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2018 Toyota Yaris first drive review

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THE YARIS marks Toyota's debut in the mid-size car segment in India and expectations from it are quite high. But it may lose out because it's only being offered with a petrol 1.5 litre engine. Nevertheless it does nearly everything in a fairly nice manner and may just be an alternative to the likes of the Honda City, Hyundai Verna, Maruti-Suzuki Ciaz, etc.

The Yaris is packed with features, including some seen for the first time in this segment like - all-wheel disc brakes; 7 SRS airbags; roof-mounted rear a/c vents with ambient lighting; tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS); electrically adjustable driver's seat; 7-speed automatic CVT (Constantly Variable Transmission) with paddle shifters; hill start assist and vehicle stability control; acoustic and vibration control glass; projector headlamps with LED DRLs, etc.

The Toyota Yaris is well proportioned with some nicely designed elements. But overall it's rather conservatively styled and does not have the flamboyance that many Indian consumers are known to favour. Dimensionally, it's slightly smaller than some of its rivals too. The roof-mounted AC vents are a highlight and extremely good at directing cool air to rear seat occupants. Normally, in vehicles from this or even higher segments, you get a/c vents placed low down in the back of the centre console or on the insides of the B-pillar and these do not cool as effectively as the roof-mounted ones on the Toyota Yaris. Unfortunately, tall persons will find that the headroom at the rear is limited.

The Toyota Yaris has a nice touch screen infotainment system with hand gesture controls and one particularly useful feature on our noisy roads are the acoustic and vibration control glass that helps limit the amount of noise that seeps into the cabin. Toyota has fortunately also focused on safety and is offering the Yaris with 7 SRS airbags, including driver and passenger airbags, side airbags, curtain shield airbags, as well as knee airbags, which are a first for this segment of vehicles. The Yaris has an appreciable 476 litres of boot space and the electrically adjustable driver's seat is also very useful.

The Yaris is driven by a 1.5-litre petrol engine generating 107PS and 140 Nm of torque. It's fairly responsive at lower revs, but sluggish in the mid-range and reluctant to rev and build up speed. Higher in the rev range above 4000 rpm, it also becomes fairly vocal. And it's nowhere as refined or willing as the petrol engines found in the Honda City and Hyundai Verna.

The Yaris comes with either a 6-speed manual or a 7-speed CVT (Constantly Variable Transmission) automatic gearbox with paddle shifters. The shifts are very smooth and jerk free and the paddle shifters add an element of sportiness. The manual 6-speed gearbox has a light and precise shifter and the clutch action and effort is also undemanding and driver friendly. The ride comfort is good with the Toyota Yaris



ironing out road deficiencies in an appreciable manner. Broken roads, potholes, speed bumps, etc are all tackled without the Yaris losing its composure. But the ground clearance is 152 mm, compared to the 165 mm of the Hyundai Verna and 170mm of the Maruti Ciaz.

The steering feels a little vague and slow to respond and lacks adequate feel. But what enhances the confidence level while driving are the all-wheel disc brakes that help arrest motion and speed in an appreciable manner. The Toyota Yaris also

with ABS and EBD and stops smartly.

While Toyota is still to announce the price of the Yaris, we expect it to be positioned slightly below the Maruti Ciaz and Honda City and below the pricier Hyundai Verna. Fuel efficiency as per Toyota is 17.1 kmpl for the manual and 17.8 kmpl for the CVT. With its attractively long list of features and Toyota's reputation for building reliable and well engineered products, the Toyota Yaris may just have the ammo it needs to take the battle to its opponents.

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