

Mazda CX-3 is a strong newcomer

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

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The nippy new Mazda CX-3 is, in many ways, a slightly more muscular Mazda CX-2 and other than it being powered by a 2-litre engine rather than the 1.5 that drives the CX-2, there is lots of common ground between the two.



Interior styling

The interior styling of the two variants is very similar – with the same infotainment screen and stitched facia decking and other bits of pieces, although the CX-3 exudes a bit more sporty zest which is also particularly noticeable on the exterior. The car's wanna-play Kodo-inspired spirit is emphasised by attractive body lines, curves, indentations, accented wheel arches and shapely grille.

The CX-3 moves into the highly competitive light-crossover market with a slightly different approach with a spirit and character leaning more towards slick urban dweller, rather than the pretend rough-and-tough air which characterises many of the latest cross-overs.

In fact, the CX-3 is really a hatchback with a slightly altered image and it fits like a well-tailored suit. This is underlined by its willingness (and ability) to play. The steering is pleasingly balanced and sensitive for urban squeezes, yet confidence-inspiringly solid when the whip is out.



Keen to trot

Although no scorcher, the CX-3 feels keen to trot, thanks to the 115k/w and the 204Nm produced by the bigger mill up front (which is the same engine in all of the five variants in the CX-3 range). It is linked to a slick six-speed auto transmission which delivers smooth, sharp cog-swopping, even when the whip is out. The range comprises three variants with auto transmission and two with manual boxes.

The new Mazda holds the road surprisingly well with hardly any body lean even when being pushed fairly hard through the twisties. The brakes are good and well-supported by ABS and EBD with brake assist. The suspension does a fine job and the CX-3 feels confident and well-planted on tar and gravel and it takes really badly corrugated patches to make it thump and bump.



On-board and exterior fancies

On-board and exterior fancies include a seven-speaker BOSE sound system, head-up speed display, leather and cloth seat combination, LED headlights, Integrated navigation, sunroof, rear camera 10-inch alloy wheels and even privacy glass for the rear and side back windows.

There is much to like and enjoy about this impressive Mazda although there are a few niggles. The interior design and sloping roof does make for tight knee room and restricted head-space for rear-seat passengers; the loading bay is not exactly cavernous and the price tag of this model of R325,900 is on the steep side (although the entry-level CX-3 costs only R254,900). All models are backed by a three-year unlimited factory warranty, three-year roadside assistance and a three-year service plan.

The CX-3 enters the battle for the consumer wallet shoulder to shoulder with the Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Suzuki Vitara, Ford EcoSport, Honda HR-V, Peugeot 2008 and Renault Captur.

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