

# Orlando has 16 seating combos

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front-wheel drive. All-wheel drive is not available and there is only one engine choice, the same engine as in the Equinox.

A 174 hp direct-injected 2.4-litre Ecotec inline four-cylinder engine powers the Orlando and it is combined with either a six-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmission.

GM says the Orlando has the best fuel economy of any seven-passenger non-hybrid vehicle on the market.

With a manual transmission, Natural Resources Canada fuel numbers are 10.1L/100 km (28 mpg) city and 6.7L/100 km (42 mpg) highway. With the automatic transmission, fuel economy ratings are 10.6L/100 km (27 mpg) and 6.9L/100 km (41 mpg) highway.

On the outside, the Orlando doesn't set any styling trends, but after all, it is difficult to do much when you want to toss in three rows of seats and get the maximum amount of space on a compact platform.

The front end has a muscular look to it with its 'wheels out, body in' stance and it has a fairly low roofline with, what GM calls

a 'crossover-styled silhouette.'

Inside is where the Orlando shines with three-row, theatre-styled tiered seating and floor heating ducts to both the second and third rows. In all, there are 16 different seating combinations.

The 60/40 split second-row seats tumble down easily into the floor for access to the third row with the touch of a latch on the top of the seats. The third-row seats are split 50/50 and fold flat into the floor as the headrest automatically tucks itself in when the seat is folded down.

Although this is one of the most spacious third rows in the segment, it is really meant for children or very short trips with adults aboard in the aft section. I managed to get my six-foot frame in one of the back seats, but I wouldn't want to spend much time there.

But most times, the third row will be folded down because there is little luggage space behind it with the seats upright.

With the seats folded, the load floor is low and flat, making it easy to throw in grocery bags and the like. There is 1,594 litres of cargo space behind the front seats with the second and third rows folded down.

The interior is plain, but not uninviting with the use of some bright accent trim to spark things up a bit.

It took me a while to get a comfy position in the driver's seat, but once settled in, I found the ride and seating to be more than adequate, while the steering was light enough for easy maneuvering in tight parking spaces.

During our test drive from Toronto to cottage country north into Haliburton and Muskoka and back, the Orlando proved to be very quiet for the most part. On hard acceleration, the noise level ramps up, but otherwise the cabin is a quiet place to be thanks to underbody torsional stiffness and extensive use of sound baffles in the A, C and D pillars.

On the safety front, families want to feel secure in their vehicles and the Orlando doesn't disappoint. Standard features include four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, panic brake assist and cornering brake control. Also included are stability control, traction control, six airbags and standard OnStar. For added peace of mind, the Orlando gets the Euro NCAP 5 Star safety rating as one of the top-scoring vehicles in Europe in 2011.



Called a multi-purpose vehicle (MPV), the seven-passenger 2012 Chevrolet Orlando provides interior flexibility and generous load space for a compact vehicle. It features three row, tiered theatre-style seating.

Families will love the convenience features in the cabin including two large cup holders built into the centre console, map and bottle holders in the front and rear doors, and individual compartments in the cargo area. A useful hidden storage compartment is also located behind the front fascia plate of the audio system. This area also holds the standard auxiliary jack or optional USB port for connecting your iPod or MP3 player.

Prices range from \$19,995 for the base LS model to \$29,735 for the top-line LTZ model. The LS comes standard with the six-

speed manual. The automatic adds \$1,450 to the price tag.

However, 85 per cent of sales are expected from the mid-level 1LT and 2LT models, priced at \$22,955 and \$24,895.

Pricing will be key in this growing segment as many customers shop largely on vehicle cost and economy of operation.

The Orlando would appear to be well placed in these categories and with the functionality and versatility it offers, GM Canada should be very pleased they decided to plunge in the MPV pool, even though their U.S. counterparts took a pass.

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