

MOTORING

KIA'S top-of-the-range 'KX-4' version of the Sportage features a higher output oil-burner, alongside the most well-appointed level of specification yet seen in the Korean company's popular crossover model.

- Kia Sportage KX-4 2.0 CRDi AWD -



The 'KX-4' uses an 181bhp version of Kia's 2.0-litre CRDi turbo diesel engine, hooked up to a choice of six-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmissions and an All-Wheel Drive system.

The Sportage 'KX-4' builds on the specification of the 'KX-3 Sat Nav' by adding a Parallel Parking Assist System – complete with all-round parking sensors – a keyless smart entry system and engine stop/start button, as well as stainless steel door scuff plates.

Standard equipment also includes full leather upholstery, 18-inch alloy wheels, privacy glass, seven-inch touchscreen satellite navigation system and Xenon lights. Oh yes, and if you have a passion

for cranking up the volume, it has a seven-speaker stereo with external amplifier and subwoofer.

The 'KX-4' does the 0-60mph sprint in 9.4 seconds and, when fitted with the six-speed manual transmission as my test car was, top speed is 120mph. Not blindingly quick – but not bad for a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV).

Unlike the other Sportage trim versions – '1', '2', '3' and '3 Sat Nav' – which are also on offer with two wheel drive, the 'KX-4' is only available in All-Wheel Drive (AWD). The clever Kia monitors driving conditions and anticipates when AWD will be needed, ensuring you are always in the right drive mode for the right circumstances. The AWD system

normally delivers 100 per cent of engine torque to the front wheels. But this can be redistributed up to a maximum of 60:40 front-to-rear to enhance cornering stability or if road conditions deteriorate. For off-road driving, you can manually select lock mode, which gives a 50:50 torque split at speeds of up to 25mph.

The 'KX-4' always feels secure on the black stuff and just as competent in the rough or in icy conditions. If you use the Sportage for commuting, you'll also be pleased – motorway miles are hoovered up with ease. Some of the cabin plastics are a bit tacky, but all instruments are visible and the switchgear is rationally placed – unlike some far more costly SUVs.

The tailgate is also nice and wide for easy loading and the Sportage will seat five adults in the cabin. Additionally, the maximum towing weight (braked) is 2000 kg, so if you're into caravanning or you move in equine circles and need to haul a horsebox, it'll serve as a decent enough load-lugger.

Tim Barnes-Clay
Twitter @carwriteups
www.carwriteups.co.uk

Kia Sportage KX-4 2.0 CRDi AWD
www.lexus.co.uk

Max Speed: 120 mph
0-60 mph: 9.4 secs
Combined mpg: 46.3
Engine: 1995 cc 16 valve 4 cylinder turbo diesel
Max Power (bhp): 181 at 4000 rpm
Max Torque (lb/ft): 282 at 1800-2500kg
CO2: 158 g/km
Price: £27,195 on the road



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