

Published based on [2011 Nissan LEAF - First Impressions](#)

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[caption id="attachment_39521" align="aligncenter" width="500" caption="2011 Nissan Leaf - Click above for high resolution picture gallery"]



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Electric technology is still distant when it comes to India. Cost of manufacturing as well as setting up charging stations will be a humungous task. When we talk about alternative fuel cars, broadly speaking there are the hybrids, hydrogen fuel cell cars and the completely electric cars. Hybrid technology is already here, Toyota Prius & Honda Civic Hybrid are a few examples of the same. Fuel cell cars are still a long way ahead, the Honda Fcx Clarity is one successful example and courtesy of infrastructure set up Mr. Terminator in California state, the Clarity is doing well in the States but critics are still not convinced about hydrogen fuel cell technology and some even call it dangerous. Coming to the complete electric vehicles, the Reva is here in India and the company has been taken over by Mahindra's off late.



Recent development has been in the direction of Lithium ion technology. Nissan has spend millions of dollars into research and have come out with best electric car in the global market last year, the Nissan LEAF. The LEAF stands for '*Leading, Environmentally friendly, Affordable, Family car*'. The LEAF has already won the 2011 car of the year award and is already on sale in Japan, Europe and North America.



Conservation of energy is absolutely essential and thus an Aerodynamic body reduces drag.



No exhaust pipe. (Zero Emissions). The regular electricals of the car like the tail lamps, horn etc are powered by a separate 12 V battery. There are 48 lithium-ion battery modules with four battery cells inside each module which fit snugly beneath the floor of the car, these are used to power the motor. The LEAF also has regenerative braking, which means that by applying the brake or lifting off the accelerator, the electric motor acts as a generator, converting energy that would otherwise be wasted into battery energy.



The LEAF is powered by a light weight and small 80 kW (108 Bhp) AC Electric motor which can run for 175 km per charge according to the European driving cycle and has a torque of 280 Nm. The electric motor does not idle but rotates only when the vehicle is moving. It is a front wheel drive and can be charged overnight as well as can be Power Charged to 80 percent battery in 30 mins, with the help of a special charger provided with the car. Charging bay is placed on the hood as shown in the picture.



Solar Panel is optional. Notice the aerodynamically shaped antenna.



Futuristic modern interiors.



Driving range depends on several factors, including external temperature, air-conditioning usage, battery age and driving style. An onboard screen shows key battery data, including maximum driving range, power output and regenerated electricity.



An eco-indicator on the meter displays the status of electricity consumption, giving real-time feedback on the driver's performance. More trees on the display indicates a better performance by the driver.



Large Boot. The bag contains the charging kit.



Getting behind the wheel, i drove for 2 laps of the designated course which had all the aspects worthy of testing such as a small straight, sharp corners to test the handing of the vehicle & i was hugely impressed. Though 2 laps are not worthy of writing a test drive report, it was still enough to know what the LEAF is all about. There are 2 drive modes, the Drive and Economy mode. The display tells you the distance the car will go on the current charge. In the D mode, acceleration is great and the LEAF can do 0 - 100 kmph in about 11.9 seconds, which is phenomenal for a complete electric car. There is barely any sound except the humm of the motor. Even around the twisties, the LEAF can handles well. Check out the detailed video which also explains a few features of the LEAF.

[youtube:http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_xVyMH4guk 540 375]

Standard equipment includes air conditioning, satellite navigation, airbags, ABS, Brake Assist, Vehicle Dynamic Control as standard, along with a rear-view parking camera. Optional extra is a solar panel integrated into the rear spoiler which can harvest energy from the sun to power accessories. Nissan offers a 5 year warranty on the electric motor and batteries and 3 years for other parts. The LEAF is, by far, the greenest mode of transport on 4 wheels. We hope it will eventually make it to India and since 80% of the worlds populations drives less than 100 km a day, the LEAF could very well fit into the complete family car role.

Nissan is showcasing the GT-R & LEAF along with the cars from the Indian lineup at the Auto Expo 2012. They had organized a small preview for select media in Noida.

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