

2023 hyundai kona electric ultimate

The Hyundai Kona is a cracking SUV with much to like. The Hyundai's in-car tech is easy, with simple displays and good safety equipment that's not intrusive. The car isn't that exciting to drive, but it's good for families.

I've had very few issues with the Auto Express 2023 Car of the Year. In fact I've struggled to think of things I don't like about it. For the record, contenders included the alert sounds, bings and bongs that might annoy a few drivers, but they only come with overly aggressive driving or speeding. Also, as the car prepares to return to Hyundai, the predicted range still only reads 245 miles after a full charge.

That is some way short of the 319 WLTP figure Hyundai quotes. But the Kona is quite conservative in its estimate, plus I have only been running the car from January to April, so I would expect the figure to be lower now than in the summer. Mind you, the weather doesn't seem to have had a big affect on the range on our Volkswagen ID.3.

Anyway you can still do a fair bit with 245 miles of range, as I discovered on a recent weekend away in Lincolnshire visiting family with my wife and grandchildren Zack and Hope. Their safe, but very large ISOFIX car seats take up much of the rear bench, so there was no possibility of bringing either of my grown-up sons along as well.

Driving any kind of distance with little ones requires planning and packing. Luckily, with 466 litres of boot space, the Kona took bags, cases, coats and a buggy with ease. I did remember to take the charge cable out from the underfloor space (where I usually keep it) before packing, just in case it was required. We also had plenty of room for in-car snacks and drinks in the deep door bins and cubbies.

Our usual route from South London to North Lincolnshire is around 200 miles, with a fair bit of motorway. Based on my current average return of 3.2kWh, that should have been possible in one hit with careful driving. But I was playing it safe and expected to stop once at services to give the children a break and add a few miles of charge to the Kona.

Even better, when we got back into the car, I set the nav for our destination and it took us a direct route on back roads, well away from motorways. Rather than my usual practice of getting to the nearest "fast" road, only to be disappointed by how slowly it actually allows me to drive, we carried on unhindered at a constant 50 or 60mph, which got us to our destination with 124 miles of range left and a healthy 3.9kWh readout for the last 110 miles of our trip.

Was it quick? No, but it was a shorter distance and much more relaxing, with music from the excellent Bose system and crystal-clear directions on both the main infotainment screen and the head-up display. We even

opened the sunroof when we got stuck behind some farm traffic. I had to switch to Sport mode, but I could safely and surprisingly quickly overtake it, much to the enjoyment of my passengers.

Arriving at our family stopover with plenty of charge gave us the option to use the car without having to find charge points. I was also able to plug in and top it up using my father-in-law's outside plug.

Much of that power would have been generated from his solar panels, which was nice for me and generous of him. However, I was a bit disappointed by the charge speed. Topping up overnight, plus for a chunk of the next day, only nudged the range towards 200 miles - not enough to get home in one go. That resulted in a one hour and 15 minute stop at Cambridge services, where we had a snack and let the children run about while topping up at a Gridserve fast charger. Adding 183 miles of range (from 28 to 95 per cent) cost ?38.87, based on 79p per kWh.

Again, we arrived at our destination with well over 100 miles of range and enough to easily run the car for a week, based on regular family usage. The Kona once again proved why it won our Car of the Year award and will be missed by me and my family. It was easy, safe, comfortable and trustworthy. I'd happily tackle much longer journeys in the Hyundai, safe in the knowledge that if I take my time, plan ahead and trust the in-car readouts, it's far more fun than dashing to the nearest motorway traffic jam.

Unsurprisingly, our 2023 Car of the Year, the Hyundai Kona Electric, made a flying start on the Auto Express fleet. And it recently won another road test, beating the Honda e:Ny1 (on name alone, I reckon).

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