; 5-speed manual (1.8 petrol and 2.2 turbo-diesel); dual-mode CVT auto (2.0 petrol only)

ALMERA TINO 1.8i SE+

OVERTAKING ABILITY ★★☆☆○

Modest power, relaxed gearing and tall, solid build mean mediocre pace, but 1.8 rewards with obliging, "what's-the-rush?" affability at a gentler pace. Brisker than 1.6 Multipla, but never really feels it

| acceleration in seconds | through gears* | 3 rd gear | 4 th gear | 5 th gear | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----|
| 20-40mph | 3.4 | 6.3 | 9.9 | 14.0 | |
| 30-50mph | 4.2 | 6.2 | 9.3 | 14.0 | |
| 40-60mph | 5.6 | 6.5 | 9.6 | 14.0 | |
| 50-70mph | 7.2 | 7.1 | 10.9 | 15.2 | |
| 30-70mph | 11.4 | 13.3 | 20.2 | 29.2 | |
| max speed in each gear (*using 6000rpm for best acceleration) | | | | | |
| gear | ①* | ②* | ③* | ④ | ⑤ |
| speed (mph) | 29 | 50 | 75 | 111 | 110 |

SPACE AND PRACTICALITY ★★☆☆○

Airy, well laid out cabin with versatile seating options, but reshuffling seats can be fussy. Load area nets a neat touch, but underfloor lockers less handy than Scenic's; wheelarches rob load space, too

| in centimetres (5-dr mid-sized MPV) | | inside | († with sunroof) |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---|-------------------------|
| outside | | front - legroom | 85-108 |
| length | 427 | - headroom | 94-97† |
| width - inc mirrors | 200 | rear - typical leg/ | 98 (105) |
| - mirrors folded | 176 | 5 st (4 st) kneeroom | 71 (81) |
| height (exc roof bars) | 161 | - headroom | 96 |
| load sill height | 11/68 | - hiproom | 135 |
| (inside/outside) | | load space (all seats in use) | |
| steering | | (litres/cu ft) | 375/13.2 |
| turns lock-to-lock | 3.2 | load length | 68/107/145 ¹ |
| turning circle (metres) | 10.7 | full length to fascia | 241 |
| easy to park/garage? | | load width | 92-134 |
| | ★★★☆☆ | load height (to shelf/ | 53/ |
| | | to top of aperture) | 87 |

¹ rear seats in use/folded/removed

CONTROLS AND DISPLAYS ★★☆☆○

Supportive seats and lofty "in-charge" driving position, but remote, detached gearshift and languid, low-geared steering dent at-the-wheel appeal. Optional satnav system a boon for navigational no-hopers



SAFETY ★★☆☆○

Dual front airbags, side airbags, three 3-point rear seatbelts, Isofix child-seat fixings and "active" front head restraints net the Tino a four-star NCAP rating, out-scoring even the strong-on-safety Scenic

| braking | pedal feel | in emergency | handbrake | dry road stopping distance from 50mph (with ABS/brake-assist) | |
|---------|------------|--------------|-----------|---|----------------|
| | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | pedal load | distance |
| | | | | unhurried 8kg | 35½m |
| | | | | sudden 10kg | 26½m best stop |
| | | | | +4kg ie 14kg | 28½m |

EURO NCAP CRASH TEST RATINGS - 1.8 tested Mar 2001

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-------------------|-------|
| front impact | 75% | side impact | 100% |
| overall | 88% ★★☆☆○ | pedestrian rating | ★★☆☆○ |

SECURITY FEATURES

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|
| central locking | ✓ | alarm | 0 |
| remote control | ✓ | immobiliser | ✓ |
| auto window closure | ✗ | luggage security | ★★☆☆○ |
| deadlocks | ✓ | | |
| ✓ standard | | 0 factory option | ✗ not available |

HANDLING AND STEERING ★★☆☆○

Not the best bend-swinging MPV, let down by unresponsive (albeit smooth) steering. Can be hustled, but prefers not to be



COMFORT ★★☆☆○

Comfortable and not too cosy for space, though compliant ride deteriorates at higher loads. Cruises quietly, with plenty of creature comforts and neat little touches around the cabin

