



Isuzu D-Max Utah Double Cab 4x4

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I KNOW it's not politically correct to 'supersize' your vehicle these days, but I prefer to go bigger rather than smaller when it comes to motoring.

I only say this because I feel more protected with lots of metal around me on my regular commute along the road to hell. I'm talking about the A14. From Monday to Friday it's not so much a road as a car park, with accidents nearly every week, huge jams during rush hour and don't even mention what happens at the first sight of snow. It's a source of misery for many who live or work anywhere in East Anglia. That's why I loved my week behind the wheel of the mighty Isuzu D-Max.

It's massive, and other drivers give you a wide berth. That's a good thing as far as I'm concerned because I really don't want to become another accident statistic on this infamous road. And should I end up in a shunt in a D-Max, the chances are I'd be better off than some. You see, the all-new Isuzu has been awarded a four-star safety rating by independent vehicle assessment organisation, Euro NCAP. The results of the recently-introduced, tougher test process mark the D-Max as one of the safest vehicles in its segment.

It received 83 percent in the 'adult occupant' category, scoring maximum points for the protection it provides in the side-barrier test, thanks to its strong, long and wide chassis. Euro NCAP also praised the front and rear head restraints for providing good defence against whiplash injuries in a rear-end collision. The Electronic Stability Programme (ESP), and front seatbelt reminder system – both standard – contributed to the D-Max's joint-class-leading score of 71 percent in the 'safety assist' category.

In the 'child occupant' category, the pick-up scored 67 percent.

This makes the Isuzu D-Max a highly appealing ownership proposition, especially in all-singing, all-dancing, double-cab, leather-clad, Utah guise. In fact it's one of the most cost effective pick-ups on the market today, with ultra-low insurance, class-leading residual value and fuel economy.

Under the bonnet, the D-Max is fitted with a completely re-engineered, 2.5-litre twin-turbo diesel lump. My demo model had a six-speed manual gearbox mated to the engine, although an automatic transmission is also available. The strong powerplant makes light work of your on-road or off-road needs.

That said, it's less than refined at motorway speeds. Unladen, its suspension makes you jiggle up and down like a buoy in the ocean and the D-Max's oil-burner always sounds very agricultural - but that's forgivable.

After all, the Isuzu's main talent is being a workhorse to help tough guys carry out tough jobs. Yes, it'll double up as family transport when it's off-duty, but tackling mud, grass, sand, snow and everything in between is what the D-Max is best at. It'll also pull a house out of the ground with its colossal 295 lb ft of torque, and with a maximum braked trailer weight of 3000 kg it'll make towing almost a pleasure.



PROS 'N' CONS

- Strong ✓
- Safe ✓
- Practical ✓
- Noisy ✓
- Ride X

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 112 mph
- 0-62 mph: 16.0 secs
- Combined mpg: 38.2 (unladen)
- Engine: 2,499 cc 4 cylinder 16 valve turbo diesel
- Max. power (bhp): 161 at 3600 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 295 at 1400-2000 rpm
- Max. towing weight (braked) 3000 kg
- CO2: 194 g/km
- Price: £20,499 + VAT on the road