



Which? Car review

TOYOTA Toyota Yaris (1999-2005)

ON SALE: **Apr 1999** CLASS: **Superminis**NEW PRICE: - USED PRICE: **From £750**

PERFORMANCE:



RIDE COMFORT:



HANDLING:



TOTAL SCORE:

Recommended models
in the range

BOOT & STORAGE:



SAFETY:



RELIABILITY:



- ✓ Good reliability and build quality.
- ✓ Good design and user-friendly interior layout.
- ✓ Manoeuvrability and ease of use around town.
- ✗ Weedy 1.0-litre petrol engine.
- ✗ Small boot and cramped rear seats.
- ✗ Hard ride, especially over poor road surfaces.



WHICH? CAR TOP CHOICE MODEL

1.4 D-4D CDX 5dr

New price: -

Used price: **£1,595**

FASTEST MODEL

1.5 VVT-i T Sport 5dr

New price: -

Used price: **£1,650**0-62mph: **9.0 secs**

MOST EFFICIENT MODEL

1.4 D-4D GS 3dr

New price: -

Used price: **£1,325**Combined fuel economy: **67.3 mpg**

CHEAPEST MODEL TO BUY NEW

-

New price: -

CHEAPEST MODEL TO BUY USED

1.0 16v VVTi GS 3dr Free-TronicUsed price: **£750**

CHEAPEST MODEL TO RUN (NEW)

-

New price: -

Running costs: -

(3 YEARS/36,000 MILES)

Overview

The Toyota Yaris is a handy little car that's hard to beat for city use. It's a decent drive and, providing you choose the right engine option, it can be pretty swift. There are 1.0, 1.3 and 1.5-litre petrol engines or the 1.4 D-4D diesel, and the option of three- or five-door body styles. There's also the oddball Yaris Verso estate-cum-mini-MPV (reviewed separately).

The Yaris remains a popular secondhand choice, and it's not super-cheap - because it has a good reputation for reliability, low running costs and general ease of ownership.

The first-generation Yaris is an attractive-looking small car, which really moved the game on in terms of supermini quality. The nicely laid-out and simple-to-use cabin offers plenty of comfort and space up front, although rear-seat passengers aren't so well catered for and the boot is small. Overall safety levels are fair; it scored four out of five in the Euro NCAP crash tests, a good result for its time.



OWNER'S VIEW

My Yaris has done a lot of miles and has been reliable and cheap to run. It has been one of the best cars I've ever owned.



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On the road

The suspension is rather harsh, but in general the Yaris is a decent drive. The 1.0-litre petrol version is underpowered and overtaking takes a long wind-up and gritted teeth. The 1.4-litre diesel, however, has plenty of urge and can deliver some excellent performance. Visibility is good, although the dipped headlights are rather dim. In the main, the interior is sensibly laid-out, and simple to get used to.

Performance

★★★

The small 1.0-litre engine is underpowered and performance is rather sluggish. Having said that, it runs smoothly with little vibration, although its gearing is too long and you'll find you need to change down for the slightest uphill slope when in top gear. The optional automatic gearbox is also very rough — it changes up too late, allowing the engine to rev too much.

In contrast, the 1.4-litre diesel engine has plenty of power and can deliver excellent performance and swift overtaking. The unit is civilised and smooth too, although it's still obviously a diesel to the ears. It works well with the five-speed manual gearbox and gear shifts are easy and precise, although they can feel a bit notchy if you perform them too quickly.

Other Yaris engine options included a lively 1.3-litre petrol engine and, in the T-Sport, a 103bhp 1.5-litre.

Model tested	Acceleration (37-62mph)	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	8.4 secs	★★★★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	11.4 secs	★

Ride comfort

★★★

The suspension is too stiff for a small car like this - most bumps are dealt with well, but potholes, ruts and drain covers can rattle your fillings. Straight-line stability is good at all speeds, but if you have to swerve suddenly to avoid an obstacle the rear end can break away, and there's no electronic stability programme (ESP) to help keep you out of trouble.

Model tested	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	★★★★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	★★

How we test

Performance



We use the sophisticated electronic timing equipment to record standing-start and in-gear acceleration, and repeat each test several times.

Ride comfort



Ride comfort is assessed by our laboratory experts who have driven hundreds of thousands of miles in a myriad of different models.



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On the road continued...

