

THE BIG NEWS

The Octavia Estate can carry more than a Volvo V70



Photography Will Williams

Skoda Octavia Estate

What is it? Estate version of brilliant new Octavia hatchback

Price £17,000 (est) **On sale** June

THIS NEW ESTATE version of the Skoda Octavia is the first of the new VW Group family hatchbacks (the others are the Audi A3, Seat Leon and Volkswagen Golf) to be available in estate form. It uses the longer wheelbase already employed by the regular Octavia hatchback, but adds a slightly longer rear overhang and an estate car roofline to achieve a large load bay.

Skoda claims the new model will offer 610 litres of boot space with the rear seats in position; that's 20 litres more than the hatchback, and nearly 80 more than a Ford Mondeo Estate.

The rear seats can be lowered using easily accessible handles at either side of the boot; you don't need access via the rear doors to perform the operation. If you do fold down the seats

the Octavia's capacity expands to 1740 litres; that's 140 litres more than you'd get in a Volvo V70, although it's still more than 100 litres shy of the capacity of Skoda's larger estate, the Superb.

The Octavia Estate has a double-height boot floor. In its default position, you get the maximum load capacity but have to put up with a reasonably

big lip at the top edge of the rear bumper. This problem can be alleviated by raising the boot floor to its upper height; you lose a little space this way, but gain a flatter load space and a smaller drop down into the boot.

Other tricks in the boot include a number of bag hooks and storage compartments, plus a cargo net to stop your shopping rolling around. There's even a rubbish bin.

First look



Handy touches include small hooks in the sides of the boot for carrying takeaways



The rear seats don't fold down completely flat, but the resultant space is still massive



It's easy to fold down the rear seats, too; just tug the levers on either side of the boot



SLOPING TAILGATE

Looks like it would affect boot space, but doesn't



this improves cabin space and legroom, particularly for the rear-seat passengers.

Inside, the Octavia Estate looks identical to the recently launched hatchback, with materials that feel a match for those in the latest, Mk7, VW Golf, a large centre console with a touch-screen, and plenty of oddment space.

What's under the bonnet?

The engine line-up will follow that of the hatchback version, so expect the entry-level models to be powered by a 1.2-litre turbocharged petrol engine with 104bhp. There will also be a 1.4 TSI with 138bhp, plus a pair of diesel



QUALITY

Interior uses truly high-quality materials, and they've been put together with real care

TOUCH-SCREEN

Clever system senses when your hand is close to the screen, and changes accordingly

'The rear seats can be lowered by handles in the boot'

units, a 1.6 with 104bhp and a 2.0 with 148bhp.

All Octavia Estate models will get the simpler version of the VW Group's latest chassis, with lighter but less sophisticated rear suspension. That situation won't change until the hot vRS version of the car appears later this year.

The Octavia Estate will go on sale in June, with prices estimated to start at around £17,000.



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Styling and cabin space

Skoda has played it safe with the styling of the new Octavia hatchback, and that approach has been maintained with the estate version. The front end is identical, with the latest Skoda 'family' grille and headlights. At the rear, the Octavia hatchback's sharp creases at either side of the numberplate have been incorporated into the estate's panels. The tail-lights curve around to form prominent rear shoulders; their wide positions also help to give the boot as wide an opening as possible.

The car is 9cm longer and 5cm wider than the outgoing model, and the wheelbase is 11cm longer. Skoda claims that

LONGER WHEELBASE

Means more room, especially for those in the rear seats

Skoda Octavia takes on its biggest rivals on page 38



As with the hatchback Octavia, the rear seats offer plenty of space for tall adults



Optional 'hammock' is mounted on rails in the boot and holds smaller items securely



Wraparound rear lights and creases in the tailgate mirror the style of the hatchback