

# Honda Crave



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## data

PRICE as tested	£37,255
WARRANTY	3 years / 90,000 miles
INSURANCE	--
VED	6

## performance

ENGINE	2.0-l, 4-cyl petrol, two electric motors
TRANSMISSION	eCVT
POWER (engine)	184PS @ 6,200rpm
TORQUE	175Nm @ 4,000rpm (engine); 315Nm (electric motor)
0-62MPH	9.2sec
TOP SPEED	112mph
FUEL TANK	57 litres
CO <sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS	126g/km

## dimensions

LENGTH	4,600mm
WIDTH	2,117mm
HEIGHT	1,689mm
WHEELBASE	2,662mm
LOADSPACE	497 litres



## verdict

Generally, the CR-V Hybrid feels like a solid set-of-wheels, and that's where most of its allure lies. The official 51.4mpg fuel efficiency isn't earth-shattering, but, as we've said, it's comparable with most similarly-sized diesel-driven vehicles. It'll be easier on the pocket than the standard petrol-propelled version, that's for sure.

The new CR-V builds on the talents of the outbound model, fixing some of its weaknesses to attain an accomplished outcome. It's comfortable, spacious, economical and pleasant to drive, along with being well kitted-out and reasonably priced. Significantly, prior testimony suggests it will be a reliable car, too, supported by a three-year/90,000-mile warranty.

## Tim Barnes-Clay

**D**iesel seems to be dying, and that's a shame for a lot of people. There are a lot of good diesel-driven cars out there, but the scrapyards are where government leaders would like to see them. And while most automakers are still building oil-burners, that's not the case with Honda. The Japanese firm has committed itself to an electrified future and claims that by 2025 two-thirds of its European sales could be electrified vehicles.

Honda aims to usher in a full urban EV later next year, but its first step towards this new age is a hybrid version of the CR-V. The model is in its fifth generation, and the hybrid powertrain is already housed within the Accord saloon in the United States. That means it's a proven unit, so its debut in the CR-V over this side of the pond looks like a safe bet. And for private hire operators, big consumers of Honda's sadly defunct Insight hybrid, the Japanese brand's return to the hybrid market will be welcome.

While still plainly a Honda CR-V, this up-to-the-minute model looks brawnier, with a swollen bonnet, a muscular shoulder-line and beefier wheel-arches. The car's general dimensions have barely changed, but the wheelbase has sprouted an extra 30mm, giving the SUV a more athletic posture.

There are more shiny bits, too. And while we aren't talking stacks of chrome, you'll be aware of the side-window surrounds, the bold grille, the trim between the rear lights and the sill accents.

Honda's key rivals are mainstream brands such as Toyota, Volkswagen, Ford and Kia. When making the CR-V's cabin, though, the car-maker wanted to equal upmarket marques such as Mercedes-Benz and Audi.

Its labours have only been partially effective. While fit is faultless, harvested switchgear from the Civic and the poor quality of some materials rain on the parade. The imitation wood trim doesn't help matters, either.

Room and practicality are still among the Honda's fortes, though. Its elevated ride height makes for carefree entry and exit, while even tall occupants will be comfy in the rear seats. At 497 litres, the CR-V's cargo capacity is on a par with the best in class.

The paraphernalia we take with us on journeys can make any vehicle feel cluttered, so Honda has packed the CR-V with cubbyholes, power sockets and cup-holders. We also love the folding rear seats, which fall flat instantly using levers located in the boot.

This is all well and good, but the CR-V Hybrid has some drawbacks. Firstly, the need to accommodate a battery pack means the car's boot is 64 litres smaller than the pure petrol CR-V's load area. Also, the Hybrid has five seats, compared with the petrol's optional seven-seat arrangement, though it's unlikely that you'd be able to licence a car of this size as a seven-seater.

The CR-V Hybrid EX AWD, as tested here, is 4,600mm long, 2,117mm wide and 1,689mm tall. By comparison, arch-rival, the all-new 2019 Toyota RAV4, is the same length, although at 1,855mm wide, it's narrower than the Honda, but taller than the CR-V Hybrid at 1,702mm.

Inside, a bold horizontal emphasis applied to the CR-V's fascia layout heightens the feel of airiness in the cabin. Furthermore, Honda has

improved the space in the driver and passenger foot wells by raising the lowermost portions of the dashboard.

Then there's the CR-V's factory-fitted 7in touchscreen. It's housed in all but the entry-level S model, but, alas, it falls behind competitors for intuitive use. It also has a somewhat passé Garmin navigation system. Mercifully, Apple Carplay and Android Auto are supported, so you can use Google Maps as an alternative.

The hybrid will be in dealerships from this month. Pricing will kick off from \$29,105 for the 2WD S grade and reach £37,255 for the AWD EX. Grades are the same as the petrol CR-V: S, SE, SR and EX.

As well as a bunch of safety equipment on all grades, the CR-V gets active cornering lights and smart entry and start from the SR trim level onwards. The flagship EX we drove adds a head-up display, a heated steering wheel, and a hands-free powered tailgate.

The CR-V Hybrid's powertrain is named Intelligent Multi-Mode Drive (i-MMD), and it facilitates a trio of drive settings.

All-electric can be selected in EV Drive, but only for limited amounts of time, due to the minuscule 1kWh battery bundle. Hybrid Drive utilises the clout of the 2.0-litre petrol engine, which runs at low revs to run one of the Honda's electric motors. This then produces the muscle used by the other motor for momentum. Engine Drive shuts a clutch to allow the front axle to be propelled by the petrol motor, while the transmission is a single fixed ratio transmission. Both all-wheel drive and front-wheel drive versions are offered.

So, in Hybrid Drive, the simplest way to understand how the Honda powertrain works is to imagine it being akin to a hydrogen fuel cell car – but, instead, it's using petrol to produce a charge for the electric motor.

The CR-V Hybrid favours EV Drive or Hybrid settings when it's not on the motorway. This means the engine is either not running, or it's just trickling power to the battery pack. But the best bit is that the Honda automatically sorts through its trio of modes depending on your driving - and the changes are virtually flawless.

If driven conservatively, the CR-V Hybrid is a hushed and comfortable car. The cabin is refined, and the switchgear falls easily to hand. The paddles behind the tiller enable you to change the intensity of the energy recuperation system, as well. There's also a Sport setting, which is meant to give a quicker throttle response – but its influence is minimal.

The 'green' Honda rides pleasantly and absorbs potholes well, but the heavy car does suffer from body roll in corners.

Standard across all the grades is Sensing - Honda's suite of safety features. This encompasses forward collision warning, collision mitigation braking; lane keep assist, lane departure warning, road departure mitigation, adaptive cruise control and traffic sign recognition. The SE grade adds a rear-view camera and parking sensors, while the SR and EX feature cross traffic monitoring and a blind spot warning system.

The CR-V Hybrid hasn't been crash-tested by Euro NCAP yet, but its safety package is up there with the best. Therefore, the car should get the highest five-star crash safety score.

Even though performance is not the focus of this SUV, the CR-V Hybrid does 0-62mph in 9.2 seconds with all-wheel drive. It'll do it in 8.8sec if you select the front-drive model. The maximum speed of both variants is 112mph.

The Honda CR-V Hybrid's key selling point is its inexpensive running cost because of the electrified set-up. You should anticipate around 50mpg, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 126g/km for the CR-V Hybrid EX AWD we tried.

Those numbers may not sound overly remarkable, but the CR-V Hybrid is close to the frugality of a diesel. And, significantly, urban mpg is especially decent, so the Honda is good for city motoring. Indeed, of all the non-plug-in hybrids, the CR-V is one of the better cars.