Handling

★★★★★

If you throw it hard into a corner the Yaris tends to understeer, which is the safer option, but if you lift off the accelerator in the middle of a corner the back of the car can begin to slide, which can be difficult for inexperienced drivers to cope with. The steering is light and direct and gives the driver good feedback. The small turning circle, coupled with the car's small dimensions, make it a doddle to manoeuvre in tight spaces.

Model tested

diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)

Rating

★★★★★

petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)

★★★

Brakes

★★★★★

The 1.4 diesel's brakes are acceptable and even when used heavily there's no brake fade. The ABS and brake-force distribution help bring the Yaris to a halt safely and in the minimum distance.

The 1.0 petrol auto's brakes have to work harder due to the lack of engine braking - they tend to suffer more than a manual car's brakes during heavy driving.

Model tested

diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)

Braking distance (62-0mph)

42.0m

Rating

★★★

petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)

46.1m

★★★

Refinement and noise

★★★★★

At up to around 80mph, noise levels are acceptable and engine noise, although always present, is only annoying at high revs.

Model tested

diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)

Cruising noise

71dB

Rating

★★★

petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)

71dB

★★★

How we test

Handling



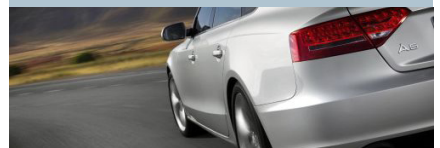
On-the-limit handling is explored well away from public roads to ensure a fair test. Our obstacle avoidance test is one of the harshest tests in the industry..

Brakes



The Which? Car braking test measures stopping distance from 62-0mph and is repeated ten times in quick succession to highlight any brake fade issues.

Refinement and noise



The Which? Car experts use a decibel meter to record interior sound levels at common UK motorway speeds, and combine this with subjective assessments to arrive at an overall score.



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On the road continued...

Cabin and controls

★★★★★

The main controls are located on two steering column stalks. The driver's seat and steering column are both height-adjustable to suit individual requirements, heating and ventilation controls are sensibly located and the optional satellite-navigation system is very easy to use.

There are loads of handy places located around the car for storing small items, and even a dual-compartment glove box. However, we do have some gripes: the digital instruments are rather unclear and not easy to read from the driver's seat; the wing mirrors and window switches are not illuminated, which makes them hard to find at night; plus, the front seatbelt catches are oddly positioned, which makes them hard for shorter people to reach.

Model tested	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	★★★★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	★★★★★

Visibility and parking

★★★★★

The driver gets a good view down the road thanks to a slightly elevated seating position. The large windows and narrow door pillars provide good all-round visibility and it's easy to guess where the front and rear of the car is when parking. However, the dipped beam range on the headlights is rather short, which restricts visibility at night.

Model tested	Turning circle	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	10.4m	★★★★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	10.4m	★★★★★

How we test

Cabin and controls



We penalise cars with difficult controls, and we look for things like backlit light switches and easy-to-use heating and ventilation adjustments.

Visibility and parking



Visibility is a major issue for motorists today, so each car gets a 360-degree swivel view test to reproduce the driver's eye view and any obscured areas.



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Comfort and practicality

Things are fine in the front of the Yaris, with comfortable seats and plenty of room, but rear-seat passengers get a raw deal as space is limited, the seats are uncomfortable and, with the three-door version, it's awkward to get in and out.

The boot is too small, though the ability to trade passenger and luggage space by sliding the rear seat forward or back on its base is a nice touch.

Getting in and out

★★★

In the three-door, the wide-opening doors make getting in and out of the front easy, but access to the rear is more awkward. By contrast, getting in and out of the front and back is fine in the five-door versions, thanks to the wide-opening doors.

There's plenty of room in the front and the driver's seat slides back to comfortably accommodate those up to 1.85m (6'1") tall. Rear-seat passengers aren't so well catered for, however, and anyone over 1.7m (5'7") will find it rather cramped.

Model tested	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	★★★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	★★★

Seat space and comfort

★★★

The driver's seat is height-adjustable and the front seats are very comfortable, but they could do with more side bolstering to hold you firmly when cornering. Things are not so great in the back, where the unsupportive seats offer passengers a rough deal.

Model tested	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	★★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	★★

How we test

Getting in and out



We take measurements all around the driver and passenger's door apertures and note the height of the seat, door sills and step down onto the car floor. The best cars don't require too much bending or stretching to get in and out.

