

On test: The Kia Carnival. It's big

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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It's big and has a bold SUV-like design with a commanding presence. The Carnival combines a new level of luxury and utility with many seating configurations. The smoothness of the ride coupled with the low fuel consumption, with the many drive modes and paddle shifts grabbed my attention. The Carnival has a powerful 2.2l turbodiesel engine and once on the highways and byways of KZN, you hardly feel that effortless glide.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

Both rugged and refined

The exterior design of the all-new Carnival follows suit with Kia's recent signature SUV style, with the strong and confident design language directly connecting it to the crisp lines found on other recent Kia debuts. Kia's modernised 'tiger nose' grille affords substantial width to the face and artfully integrates high-tech LED headlamps.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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Dramatic bonnet lines enhance the vehicle's unmistakably eye-catching character, while brawny wheel arches give a sense of volume to the body in profile. The SUV aesthetic is enhanced by the addition of a rear skid plate garnish and reflectors, as well as the standard fitment of tasteful 18- or 19-inch aluminium alloy wheels.

Innovative cabin

Within, the Carnival's sleek design elements and quality materials come together to create a refined, harmonious and

sophisticated space. The central facia stack takes on a premium image with high-gloss black surfaces, while a signature chrome garnish runs the length of the dash to create a sense of width, space and openness in the forward cabin.

In addition to the Carnival's elevated interior styling, it offers plenty of space for seven- or eight-passenger flexibility, comfort for long road trips, or short local trips. With all seats erected, the Carnival offers a useful 1,139ls of luggage space. Remove the second row and stow the third flush with the floor, and that figure increases to a massive 4,110ls.

Economy and power

Kia's brand-new 'Smartstream' 2.2 CRDi turbodiesel engine is the perfect partner for the Carnival. It's more powerful than the outgoing 2.2 CRDi yet is more efficient, boasting 148kW at 3,800r/min. The 'Smartstream' engine finds the perfect companion in Kia's 8-speed torque-converter automatic transmission, which offers smooth shifts.

Keeping you safe

The Carnival has a comprehensive list of standard Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS).

Forward collision avoidance assist, blindspot collision avoidance assist, rear cross-traffic alert, lane-keeping assist, smart cruise control, amongst others, are all there to ensure your safety whilst in the Carnival.

The around-view monitor has four cameras and provides a 360-degree view around the vehicle to assist the driver in tight parking conditions. The 12.3" touchscreen infotainment with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto is so easy to use. There is a whole plethora of luxuries that will make your drive in the Kia Carnival more exciting, viz:

- Paddle shifters
- Seven USB ports
- 19" aluminium alloy wheels
- Heated and ventilated front seats
- Electrically adjustable front seats with lumbar support
- Smart cruise control
- LED front fog lights
- Dual LED headlamps (high and low beam)
- Dual tilt and slide sunroofs
- Wireless smartphone charging
- 12.3" touchscreen infotainment with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto
- Rear LED combination lamps
- Skid plates front and rear
- Lane keeping assist
- Forward collision-avoidance assist
- The Carnival SX Limited is a limited-edition model and will be bolstered – from March 2022 – with the fully loaded

Carnival SXL, which adds:

- 12.3" TFT Supervision instrument cluster
- Bose surround sound with 12 speakers
- Blindspot view monitor

Verdict

"The Kia Carnival is here to disrupt a staid segment and proves once again what is possible when conventions are shattered," comments Gary Scott, CEO of Kia South Africa. "With its SUV-like character, Carnival delivers a combination of premium design and features, intelligent packaging, and an abundance of innovation in safety and technology at a price that packs a value punch."

Models and pricing

- Carnival 2.2 CRDi EX 8AT seven-seater - R799,995
- Carnival 2.2 CRDi EX+ 8AT eight-seater - R879,995
- Carnival 2.2 CRDi SX Limited 8AT seven-seater - R999,995
- Carnival 2.2 CRDi SXL 8AT seven-seater - R1,024,995

All Carnival models ship as standard with Kia's industry-leading unlimited kilometre, five-year warranty (inclusive of roadside assistance), as well as a six-/90,000km maintenance plan.

The latter is a comprehensive package that covers a number of components at no cost to the owner over and above a standard service plan, including (but not limited to) brake pads, discs and linings; shock absorbers, battery; clutch; cambelt; various belts; globes and fuses.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist. Contact Naresh on nmaharaj321@gmail.com

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