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DRIVE AT EASE

Renault Scala

Wondering what Renault was thinking launching a petrol automatic Scala – we did too, so we test drove the new variant to find out whether it's a practical buy...



Six months ago, when Renault launched the Nissan Sunny look-a-like, Scala many wrote off the French manufacturer's chances in India for taking the safe and boring route. Not to mention, this is the same formula Volkswagen-Skoda has adopted, which has yielded little success for them. Nevertheless, the skeptics were left red faced as Scala received a warm welcome in the market. Taking heart from that, the company seems to be taking another leap of blind faith with the recently launched automatic variant that runs on petrol. If history is anything to go by, petrol automatic sedans have never fared well. In fact, even the mighty Honda City had a tough time selling the idea, so we took the Scala automatic X-tronic CVT for a spin to find out how it tackles rush hour traffic and whether it drinks petrol like a fish.

Control that makes the gearbox ratios ideal for city conditions. The gearbox's belt is made of steel, which increases its durability. Step on the pedal and the sedan smoothly accelerates without any noise, but if you push the car hard, the engine starts to grumble. Now all that is fine but the buck stops at "Boss mileage kya hai". Good news is that Renault has done their homework as the Scala returns a class leading 17.97kmpl. This is another factor that could work in their favour. The trick to get high fuel efficiency is to go easy on the gas pedal and meander at a low rpm. This way, the engine doesn't consume too much power. Also, this gearbox generates 30 percent less friction while shifting gears and is 10 percent smaller and lighter than other CVTs.

LOOKS AND COMFORT
The Scala's edgy design has helped Renault sell over 3000 units ever since its launch. Touted as a premium option compared to the Sunny, the hexagon grille certainly raises eyebrows and the rear comes with a chrome strip, giving it a distinguished look.

VERDICT
Renault has planned and delivered an automatic petrol sedan ideal for India. It's spacious enough to let the family travel in comfort and the huge boot ensures you stuff loads of luggage for your weekend getaway. But it is the class leading fuel efficiency that will bring smiles on many potential buyers' faces. In terms of ride quality, the Scala easily absorbs bumps and sails over potholes. The shock dampeners are on the softer side, so expect body roll while taking sharp corners. Driveability is a breeze due to the smooth gearbox and ratios perfect for city traffic. The steering wheel is light and lets you maneuver out of jam packed areas with ease, but it's not as crisp and responsive like Ford and Volkswagen. Clearly though, here's a well-thought car for sensible buyers.

PERFORMANCE
The 1.5-litre petrol heart is brilliant on slow speed, which makes it a pleasure to drive during heavy traffic. This refined engine comes with Valve Timing



Car Specs
RENAULT SCALA

Price ₹ 9.89 lakh
Displacement 1498 cc
Max output 101PS@5600
Max. Torque 134 Nm@4000

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