

Family Flair...



The Ford C-Max is more than just a solid and reliable MPV: it has neat styling, a refined engine, pleasant road manners and enough 'toys' to please the most ardent gadget fan. On an extended test run to Conwy in North Wales, it soon became clear why the C-Max is a popular choice for many families.

For: Spacious, smart styling, excellent driving dynamics, good fuel economy and clever gadgets.

Against: Steering lock isn't the best, visibility not great over the right shoulder. Gadgetry may flummox some.

Performance:

I tested the 2.0 Duratorq TDCI engine (140ps) coupled to the Ford Power Shift dual-clutch automatic transmission. The engine was potent, yet smooth, and the gearbox complemented everything very nicely. It was a very comfortable car to drive long distances in and the fuel economy on my run to Conwy hovered around the 45-50mpg mark, which was pretty impressive.

Ride and Handling:

The C-Max was very good to drive and handled well despite its size. Cornering was a doddle and the suspension was supple which produced a very relaxing ride. On some very twisty corners in Mold, there was body roll, but this was minimal. The steering was light enough to make low-speed manoeuvres a straightforward task.

Refinement:

There was very little wind noise or road noise, and whilst the engine had a pleasant rasp under heavy acceleration, once at cruising speeds there was very little noise at all. The C-Max was such a relaxing car to drive I was reluctant to hand back the keys at the end of the day.



Buying and Owning:

With prices starting around the £17,500 mark, the C-Max isn't especially cheap compared to other similar MPVs, but you are getting a very high quality product for your money. In addition, the 1.6 litre diesel option returns over 60mpg and attracts a measly 13% company car tax figure. It is also exempt from road tax.

Quality and Reliability:

The C-Max cabin was such a pleasant place in which to sit. The dash had a modern feel to it, and the materials used were off a very good quality. The displays for the radio/sat nav and on-board computer were quite futuristic and complemented the exterior styling. There were a few reliability issues with the last C-Max, and it remains to be seen how the new model will fare in this regard.

**Safety and Security:**

The C-Max has a maximum 5 star rating in the Euro NCAP test. Electronic stability control, traction control and side and curtain airbags come as standard. My model

also came equipped with a system which warned if a car was in a blindspot. A Thatcham-approved alarm, deadlocks and marked parts provide a decent level of security kit

Behind the Wheel:

The C-Max benefits from an elevated driving position and there are numerous alterations available to the seating and steering position. It should be possible for any driver to be comfortable behind the wheel. The rear windscreen isn't the biggest and it was very difficult to observe traffic over the right shoulder. The controls for the major pieces of equipment were logically laid out, and the buttons were not at all fiddly. My model came equipped with option voice control, which allowed me to change the interior temperature and audio options without diverting my attention from the road.

**Space and Practicality:**

The C-Max is a tall car and there was plenty of height and leg room inside the cabin. The boot is also massive and the rear seats can either be folded flat or removed completely, maximising practicality.



Equipment:



I was very much spoilt in the range topping Titanium trim, but even standard models have alloy wheels, air conditioning, heated front windscreen, Bluetooth and a digital radio. My model added a premium Sony stereo, Satellite Navigation, automatic headlights and wipers, cruise control, climate control and a keyless start. The automatic opening and closing boot was also extremely useful. The car also came with an additional party-piece: a self-park function and a rear-parking camera. Simply by pressing a button, and driving past two parked cars, the system would detect whether or not your car would fit and would then instruct you to engage reverse. It would then proceed to park the car in the space before telling you to engage the brake. I must admit I was slightly apprehensive testing it, but it really did seem to work well. Whether or not it is worth the £525 is another matter, especially as the rear parking camera made reversing on your own even easier.

About the Dealer:

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