

Date	July 10, 2014
Website	www.cartrade.com
Edition	Online

Detailed Expert Review On Isuzu DMAX Car

Rs. 5.99 - Rs. 7.09 lakhs
Ex-showroom Price (Mumbai)

Jul 08, 2014 : Expert Review By Aditya Chatterjee
Isuzu D-Max Review

They have officially entered India now but their presence has been in the country for many years. Be it powering the iconic muscle car of India, Hindustan Motors Contessa or engines for SML LCV trucks, Isuzu has been a reputed name in diesel engines not just locally but globally as well.



The company forecasts that by 2023, the pickup truck industry in India will be the largest in the world. With the D-Max, the company plans to bring in a fresh approach in a segment which has been dominated by Mahindra and Tata Motors. Banking on durability and reliability, Isuzu D-Max wants the industry to have more options.

With the entry of Isuzu, competition will get a level higher since it is the only foreign manufacturer to venture in the pickup truck scene. We were in Chennai to drive one and here is our report.

Isuzu offers D Max in three different options. Two of them are strictly for commercial purpose while the space cab arched deck is aimed at lifestyle consumers. This one does not look as sporty and racy as its counterpart sold in Australia. It has its macho elements but still looks functional unless you are willing to spend more.



It has a straight cut design. Gets chrome finish on the toothed radiator grille. It has body coloured bumpers and provisions for fog lamp housing. Short hood also features an air intake scoop. Side mirrors have chrome too. These mirrors cannot be adjusted from inside but externally. An internal adjustment setting is in the pipeline and will feature soon.

Dimensionally, it is smaller than the Tata Xenon and the Mahindra Scorpio Getaway. It has a length of 5030mm out of which 1920mm is occupied by the loading area. Door handles in the premium version are treated with chrome. It has flared wheel arches to make it look strong and muscular. There is a decent size glass support immediately after the driver's window merely for ventilation purpose. From side, the vehicle looks much in proportion. Even the 215/ 70R15 tyres look proportionate to the overall dimension. It also gets remote controlled fuel lid opener placed on the rear wheel arch.



The Japanese are known for their seriousness in design. Take the cargo loading area for instance. The build quality is top notch. All the welding spots are very well finished and nothing jets out as seen on a locally made pickup. Not just on the arched deck, the same can be seen on the flat deck models too.

The last bit of chrome can be seen on the handle to open the rear cargo gate whereas on the other variants, the gate is locked with the help of latches. Proportional tail lamps paired with a simple design, the rear too looks very balanced. Spare tyre is fitted below the cargo section.



Things look minimalistic and simple inside the cabin of D max. Every button and knob is built for a purpose. You won't find flowing lines and pampering trims inside a vehicle like this. Instead, you will find only the bare necessities to make sure your work gets done.



While other manufacturers strictly go by my above stand, Isuzu wanted to bring in a slight change. They wanted to make sure the quality of interiors doesn't feel compromising. The plastics and the fit and finish of the basic trims are superb. Even though, it is priced lower than competition but then the D max offers value for money in the true sense.

The steering wheel is the same for all three variants but the one on this fully loaded arch deck comes with a better support which feels nice to grip. On the dashboard, it gets four basic vents with a four speed manual Air-Conditioner. Considering the passenger area is too less, the unit does a decent job of cooling the cabin. On the other two variants, Isuzu just provides vents but not AC saving in costs again. One can however fit an AC because the mechanical arrangement to do it is present in them.



There is a space of 1.5 Ft after the first row to keep bags and other personal items. If you happen to be a professional photographer, you can keep your camera bag and related accessories in the rear section and park tripods and other stands in the cargo deck.

Instrumentation is simple as well with the speedometer and odometer which only features in this variant. In addition, you can only see the odo and trip readings. It gets fabric trims on door panel's to make it feel premium compared to the other two variants.



Seats are just two and so it is just you and your co-driver along the way. The space behind is not enough to do any sort of retro fitting for extra seats. The cabin feels roomy and the seats offer sufficient travel. The fabric seats are reasonably comfortable. There are multiple cup holders and bottle containers on the central area as well as on door trims. These pickups can legally carry 1.2 tonnes of load but then often it is seen how operators flout the official limit by hauling twice the legal limit.



Generally, pickup trucks are not known for exciting performance because their main purpose is to haul goods for commercial purpose. The D Max comes in three different variants with one being for the lifestyle and the other two purely for commercial but the engine train and suspensions are same for all versions.



