



2013 Chevrolet Trax

By Tim Barnes-Clay, Motoring Journalist.

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The Trax went on sale in August and can be yours for as little as £15,495.

It's the newest addition to the Chevrolet family and is available with a diesel or petrol engine. You can also choose to have two-wheel or all-wheel-drive (AWD).

I decided to get behind the wheel of the 1.4T AWD LT. At £19,795 this variant is straying away from the 'affordable' price-tag, but with 138 horses and a turbocharger under the bonnet, it's one of best in the Trax line-up.

So what is it? Well, it's cast in the style of a small Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) but without the archetypal running costs. It all sounds a bit 'Mickey Mouse', but you're in good hands if you buy a Trax. You see, Chevrolet lays claim to inventing the first ever SUV with the introduction of the Carryall Suburban in 1935.

Today, nearly 80 years later, the Trax is the modern expression of the company. Yes, it's got SUV in its DNA, but with a big twist of funkiness to boot.

Conveying brawniness, and agility, the Trax looks good. A grille featuring the iconic Chevrolet bowtie logo, prominent wheel arches, powerfully built rear haunches, and a fast, rearward-swept roofline are key elements that define the car's exterior.

The cabin is also well turned-out. It's practical, well-organised and characterised by sinuous lines. The rear seat row even boasts an electrical socket that can be used for recharging laptops and other electronic devices without the need for an adapter.

Storage facilities are abundant too. Compartments include an under-seat storage tray and two glove boxes, one of which contains a USB outlet that enables

connectivity for your iPod or smart phone.

The Trax's boot space isn't massive because, let's face it, this car is a compact vehicle. That said, it does a lot with what it's got. Without a spare tyre, there's more room available under the cargo floor. It comes in handy for storing items securely – but not so convenient if you get a puncture and have to use the do-it-yourself repair kit, which comes in lieu of the emergency wheel.

Driving the Trax is a pleasure. It's been tuned to deliver European driving dynamics and the car flies its own kite when it comes to sophisticated electronic aid systems. The car I drove came fitted with a six speed manual gearbox and petrol saving Stop/Start functionality. 0-62mph is achieved in 9.8 seconds and the top speed is 121mph.

The AWD system adapts to the road conditions and notably improves traction on slippery or gravelled roads. That's a big bonus if you live in the countryside or you want a car that won't give up the moment winter kicks in.

The strength of its structural design makes the Trax very safe. Should the worst happen and the car rolls over, it's been engineered to carry more than four times its own weight.

What's more, the Chevy is equipped with Hill Start Assist and Hill Descent Control. Customary kit also includes Electronic Stability Control, Traction Control and Anti-Lock Brakes. Six airbags and ISOFX

anchoring systems for children's safety seats are equally part of the standard safety features onboard the Chevrolet Trax.

PROS and CONS

- Funky ✓
- Practical ✓
- Safe ✓
- No spare wheel X

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 121 mph
- 0-62 mph: 9.8 secs
- Combined mpg: 44.1
- Engine: 1364 cc 4 cylinder 16 valve turbo petrol
- Max. power (bhp): 138 at 6000 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 147 at 1850 rpm
- CO2: 149 g/km
- Price: **£19,795** on the road



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Autumn Driving Advice

Don't get caught out by the seasonal change in driving conditions

Autumn isn't all about blackberries and crunchy leaves – it also brings many changes for road users, from dazzlingly blinding sunlight to the first icy windscreen of the season. Be prepared – plan ahead to avoid being caught out.

Autumn is particularly bad for dazzle from low sun. Improve vision by making sure that the windscreen is clean – inside and out. Even non-smokers find a hazy film builds up on the inside surface of the windscreen over time. Scratches, abrasions and chips on the outside can intensify the sun's dazzle too.

Windscreen washer fluid

Top up and treat with a good quality, purpose-made additive to reduce the chance of freezing. Don't use ordinary

engine anti-freeze but do check the handbook carefully to make sure you fill the right reservoir.

Bulbs

Check all bulbs regularly (at least once a week) not forgetting brake lights and number plate lights. The handbook will show you how to change bulbs, though some headlight bulbs may require a visit to the garage. Carry some spare bulbs.

Windscreen wipers

Blades will last for two years at the most. New blades clear the screen more effectively and so help reduce dazzle from the sun. Now is a good time to renew worn blades.

Battery

This is one of the most common causes of breakdown at any time of year, but particularly in the winter when electrical loads are higher. If there's any sign of the battery struggling now, the likelihood is that it'll let you down at some time during the winter, particularly if it's more than five years old.

It makes sense to renew the battery now to avoid the hassle and inconvenience of an unplanned failure later.

Antifreeze

Not just for winter, antifreeze is important all year round as it contains additives to prevent corrosion and

improve summer cooling too. It should be checked as part of the regular service schedule.

A frozen engine is very expensive to repair so if there's any doubt now is a good time to check the concentration.

The handbook will give details of the correct antifreeze to use for your car there are different types and mixing them could cause engine damage.

If in doubt get a garage to check for you many offer cheap or even free winter checks at this time of year.

For more information visit:
www.theaa.com/motoring_advice



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