Seat space and comfort



We assess seat comfort subjectively, using our road testers' expert knowledge and experience from thousands of different cars. And we measure the head-, leg- and elbowroom on offer in every seat, to see how well the car caters for people of all shapes and sizes.



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Comfort and practicality continued...

Boot and storage

★★★★

The Yaris's boot can hold only 205 litres, but you can make the most of it thanks to its practical shape. If you fold the rear seats forward, the volume expands to 465 litres or, alternatively, you can also slide the whole rear seat forward or backwards on its base by 15cm, should you need more room for luggage or passengers.

The boot opening is large but the sill is quite high, which makes loading and unloading heavy objects a bit of a pain. It's also rather too easy to crack your head on the open tailgate as you struggle with your luggage.

Model tested	Boot space (seats up/down)	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	200 litres / litres	★★★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	200 litres / litres	★★★★

Heating and ventilation

★★★★

The Yaris comes with a reasonable heater that's particularly good for front-seat passengers, and models with air conditioning fitted keep things comfortable on hot days.

Model tested	Rating
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	★★
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	★★★★

How we test

Boot and storage



Carmakers give official stats for boot space, but our tests are more realistic. We load the boot up with measuring blocks only as far as the rear window line, so that luggage is well secured and won't obscure rear visibility. We repeat the test with the rear seats up, and folded down (where possible).

Heating and ventilation



Feel sorry for the tester who has to warm each car up from a frosty -10 degrees in our climate chamber. Starting with a cold engine, we measure how long it takes to warm up the front and rear of the cabin. Diesel cars usually take longer. We also check the effectiveness of air conditioning, where fitted.



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Running costs and depreciation

Overall running costs are average, aided by low depreciation and reasonable fuel costs. Yaris reliability is top notch — virtually flawless in its first few years - so unexpected garage bills should be few and far between apart from the inevitable wear and tear as it gets older. Insurance groups vary from 2 to 7, depending on model and engine size.

Fuel consumption

The 1.0-litre petrol model we tested managed 42.8mpg, but this was an automatic. Toyota quotes 50.4mpg for the manual — expect around 45mpg in reality. Diesel models (introduced after 2002) claim to do a miserly 67.3mpg: we recorded 54.3mpg in our tests.



Petrol (combined mpg, claimed)

40.4 mpg - 52.3 mpg



Diesel (combined mpg, claimed)

64.2 mpg - 67.3 mpg

Model tested	Urban (claimed/measured)
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	53.3 mpg/54.3 mpg
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	44.1 mpg/43.5 mpg

Model tested	Extra urban (claimed/measured)
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	74.3 mpg/68.9 mpg
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	57.6 mpg/53.3 mpg

Model tested	Motorway (measured)
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	42.8 mpg
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	32.8 mpg

Model tested	Combined (claimed/measured)
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	64.2 mpg/54.3 mpg
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	52.3 mpg/42.8 mpg

How we test

Fuel consumption



We test fuel economy under strict lab conditions — using realistic test cycles — to reveal the facts behind the figures. Our figures rarely match manufacturer claims as, unlike the official mpg test, we measure economy with both a hot and cold engine, and on the motorway.



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Running costs and depreciation continued...

Emissions

The 1.4 D-4D diesel emits less than 120g/km of carbon dioxide, so qualifies for very cheap annual VED (road tax); even the 1.3 petrol puts out a relatively clean 133g/km.



Petrol (CO2, claimed)

129g per km - 165g per km



Diesel (CO2, claimed)

113g per km - 117g per km

Model tested	Emissions (claimed/measured)
diesel 1.4D-4D (75bhp) manual 5-door (2003)	117g per km/137g per km
petrol 1.0 (65bhp) automatic 5-door (2003)	129g per km/149g per km

Safety and security

Euro NCAP score



The Yaris scored four stars for overall adult occupant protection in the Euro NCAP crash tests, a respectable result for a supermini of its time.

Here is the video of the 1999-2005 Toyota Yaris Euro NCAP frontal crash test.

Please enable JavaScript to access this content.

Adult occupant



Child protection

-

Pedestrian protection

-

Which? safety rating



The Yaris scored 8.5 in our expert assessments, which is about average for a supermini.

