

**QUICK FACTS**

Price from Rs 8.7 lakh  
(ex-showroom, Delhi)  
On sale Now



# Scala-able

The Renault Scala gets a capable automatic transmission.

**FIRST VERDICT**

Auto transmission adds to the Scala's city-friendly nature.



**SO GOOD**

- Responsive and quick
- Spacious interiors

**NO GOOD**

- Rear seat thigh support
- Engine noisy when revved

AN AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION, fuel efficiency and responsiveness are usually strange bedfellows, but surprisingly that's not the case with the new Renault Scala automatic. It is so mostly because of the new high-tech CVT automatic gearbox used on this car. Renault's partner company Nissan is one of the few carmakers that continues to pursue Continuously Variable Transmission technology, and this investment is now beginning to bear fruit. The X-tronic CVT featured in this car comes with a steel belt for greater durability and less of the rubberband effect that CVTs are usually associated with. Initial impressions are good. The engine is quite responsive and the gearbox feels really well suited to urban stop-start driving. This complements the light steering quite

nicely, making the Scala effortless to drive in traffic.

It is happy to amble around at city speeds, the gearbox keeping the engine in the 1000-1500rpm band if you only use part throttle. Flat out, the Scala auto is quick – 0-100kph takes 12.1sec, which makes it faster than the more powerful Honda City auto. Its in-gear times are quicker than the Honda as well. Helping the Scala is its light kerb weight – it tips the scales at just 1040kg – and the fact that the CVT gearbox keeps the engine spinning in the meat of its powerband when you put your foot down.

That said, the Scala's engine is not one that encourages you to push hard. The motor sounds strained and noisy when you really extend it.

Where the CVT really pays you back is with efficiency. When you aren't in a hurry, it keeps engine revs down in the more efficient part of the powerband, and every

time you lift off the throttle the engine gets 'disconnected' from the gearbox, reducing mechanical drag. Renault claims that the Scala auto delivers an ARAI-tested 17.97kpl, which is a shade better than the Ford Fiesta's dual-clutch automatic variant, which gives 16.97kpl (ARAI-tested).

Otherwise, the Scala automatic is very similar to the manual gearbox-equipped version. You get plenty of space on the inside, a comfortable but slightly bouncy ride and a massive boot. However, the design of the interiors is a bit too similar to that of the Nissan Sunny, and the Scala automatic isn't really a car that you can enjoy driving fast. Renault is offering this gearbox in mid-level RxL and top-end RxZ trim only. At an estimated Rs 8.7 lakh for the RxL there really isn't a car that combines the same practicality, space and ease of driving as this one.

**NIKHIL BHATIA**

RENAULT SCALA RXZ CVT			
Price	Rs 8.7 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)*		
L/W/Height	4425/1695/1505mm		
Wheelbase	2600mm		
Engine	Four cyls, 1498cc, petrol		
Power	97bhp at 5600rpm		
Torque	13.6kgm at 4000rpm		
Transmission	CVT		
Front suspension	Independent, MacPherson struts		
Rear suspension	Non-independent, torsion beam		
Brakes(f/r)	Discs/drums		
Tyre size	185/65 R15		
Kerb weight	1040kg		
<b>Acceleration (from rest)</b>			
Kph	(sec)	Kph	(sec)
20	1.51	100	12.11
40	3.28	120	17.13
60	5.48	140	25.28
80	8.33	160	43.65
<b>In-gear acceleration</b>			
20-80 kph (in kickdown)		6.72s	
40-100kph (in kickdown)		9.17s	

\*ESTIMATED



Dashboard identical to manual. Plenty of space inside.



Scala gets CVT automatic.



Spacious but lacks support.

PHOTOGRAPHY RAJEEV GAIKWAD