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Is a 2008 ford escape a good car

When it was released in 2002, the Escape - and its Mazda Tribute twin - made a huge splash. But since then the market has attracted new rivals, including the popular Ford Territory, which has steadily chomped away at sales. Since there's no sense in fighting your own products for buyers' attention, Ford's latest upgrade for the ZD Escape distances itself from its stablemate. Drivetrain The main change is that the 3.0-litre V6 version has been dropped, leaving the Compact Escape as a single variant range carrying the Mazda-sourced 2.3-litre four-cylinder engine with variable valve timing. Coupled with a four-speed automatic, the engine develops 109kW of power at 6000rpm and 199Nm of torque at 4000rpm, and returns a fuel economy figure of 10.5L/100km in the combined cycle. Drive is to the front wheels, with an on-demand all-wheel system sending up to 50 per cent of the torque to the rear axle as needed. There's also a button-controlled lock mode that keeps the axles in a 50:50 torque split. Appearance The designers have passed the cosmetic brush all around the vehicle, but it's been a light dusting. On the outside there are more pronounced wheel arches, which are now body coloured - previously only available on the upper spec model. They are joined by updated fenders and three-bar grille, head and tail-lights - with LEDs in the latter - new front foglights, more streamlined tailgate and new 16" alloy wheels, while indicators have now been embedded in the wing mirrors. The interior has been given a new piano-finish accent trim, plus freshening for the seat trim and door skins. Price and equipment The new Escape has a price tag of \$31,990 - about \$1500 less than the outgoing model, and \$6000 less than the Territory. The new arrival replaces the mid-level XLT (which sold for \$33,490 at last update in mid-2006), and Ford has not stinted on the fit-out, with a decent six-stacker CD audio system - compatible with MP3 disks - climate control airconditioning, roof racks, cruise control and an overhead console with sunglasses caddy and quite good map lights. The steering wheel is leather-wrapped and bears controls for the audio system, but while it has tilt-adjustment it misses out on reach. However you do get lumbar support on the driver's seat, and the back of the second row reclines as well as split-folding for extra carrying space, increasing the 935 litres in the cargo area to 1792 with the rear seats folded flat. Safety Driver and front passenger side/head thorax airbags have been made standard equipment, and the vehicle also has anti-lock brakes with brakeforce distribution to better spread the anchoring effort between front and rear, plus brake assist that puts extra pressure on - faster than you can by yourself — for extreme situations. Work capability Towing capacity remains at 1000kg braked or 750kg unbraked. The 208mm clearance, coupled with an approach angle of 28.5 degrees and a departure of 30 degrees, means that it's a useful package in lighter offroad situations. But with no low-range transfer case, it's not meant for any heavy duty driving. On the road We were concerned that reducing the Escape range to just a four-cylinder would leave it underpowered. But those who are looking for more zip in their softroader slot have already migrated over to the Territory. And while the Escape is no sports stinger, there proved to be enough on offer from the engine to get the vehicle around quite comfortably. Launch feel was surprisingly good, with the power plant winding up fairly well off the mark, but the fully automatic transmission seemed clunky even in gentler shifts, and occasionally indecisive on sharp slopes. Steering is light enough to make carparks no problem, and with a turning circle of 10.8m — quite respectable for an SUV — and you never felt you were trying to turn a truck, even in tight streets. There's a bit of roll as the tallish 1578kg body swings through corners, but the McPherson strut front and multi-link independent rear suspension gives a compliant ride on rough bitumen, and smoothes out dirt corrugations reasonably well. The interior was comfy and pleasant to be in, and the only real annoyance was that nearly every time we tried to open one part of the tailgate, we invoked Murphy's law, found the wrong part of the hidden double-handle and opened the other part instead. The Escape is not going to set the world - or your heart - on fire, but it's a very user-friendly package that should win fans looking for economy and comfort. Snapshot Ford Escape Price: \$31,990 Engine: 2.3-litre four-cylinder VVT Transmission: four-cylinder VVT Transmission: four-speed auto Drive: on-demand all-wheel drive with 50:50 lock Outputs: 109kW@6000rpm, 199Nm@4000rpm Fuel: 10.5L/100km Towing: 1000kg braked, 750kg unbraked CC BY 2.0/free pictures of money/Flickr Whether you're thinking of buying or leasing your next automobile, you'll need to decide on the best way to pay for it. We offer 10 options for car financing to make your next set of wheels a reality. 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