FUEL ECONOMY ★★☆☆○

Competitive but not class-leading economy, outshone by more abstemious Picasso/Scenic pairing. Easy filler and good-sized tank ensures a decent range. Highest VED car tax band, though

| AA test results (mpg) | | official figures (mpg) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-------------|
| worst (hard/urban) | 22 | urban | 27.4 |
| best (gentle/rural) | 41 | extra urban | 44.8 |
| overall mpg on test | 33 | combined | 36.2 |
| realistic tank capacity | 53 litres | CO ₂ emissions | 186g/km |
| typical range | 385 miles | car tax band | D |

HOW THE TINO 1.8 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 from 50mph (m/kg) | maximum legroom - front (cm) | typical leg/ kneeroom - rear (cm) | steering turns/ circle (m) | overall length (cm) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| NISSAN ALMERA TINO 1.8 [5] | 4/1769/114 | 3160 | 11.4 | 29.2/20.2 | 33 | 26½/10 | 108 | 98/71° | 3.2/10.7 | 427 |
| Citroën Xsara Picasso 1.8 [5] | 4/1749/117 | 3205 | 10.6 | 27.6/17.6 | 35 | 27½/18 | 106 | 95/72 | 3.3/11.9 | 428 |
| Daewoo Tacuma 2.0 CDX [5] | 4/1998/119 | 3350 | 11.0 | 24.4/17.0 | 29 | 28½/20 | 103 | 103/77 | 3.0/10.4 | 435 |
| Fiat Multipla 1.6 [6] | 4/1581/103 | 3780 | 12.7 | 29.2/20.6 | 29 | 27½/20 | 106 | 114/83 | 2.8/11.1 | 399 |
| Renault Scenic 1.6 16v [5] | 4/1598/110 | 3465 | 12.0 | 28.2/19.3 | 34½ | 26/40 | 108 | 102/76 ¹ | 3.5/10.6 | 417 |
| Vauxhall Zafira 1.8 [7] | 4/1796/113 | 3630 | 11.3 | 22.4/16.3 | 32 | 27/14 | 103 | 102/75 | 3.2/11.0 | 432 |

* maximum seating capacity in [] † all with ABS °105/81 as 4-seater °109/85 as 4-seater

ALMERA TINO 2.2D SE

OVERTAKING ABILITY ★★☆☆☆
Relaxed, long-legged gearing blunts turbo-diesel's pace, not aided by vibes and tardy low-speed pick-up. Quieter at cruise, though, when the oil-burner's long, loping gait is more agreeable

| acceleration in seconds | through gears* | ③ rd gear | ④ th gear | ⑤ th gear | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----|
| 20-40mph | 3.6 | 5.9 | 12.5 | 21.8 | |
| 30-50mph | 4.9 | 5.1 | 8.8 | 16.6 | |
| 40-60mph | 5.9 | 5.5 | 8.2 | 13.4 | |
| 50-70mph | 7.7 | 7.5 | 8.7 | 13.1 | |
| 30-70mph | 12.6 | 12.6 | 17.5 | 29.7 | |
| max speed in each gear (*using 4000rpm for best acceleration) | | | | | |
| gear | ①* | ②* | ③* | ④ | ⑤ |
| speed (mph) | 22 | 39 | 63 | 91 | 112 |

SPACE AND PRACTICALITY ★★☆☆☆
Matches Scenic's versatility, but not always as easy to exploit. Light-coloured seats and interior trim give cabin a bright, airy feel, but less practical for "kids and pets" duties, and reflect badly in lower screen

| in centimetres (5dr mid-sized MPV) | | inside | († with sunroof) |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| outside | | front - legroom | 85-108 |
| length | 427 | - headroom | 94-97† |
| width - inc mirrors | 200 | rear - typical leg/ | 98 (105) |
| - mirrors folded | 176 | kneeroom | 71(81) |
| height (exc roof rails) | 161 | - headroom | 96 |
| load sill height | 11/68 | - hiproom | 135 |
| (inside/outside) | | load space (all seats in use) | |
| steering | | (litres/cu ft) | 375/13.2 |
| turns lock-to-lock | 3.2 | load length | 68/107/145 ¹ |
| turning circle (metres) | 10.7 | full length to fascia | 241 |
| easy to park/garage? | | load width | 92-134 |
| | ★★★☆☆ | load height (to shelf/ | 53/ |
| | | to top of aperture) | 87 |

