



Isuzu D-Max V-Cross Review: First Drive

**X-Factor: Priced well, immensely utilitarian and yet makes quite the style statement.**

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**Isuzu's D-Max V-Cross has become rather popular in urban India for a very unlikely reason for it has emerged to be quite the lifestyle statement. We live with it for a few days to see what the fuss is all about. And well there wasn't a good enough reason to not go off-roading in it!**

It's about 1 am at night as I drive into DLF Phase 5, a residential area bustling with the corporate crowd consisting of the young and aged alike. On the side of the main driveway I notice two trucks glimmering under the orange hue of the street lamps with 'Isuzu' written in big bold font on their tailgates. One has a canopy fitted to the back while the other has an LED light bar mounted on the roof.

Right there in front of me was an example of how increasingly popular Isuzu's D-Max V-Cross has become. Here in Gurgaon, the D-Max V-Cross is the hot new favourite amongst lifestyle vehicle owners and off-road enthusiasts. One of these trucks here, the one with the light bar belongs to someone living in one of these buildings. While the other one appears to be from the farms of Punjab with its PB plates and canopy, suiting a buyer who may actually utilize all of the capability of the vehicle.



Ever since bookings opened for the Isuzu in May of 2016 I have been aching to drive this car. Unfortunately, due to some reason or the other I really hadn't had the chance to truly experience the vehicle.

Fortunately, that was until I somehow managed to convince our Editor that it would be a great idea to feature the Isuzu D-Max V-Cross against some very different cars – Toyota's new Fortuner and the **Ford** Endeavour. Both of which cost considerably more and are very different from the Isuzu in nature.

And so with my case made, the keys to the new D-Max V-Cross were finally in my pocket. Now while I have driven the smaller D-Max I was honestly expecting the much larger V-Cross to feel much heavier to drive with all of its 5,295mm of length.

I was in for a real treat though for the steering while on the heavier side does not really leave you with anything to complain about. And the only limitations in urban environs rest with the fairly large turning radius and the lack of rear parking sensors or a camera. Something you really need as standard kit on a truck of this size. But apart from this I was pleasantly surprised to find how not difficult it is to drive this truck. The gearshifts have long throws but I have experienced more notchy gearshifts in diesel hatchbacks. Speaking of diesel hatchbacks, the clutch on this 2.5 litre engined pick-up is so light that it can put many of them to shame. Thanks to the light clutch, driving in traffic isn't much of a hassle really. Good visibility out of the cabin also helps.



Let the roads open up and you begin to appreciate the refinement from the Isuzu's powertrain even more. Power delivery is smooth and since it is tuned for low-end grunt you can pretty much drive this truck between 1 and 2,000 rpm all day, adding to the convenience. Of course, owing to its utilitarian nature there is a fair amount of NVH. But that's about it really. The V-Cross can cruise at triple digits speeds

easily on expressways and its uncanny how this long and high set vehicle can take highway bends at 90 km/h in an absolutely composed manner. The ride is not too bad either and pot holes are dismissed without a bother. Although, over raised surfaces such as speed breakers the ride can be a little bumpy. But then again, once that flatbed is loaded at the back, things will be better.



When it comes to the interiors, the D-Max V-Cross' cabin is not a back to basics place to be as it does come with climate control, power windows, a dual-DIN stereo, rear defogger and more but don't expect anything fancy in here. Build quality, plastics and fit and finish is pretty decent otherwise. The seats are ok on the comfort front but nothing to write home about.

As you can see in the pictures here, we also went off-roading in the V-Cross. The long stance of the D-Max does hinder its off-road credentials, but it is really rather capable otherwise. Although, I may not be a big fan of rotary 4x4 controls, the low ratio box is easy to engage with the knob allowing you to engage High speed four-wheel drive or Low speed four-wheel drive in absolute ease. In four-low the truck has enough grunt with its peak torque of 320Nm coming in at 1,800 rpm. There will be times when the D-Max may struggle a bit at extreme off-roading when one or two wheels are in the air, but it's nothing you can't overcome with some tactful driving. Still, bigger sized wheel rims than these 16 inch ones and proper off-road tyres would give the D-Max V-Cross better off-road credentials. Something that I really liked about the V-Cross was its suspension articulation which allows you to push this rather huge double-Cab pick-up truck in quite a few extreme conditions. Infact, the truck feels very well balanced for something as tall and over five meters long.

All in all, I have to say that the D-Max V-Cross doesn't just look the part but is a proper lifestyle vehicle that can be used to not just showboat around uptown locales but also serve as a proper workhorse that can be used to carry your farm produce from where there are no roads, to the market place.







▪ **Isuzu D-Max V-Cross**

**Engine:** 2,499cc / 4-cylinders / 16 valves / DOHC / Turbocharged

**Fuel:** Diesel

**Transmission:** 5-Speed Manual / Four Wheel Drive

**Power:** 132bhp @ 3,600rpm

**Torque:** 320Nm @ 1,800-2,800rpm

**Price:** Rs. 12.80 lakhs (Ex-showroom, Delhi)

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