Active (crash avoidance)

-

Passive (crash safety)

-

Child

-

Pedestrian

-

Security

The Yaris isn't exactly easy to drive away but there isn't enough protection for the valuables inside. Most superminis are poor in both of these areas in general.



Theft of car:



Theft from car:



How we test

Emissions



While testing fuel economy, we also collect exhaust gases to enable us to measure the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) emitted. We also check whether particulate filters are effective at removing sooty emissions from diesel engines.

Safety



We rate cars for safety using Euro NCAP crash test scores (where available), alongside our own comprehensive safety checklist. Uniquely, we also feed in results from our accident avoidance test – after all, it's far better to steer around a crash than rely on the airbags...

Security



Security scores come from the security experts at Thatcham, who break into hundreds of cars each year. Most modern cars are very difficult to drive away, but are still too easy to steal from.



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Which? Car Survey results

The Which? Car Survey is the UK's most robust reliability and owner satisfaction survey. In 2015, drivers told us about 58,000 cars, covering more than 484 million miles in the previous 12 months (that's equivalent to driving to the moon and back a hundred times). This unique feedback allows us to rate satisfaction and reliability for hundreds of new and used cars.

Note: Star ratings below are from 1-5 (1 is very poor and 5 is very good). Percentages shown under 'Most common faults' indicate the proportion of owners reporting each problem in the past 12 months.

Brand

Sample size: 4,313 people

Toyota ratings

Overall owner satisfaction for this brand **83%**

Brand reliability	-
Dealer Sales Service	★★★★
Dealer Servicing & repair	★★★★★

Model: Toyota Yaris (1999-2005)

Sample size: 321 people

Ownership ratings

Overall owner satisfaction for this range **90%**

Driving enjoyment	★★★★
Ease of driving	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★
Dash layout and controls	★★★★★
Practicality	★★
Value for money	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★
In-car technology	★★
-	-

About our survey

Brand ratings



Everyone who takes part in the Which? Car survey tells us about their car and the dealers who sell and service it. We analyse this feedback across all cars to give top-level satisfaction ratings for each brand, including the brand's reliability record over the last eight years. All star ratings are out of five.

Model ownership ratings



These show how owners score this car in 12 different areas, from performance to heating. Owners' ratings are subjective – so may differ from Which? Car test scores – but they give a good idea of what the car is like to live with. Where relevant, cars are scored against other cars in the same class (e.g. for space).



OWNER'S VIEW

Very reliable. Cheap to run. Only failures in 100 000 miles are radio remote and parcel shelf string.



OWNER'S VIEW

It is comfortable for a small car. It is small and so easier to park and drive in town. It keeps going. (The battery is 10 years old and still going.) The sliding rear seat is handy.



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Which? Car Survey results continued...

Reliability ratings

		Overall Reliability -	
		Up to 3 years old	4-8 years old
Petrol cars	Reliability	-	-
	Breakdowns	-	-
	Average annual repair cost	-	-
Diesel cars	Reliability	-	-
	Breakdowns	-	-
	Average annual repair cost	-	-
All cars	Reliability	-	-
	Breakdowns	-	-
	Average annual repair cost	-	-

Breakdowns: Percentage of cars suffering a breakdown in last 12 months

Average annual repair cost: Average annual cost of repairs (not servicing), in past 12 months

Most common faults

	Up to 3 years old
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

	4-8 years old
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

Failure rate: The proportion of owners reporting this problem in the last year

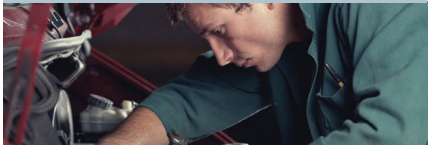
About our survey

Reliability ratings



We split reliability into breakdowns (including failure to start), faults (where parts need replacing) and problems (minor issues e.g. squeaks and loose trim). Where the car has been on sale for some time, and we have numerous survey responses from owners, we also split scores by the age of car and fuel type. Star ratings are out of five – the more stars, the more reliable the car.

Most common faults



Want to know what's most likely to go wrong as the car gets older? These are the five most common faults reported by owners, grouped by age into new, recent and older cars. A score of 40% means four out of 10 owners reported problems with that part of the car over the previous 12 months. Engine electrics and non-engine electrics (e.g. windows, stereo) cause more headaches than mechanical parts in most modern cars.