

TENTH GENERATION HONDA CIVIC – BUT IS WORTH THE WAIT?



Ten generations of the Civic tells much about the success and popularity of Honda's mid-size hatch. Like its predecessor, the all-new model is built in Britain at Swindon at one of the most modern and technologically advanced factories in the world.

If the Civic has been more about evolution than revolution over recent times, the 2017 model takes a bold stride forward with its attractively aggressive styling which gives it its sharp and purposeful look without detracting from the familiar Honda identity.

Beneath its strikingly profiled skin, there are some serious changes which result in the Civic having a significantly lighter yet stiffer chassis over the outgoing model. It also sits closer to the ground, has a longer and slightly wider body to afford a cabin with increased space for both front and rear passengers. Though the load space is nearly the same as before, the low sill height and wide-opening hatch make for easy loading of bulky items. There's always a

compromise and in this instance Honda's rear 'magic seats' have been abandoned in favour of the split and fold variety.

The Civic is available with a choice of two completely new turbo petrol engines, and a single turbo diesel which arrives later this year. While business users will be attracted to the diesel, it's the highly efficient turbo petrol offerings which will more appeal to private motorists. Three-cylinder petrol engines are a familiar feature on cars and are acclaimed for their performance and economy, and this is where Honda's 1.0 litre excels. Mated to a six-speed gearbox, it not only accelerates strongly and smoothly, it's beautifully refined throughout its power range. CVT auto transmission can be specified, but it does engender some lethargy in performance.

For drivers wanting more spirited performance, Honda offers its four-cylinder 1.5 litre petrol turbo with either a six-speed manual gearbox or as a CVT automatic. More sports orientated than the 1.0 litre, it performs well with manual transmission, and given its greater power, more so with CVT as it is better matched to the engine's torque. Drive both the three- and four-cylinder cars and the smaller-engined manual Civic will be the big surprise.

With its redesigned interior and dashboard, the well-equipped Civic has a quality feel, is comfortable and particularly enjoyable to drive.

At a glance/Vital statistics

THE TEST CAR Honda Civic 5 door, 998cc three-cylinder petrol turbo, six-speed manual

DIMENSIONS Length 4,518mm, width 1,799mm (2,076 across mirrors), height 1,434mm

FUEL ECONOMY 58.9mpg EU combined figure, but expect 35-40mpg

CO₂ EMISSIONS 106-117g/km (VED rates £140-160/£140 1st year/standard rates according to specification)

PRICE from £18,335

TOP SPEED 126mph

IN BRIEF Striking design with brilliant interior appointment makes this the biggest, best performing and most comfortable Civic to date. Three-cylinder petrol turbo model is a masterpiece of engineering but is best to drive with manual rather than auto transmission.

Test drive courtesy Honda UK.