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Car tested: 2012 Ford Fiesta Petrol Automatic Titanium+

Price OTR Mumbai: Rs. 11,44,327/-

When a global automotive giant gets an automatic variant in one of its most fun to drive cars, what do you really expect? You expect the convenience of an automatic gearbox which certainly reduces the stress of driving, especially in the over crowded metro cities. In the past, automatics have not been favorites when it comes to fuel efficiency and one does expect a drop in the mileage as compared to the manual counterpart and for those who mimic Sebastian Vettel in the drivers seat, an automatic transmission does takes away the fun of driving. Well, things seem to have changed a bit. Ford has introduced the latest 6 Speed, Dual clutch gearbox in the all new Fiesta, besides being the segment first dual clutch gearbox, it promises to deliver similar fuel efficiency to the manual variant and also preserves the fun of driving, which is the basic DNA of the Fiesta. We take the new Fiesta AT for a spin around Goa and find out!



Ford has introduced a new colour in the Fiesta range, Paprika Red, and it looks stunning. The pictures unfortunately don't do justice to it and you have to see it on ground to appreciate it. This new colour will be available across all Fiesta variants.



Besides the Automatic transmission, the Fiesta gets all new black leather upholstery, which not only looks sporty but is extremely comfortable too.



Mated to this gearbox is the same TiVCT petrol engine with the same power output of 110 Bhp and 140 NM torque. The 6 speed dual clutch gearbox is a segment first. Famous dual clutch gearboxes in the business are the DSG gearboxes, which are only available in D segment cars, such as the Skoda Laura, VW Jetta, Skoda Superb, VW Passat etc. Coming back to the 'C' segment, there is no competition with respect to this gearbox as the entire competition uses the single clutch automatic transmission which have a considerable lag between shifts. Few cars which provide an Automatic Transmission are the VW Vento, Maruti SX4, Hyundai Verna and the soon to be launched Skoda Rapid.



The only company which offers an automatic in diesel guise is the Hyundai Verna, which is a 4 Speed transmission. Ford has launched the Fiesta Automatic in the petrol variant for now and have not ruled out a Diesel automatic in the future. In European countries, its the petrol automatic which brings in the volumes for a company

and setting up a manufacturing facility for a diesel is not profitable if it is country specific. The rising fuel prices have been a concern not only for consumers but for manufacturers too. The Fiesta's AT (code DPS6) is touted to deliver almost the same fuel efficiency as the manual variant and is built to last. Ford claims that it can run absolutely untouched for 10 years and 2,40,000 km. It works on the 'Dry Clutch' principle and needs absolutely no service or maintenance. There is a separate computer which controls the transmission and the ECU and transmission computer coordinate to get the best drive out of any given situation. In extreme conditions, which you are highly unlikely to experience, the transmission computer will warn you if the gearbox temperatures soar beyond limit and requires you to shut the car and cool it down.



Getting behind the wheel, there are 2 drive modes, 'D' and 'L' (besides the reverse obviously). The first clutch controls odd gears such as 1,3,5 and the second clutch controls even gears such as 2,4,6 and Reverse. In the 'D' mode, at low speeds there is absolutely no lag, the car shifts upward with confidence and you can also feed the throttle in gently to get the car to upshift at a lower RPM. The amount of pressure on the accelerator will decide how the car behaves, floor it completely and the car hits the rev limiter and zooms ahead. Its the same story at high speeds too. At moderate speeds, if you want to overtake on the highway, there is a slight lag before the car pulls ahead. This lag is attributed to the fact that the car has to go down a couple of gears to give you the ideal exit out of the situation and petrol engines have a very poor low end torque (as compared to diesels) which leads to this slight lag, mind you, it would take more time to shift down in a manual transmission and this is where the 'L' mode comes into play.



Most Automatics have a 'S' mode, sports mode as most like to call it, however Ford calls it 'L' mode. You can equate it to sports mode if you like, but in this mode the car goes into the lowest possible gear for that given speed, giving you maximum torque available at that point. This comes handy while overtaking, just slot the car into 'L' and you will be past in a jiffy. There are no paddles or tiptronic option to shift manually but i didn't really miss it as i was having a good time in 'D' mode itself.



There was a twisty ghat section en route the drive and the Fiesta was a pleasure to drive around these tight curves. IT handles handles beautifully and the AT proved to be more fun to drive than the manual one. At the end of it i had a big smile on my face and so did most of my compatriots on the drive.



Ford has added two more small features along with the gearbox, Hill assist and Hill hold. Hill assist can be turned on with the help of a small button on the gear knob, as shown, and it works by giving you engine braking by increasing the RPM and maintaining speed while going down a steep slope.



I tried it myself and it works very well, you have to dab the brake pedal to get it working and it gives you more control of the car in downhill situations.

Hill hold is another useful feature and will be greatly appreciated by the ladies, elderly and those who find themselves rolling backwards while driving up a hill in start stop situations. It extremely simple to use too, all you have to do is press the brake pedal and release it. The car will hold its position for exactly 2.5 seconds before rolling back, giving you ample time to get onto the gas pedal and accelerate away. Getting into the mechanics,

once you are on the brakes, its the ABS which remains engaged and prevents the car from going backwards. I spent a lot of time with the Ford Team from Shanghai who had developed this gearbox and it was a really interesting to know what really goes through before a company comes out with such a competent product.



Without any doubt, the new Powershift gearbox (DPS6) is the best in the segment. Having driven the Fiesta in the city, highway and around the twisties, it certainly retains the fun to drive aspect of the car and also proves to be more enjoyable than its manual counterpart. Cruise control works much better with the automatic variant and even on steep gradient changes, the gearbox works efficiently to keep the speed constant. Fuel efficiency remains more or less unchanged and the stress free driving is a pleasure. You can even brush aside the maintenance worries as the gearbox is built to last a lifetime. It is expected to hit the road in the early part of next year. If and if only, Ford had a diesel option with the automatic, it would be to die for.



Whats Cool

- * Flawless Automatic
- * Hill Hold
- * Hill Assist
- * Zero maintenance on gearbox

Whats Not So Cool

- * Only offered in petrol variant
- * No tiptronic or paddles

You can check out the in depth review of the [new Ford Fiesta here](#).

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