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Volkswagen Polo 1.6 Test Drive Review

[caption id="attachment_30734" align="aligncenter" width="500" caption="Volkswagen Polo 1.6 - Click above for high resolution picture gallery"]



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Car tested: 2011 Volkswagen Polo 1.6 Highline

Price OTR Mumbai: Rs. 7,10,660/-

Volkswagen offers the Polo with three very different engines in India. Although not tarmac scorching, the motors in the Polo do a good job offering a decent mix of performance and mileage. However the Polo 1.6 is slightly different. It is the car for the enthusiast and boasts of the magic 100bhp figure on its spec sheet. Besides the engine, the **Volkswagen Polo 1.6** is exactly the same as its 1.2 sibling, there is no difference whatsoever. We have already tested the Polo Petrol (review [here](#)) and Polo Diesel (review [here](#)), so we will keep this review limited to the performance of the Polo 1.6.

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The interiors are exactly the same as other Polos. Fantastic build quality along with classic instrumentation are highlights of the Polo's interiors.

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The only differentiating factor between the Polo 1.2 and the Polo 1.6 is the badging on the tail gate.

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The Volkswagen Polo 1.6 is powered by a 1598cc, 4-cylinder, petrol engine which also does duty on the Vento. The in-line motor produces 105 PS at 5250 RPM and 153 Nm of torque at 3750 RPM. Torque figures are right between the 1.2 petrol and 1.2 diesel motors which produce 110 Nm and 180 Nm respectively.

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Unlike its siblings (which do not revv past the 3000 RPM mark in neutral), the Polo 1.6 freely revvs all the way to 6300 RPM, but only when in neutral.

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Start the engine of the Polo and the 1600cc instantly comes to life. NVH levels are very low and you can hardly feel the car is idling. Getting in to gear is very effortless thanks to the light clutch and smooth gearbox. The electric hydraulic power assist steering (the diesel is all electronic), makes it a breeze to park the Polo even in the smallest of spots. The low end response from the engine is decent and you never feel the lack of grunt even in city driving. However, you can't drive off from second gear and the car just stalls if you try. Shift around 3000 RPM and you will make decent progress. But remember this is a 1.6 liter and you wouldn't buy one just to cruise around town, so lets get to the highways and open roads.

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The Polo is q-u-i-c-k and how! Mash the throttle in any gear and the car makes instant progress, rushing towards the redline. The NVH levels all of a sudden go for a toss and the sporty growl from the engine is instantly vocal. The tyres are really inadequate for the car and keep spinning in glee as you unleash all the horses. Volkswagen claims the 0 - 100 kmph dash is done in in 11.1 seconds which is very quick, making it the fastest hatchback on our roads today. The Polo 1.6 will hit a top whack of 180 kmph with ease and feels quite stable at three digit speeds. However the 1.6 motor only revvs till 5900 RPM, after which the computer just cuts off further acceleration inputs. This is quite disappointing as hot hatches should revv atleast to 6500 RPM if not 7000 RPM.

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The Polo is slightly heavier than its 1200cc, 3-cylinder petrol sibling, but it does not show. Brakes are very sharp as well and the ABS system is perfectly calibrated. Handling is razor sharp and the car goes exactly where you point the steering. But again, the Apollo Acelere feel undertyred and give up way before the chassis does. Volkswagen should have slapped on wider rubber on the car, considering it has been positioned towards enthusiasts, who rarely care about fuel efficiency. Talking about fuel efficiency, the Polo 1.6 returns a decent 11 kmpl under mixed driving condition. Expect 10 kmpl in the city and 12 kmpl on the highways.

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Look closely. Yes its the Maruti Suzuki Swift which has its eyes set on the Volkswagen Polo 1.6.

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Traffic light starts are where both the cars excel. The Swift has been known for its performance in both petrol and diesel guise. The 1.3L G13B and the 1.2L K12M which have both done duty in the petrol Swift are quick. The latter doing the job in the Swift after the stricter emission BS4 emission norms kicked in. But how does the Polo perform vis-a-vis the segment leader? Mind you, we are only talking performance.

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The Volkswagen Polo 1.6 is the faster car of the two, period. Any number of drag races you do, the Polo will beat the Swift (our test car used the G13B motor with a free flow exhaust. We don't believe the K12M would have shown any different results in outright performance) hands down. Not that the Swift is slow by any standards, but the Polo 1.6 is quick, very quick indeed. The Polo 1.6 is not tall geared like the Swift which helps it build up revvs very quickly. Even on paper the Polo is the faster machine, having more power and torque and weighing almost the same as the Swift.

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The Polo 1.6 is Rs. 18,000 costlier than the Polo 1.2, which is priced at Rs. 6.93 lakhs (on-road, Mumbai). At this price point, the car is tremendous value. Even after paying the extra excise duty applicable to big cars (1600cc engine), VW has been able to price the Polo 1.6 competitively. If you care about fuel efficiency you would buy the Polo 1.2 . Other than that, there is no reason whatsoever for not paying those extra 20 grands and getting the

faster Polo 1.6, which also happens to be the fastest hatchback in the country.

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