¹ rear seats in use/folded/removed

CONTROLS AND DISPLAYS ★★☆☆☆
Distinctive fascia works well in practice with most controls sensibly sited. Driving position is fine, too, despite steering wheel adjusting for rake only. Back seat folding can be fiddly, though



HOW THE TINO 2.2 DIESEL 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 from 50mph (m/kg) | maximum legroom - front (cm) | typical leg/ kneeroom - rear (cm) | steering turns/ circle (m) | overall length (cm) |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| NISSAN ALMERA TINO 2.2D | 4/2184/114 | 2380 | 12.6 | 29.7/17.5 | 42 | 26½/9 | 108 | 98/71° | 3.2/10.7 | 427 |
| Citroën Xsara Picasso 2.0HDi | 4/1997/90 | 2480 | 14.0 | 27.0/18.6 | 50 | 26/16 | 106 | 95/72 | 3.3/12.0 | 428 |
| Daewoo Tacuma 2.0CDX (petrol) | 4/1998/119 | 3350 | 11.0 | 24.4/17.0 | 29 | 28½/20 | 103 | 103/77 | 3.0/10.4 | 435 |
| Fiat Multipla 1.9 JTD 110 | 4/1910/110 | 2740 | 13.3 | 27.5/19.2 | 43½ | 28½/18 | 106 | 114/83 | 2.8/11.1 | 399 |
| Kia Carens 1.8 5dr (petrol)¹ | 4/1793/108 | 3380 | 11.1 | 27.4/18.3 | 31 | 29/16 | 105 | 104/77 | 3.2/10.6 | 444 |
| Skoda Octavia 1.9TDi 110 Estate | 4/1896/110 | 2540 | 10.7 | 21.3/15.5 | 54½ | 24/27 | 112 | 97/69 | 3.1/10.5 | 451 |

¹ available as 5 or 6-seater

SAFETY ★★☆☆☆
Dual front airbags, side airbags, three 3-point rear seatbelts, Isofix child-seat fixings and active front head restraints net the Tino a four-star NCAP rating, out-scoring even the strong-on-safety Scenic

| braking | dry road stopping distance from 50mph (with ABS/brake-assist) |
|--------------------|---|
| pedal feel ★★☆☆☆ | pedal load distance |
| in emergency ★★☆☆☆ | unhurried 6kg 37m |
| handbrake ★★☆☆☆ | sudden 9kg 26½m best stop |
| | +4kg ie 13kg 29m ABS on |

EURO NCAP CRASH TEST RATINGS - 1.8 tested Mar 2001

| | | | |
|--------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| front impact | 75% | side impact | 100% |
| overall 88% | ★★★☆☆ | pedestrian rating | ★★☆☆☆ |

SECURITY FEATURES

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|
| central locking | ✓ | alarm | 0 |
| remote control | ✓ | immobiliser | ✓ |
| auto window closure | ✗ | luggage security | ★★☆☆☆ |
| deadlocks | ✓ | | |
| ✓ standard | 0 factory option | ✗ not available | |

HANDLING AND STEERING ★★☆☆☆
Weightier diesel proves softer and slower on its feet than 1.8 petrol, favouring comfort over cornering prowess still further. Steering is smooth and fluid enough, but not especially inspiring



COMFORT ★★☆☆☆
Soft, compliant ride smoothes out the rough edges well at lighter loads, but loses some composure when more heavily laden

FUEL ECONOMY ★★☆☆☆
Tino diesel sips its derv respectably slowly, but others do better. Still, 40-50mpg economy not to be sneered at, while easy filling and fair-sized tank yields a near 500-mile range

| AA test results (mpg) | official figures (mpg) | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| worst (hard/urban) | 30 | urban | 34.0 |
| best (gentle/rural) | 52 | extra urban | 53.3 |
| overall mpg on test | 42 | combined | 44.1 |
| realistic tank capacity | 53 litres | CO ₂ emissions | 168g/km |
| typical range | 490 miles | car tax band | C |