



auto BIOGRAPHIES

Ford B-MAX 1.6 TDCi Titanium

By **Tim Barnes-Clay**, **Motoring Writer**

www.carwriteups.co.uk [@carwriteups](https://twitter.com/carwriteups)



FORD IS on a mission to please families. At least, that's the impression I got at the all-new B-MAX launch this week. And it's not a bad objective to have.

You see, the B-MAX is aimed at people just like me – parents of young kids who need their motor to be spacious and practical – not just fashionable. If you've never had to cope with a struggling two year old then you won't know what I'm on about, but seriously, trying to fit your grumpy toddler into a car seat isn't the first thing your aching back wants on a Monday morning.

So, Ford came up with a solution - the 'Easy Access Door System'. Research was painstaking; it involved engineers going 'undercover' to observe drivers in their daily routine – going shopping or picking up their children from school. The answer they came up with combines conventional, hinged front doors and rear sliding doors, in a new body design. This integrates the traditional central pillar structure into the front and rear doors, rather than forming part of the body shell itself, and creates a huge, clear opening - more than 1.5 metres wide. This is around twice the width offered by competitors with alternative door concepts and makes it significantly easier to enter or exit the rear seats, attend to your children in their child seats, or load and unload shopping.

The B-MAX's twin sliding rear doors also make access easier in crowded streets or narrow parking bays. The front and rear doors can be opened completely independently, so the front or rear cabin can be accessed as required. But it doesn't stop there - a flexible and easy-to-use seating system features 60/40 split rear seats which can be folded flat with a simple 'one-hand, one-motion' mechanism. Furthermore, the front passenger seat can be folded, creating an extensive flat load floor capable of swallowing loads up to 2.34 metres long. That means you'll get a decent length Christmas tree or even a proper surfboard in the car!

Behind the wheel, the seating position is high and comfortable. The steering wheel is chunky and reassuring to grip and all the controls are very user friendly. The performance and average fuel economy of the 1.6-litre TDCi model I drove was more than adequate on my motorway test run, with excessive wind noise around the wing mirrors being the only disappointing aspect. The top of the range 'Titanium' vehicle came with all the trimmings, including cruise control, auto headlamps, rain sensitive wipers and a powerful Sony entertainment system.

Of course if, like me, your home is full of nappies, dolls and toy cars then you won't be so bothered about the quality of your car stereo system or blustery sounds around your wing mirrors. You'll be more interested in transporting your little ones in the safest car you can afford. Ford has realised this, so even though ease of access has been a key focus with the B-MAX, the company has not ignored protection. In fact the B-MAX has been awarded the highest possible five-star safety rating by independent crash test authority Euro NCAP. Ford is so committed to this aspect of its product that it subjected the B-MAX to many crash tests during development. This included 5000 simulated computer crashes, 40 complete crash tests and a further 100 tests which involved the car being mounted on a sled and fired into a barrier.

High strength and ultra-high strength steels form more than 58 per cent of the B-MAX body and are used in brackets, called crash-catchers; these lock the ingenious Ford Easy Access Door System in place if the vehicle suffers a side-impact. The B-MAX is also equipped with seven airbags and the front-end is carefully engineered for optimised pedestrian protection. In addition, the car features Ford's Active City Stop system – a segment-first designed to help you avoid low speed collisions with stationary or slower moving traffic. And there's more: the B-MAX features Ford's voice-activated, in-car connectivity system, SYNC, with Emergency Assistance, designed to assist you to call for help in the event of a crash.

Quite simply, the B-MAX is a car which is likely to attract many young families. But watch out Ford, your dealers may need to provide extra crèche facilities to cope with the droves of wailing toddlers who are bound to accompany parents desperate for a test drive.

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 108 mph
- 0-62 mph: 13.9 secs
- Combined mpg: 70.6
- Engine: 1560 cc 4 cylinder 8 valve turbo diesel
- Max. power (bhp): 94 at 3800 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 159 at 1750 rpm
- CO2: 104 g/km
- Price: £18,895 on the road

PROS 'N' CONS

- **Accessible** ✓
- **Spacious** ✓
- **Safe** ✓
- **Comfortable** ✓
- **Economical** ✓
- **Wind noise X**