It has a four cylinder 2.5L CRDi engine which produces 134Hp of power and 294Nm of torque. At idling speeds, the diesel engine is sufficiently noisy. But the same reduces as the engine picks up speed. It has a typical flat torque engine with variable geometry thus higher torque is available at lower engine speeds. First and second gears are too short but then at third, the engine starts revving freely.

There is no lag felt even on first gear as the engine revs upto 4000 rpm before cutting off to second gear. The second gear does not deliver enough until it is on the third. Being a 2.5L, the throttle didn't mind being pushed for long which was impressive. The arched deck that we were driving was not loaded. It is essentially a pickup truck but the bulk is not felt post at third gear and after that as the engine keeps climbing greater speeds with equal ease. It reaches 100kmph at third gear itself and keeps pulling on fourth as well before finally giving up on the momentum but then just maintains it. We reached a max speed of 178Kmph.



Dimensionally, it is smaller than the Mahindra Scorpio Getaway and Tata Xenon XT. The cabin feels placed at a lower height than the other two. This given an advantage as the resistance to oppose air flow is lesser. Even at speeds above 140kmph, it felt extremely stable and confident. It gets disc brakes on the front and drum on the rear. The company officially offers an option of Dunlop and Bridgestone tyres.

We tried both and the Bridgestones performed marginally better since they held on to corners tightly without losing traction. The suspension setup is coil spring type for the front and heavy duty semi elliptical leaf spring for the rear. The rear cargo space is designed to take 1.2 tonnes payload. However, the leaf spring looks strong enough to take in more and it is bound to happen in India where many tend to overload it flouting official guidelines.



It claims to deliver an ARAI approved 13.26kmpl which means on a tank full it can approximately travel from Bangalore to Mumbai in one full tank.

Technical Specifications

Make	Isuzu
Model	D-Max
Variant	Space Cab Arched Deck
Engine Capacity	4 cylinder, Common Rail, Turbo-charged Intercooled Diesel Engine
Power in PS/RPM	136 / 3600
Torque in Nm/RPM	294 / 3200
Gears	5 /M
Length mm	5030
Width mm	1720
Height mm	1665
Wheel base mm	3050
Kerb Weight in Kg	1650
Ground clearance mm	190
Fuel tank capacity L	76
Tyre Spec	215/ 70R15
Fuel Efficiency	13.26 Kmpl
Fuel	Diesel

Specifications	Isuzu D-Max	Tata Xenon	Mahindra Scorpio Getaway
Variant	Space Cab Arched Deck	EX 4x2	2WD
Engine Capacity	4 cylinder, Common Rail, Turbo-charged Intercooled Diesel Engine	2.2 L 16 DOHC VTT DICOR	CRDe
Power in PS/RPM	136 / 3600	140 / 4000	115 / 3800
Torque in Nm/RPM	294 / 3200	320 / 1750	277 / 1700
Gears	5 /M	5 /M	5 /M
Length mm	5030	5152	5118
Width mm	1720	1860	1874
Height mm	1665	1833	1850
Wheel base mm	3050	3150	3040
Kerb Weight in Kg	1650	1900	2550
Ground clearance mm	190	200	180
Fuel tank capacity L	76	65	80
Tyre Spec	215/ 70R15	215 / 75 R16	245 / 75 R16
Fuel Efficiency	13.26 Kmpl	13.49 Kmpl	NA
ABS	No	Yes	No
Traction Control System	No	No	No
Brake Assist	No	No	No
Cruise Control	No	No	No

Air Conditioner	Manual	Manual	Manual
Power Steering	Yes	Yes	Yes
Power Windows	Front	Front	Front & Rear
Steering Adjustment	Tilt	Tilt	Tilt
Leather Seats	No	No	No

There was a reason why we flew down to Chennai to drive the D-Max and it is the need of a CV driving licence. This can come across a hurdle even though it saves on costs for all lifestyle buyers venturing out to buy one. The company justifies the lower pricing of the D-Max compared to others by stating it is a Built-for-a-purpose pickup.



But the twist in the tale is that the company is not only targeting its own segment of pickup trucks like the Mahindra Bolero and Tata Xenon but also small commercial vehicles like the Tata ACE and Mahindra Dost. They want the users of such vehicles to upgrade to D Max and eye bigger commercial opportunities. They have already started working on its own production facility in Andhra Pradesh, which will be fully functional by 2016. At present, they have 10 dealers spread across the country but in two years this number is set to reach 60 dealers covering metros as well as Tier 2 Tier 3 cities.

Thus, if you have a farmhouse at the outskirts of the city and are looking for a rugged workhorse to transport your ATV or dirtbike, we recommend you getting the Isuzu D-Max for its amazing build quality with an equally impressive performance.