

# Rio's chassis features unique 'Halo-body' construction

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Heightening that is the fact the sedan has been lowered 15 and the front overhang was shortened by 25 mm compared to the hatch to give it an even more sporting look.

Adding to a more premium styling are outside mirrors fitted to the doors. Not only do these lessen wind noise, outward vision is improved because you can see through the gap between the mirror and the A-pillar.

The Rio sedan, again like the hatch, rides on an all-new platform that is longer, wider and lower than the previous generation.

Suspension at the front is MacPherson struts, coil springs and a stabilizer bar with a torsion beam axle suspension in the rear.

The Rio's chassis features a high-strength steel structure that includes an innovative 'Halo Body' construction designed to help protect occupants in certain side impact and rollover collisions.

Standard safety features include six airbags (dual advanced front and front-seat mounted side as well as full-length side curtain), side-impact door beams, height-adjustable front seatbelts with pre-tensioners, three-point seatbelts for all seating positions and Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH).

Also standard on all Rio trims for increased driver and passenger safety

are Electronic Stability Control (ESC), four-wheel disc brake with Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC) and Vehicle Stability Management (VSM), which coordinates the car's ESC and ABS to help the driver stay in control of the vehicle.

The base LX includes as standard body-colour door handles and sideview mirrors and 15-inch steel wheels with 185/65R15 tires, power windows and door locks, driver's seat height adjuster, map lights, illuminated vanity mirrors, trip computer, sliding centre console armrest and 60/40 split folding rear seats.

For some reason I didn't quite understand at the press launch in Phoenix, the UVO infotainment system is only offered on one model, the EX UVO, not three or four as in the Rio hatch. Developed with Microsoft, it is the second generation of the system originally made for Ford.

What I did drive was the EX Luxury Navi with the same infotainment system. It was quick and easy to use requiring no mandatory reading of the manual before setting off. As a matter of fact, my usual co-driver was plugging in destinations on the fly.

The big thing was the system not only gave prompts far in advance of turn off, but it was accurate, something other systems I've tried have failed to be.

The 2012 Rio sedan comes equipped with low-resistance silica tires to help save on fuel.

Up in the high desert there was a lot of sand blowing across the roads. So, silica in the tires and sand on the road resulted in a hint of sliding cornering.

That won't be a problem here but in winter conditions with slush, ice and sand, it will probably be best to run four snow tires.

The interior of the sedan is identical to the hatch with a three-pot centre instrument cluster. The seats are broad and supportive and, if you move to the trim ladders, there are two-tone treatments and even leather on the Lux models.



Like the exterior, the interior of the 2012 Rio sedan is very much European in looks and placement of the controls.

Trunk space is adequate at 385 litres and there is a pass-through for the 60/40 rear folding seats.

Also adequate is the power. With every current engine technology going for it, 138 hp is pretty good but it fell off in the mountains east of Phoenix as any other car would, due to the altitude and sparser oxygen.

But helping out was the Sportshift six-speed automatic. With its sequential manual shift mode, holding the Rio in a lower gear on a steep climb is a blessing.

Driving back to our hotel in Phoenix, we found ourselves in the middle lane of a three-lane highway with a Toyota Yaris on the left and a Nissan Versa on the right.

My usual co-driver looked over and asked, 'which would rather have?'

And that's a very good question you might want to ask yourself if you're in the market for a sub-compact sedan.

## Kia Rio Sedan 2012 (at a glance)

**BODY STYLE:** sub-compact four-door sedan.

**DRIVE METHOD:** front-engine, front-wheel-drive

**ENGINE:** 1.6-litre DOHC inline four-cylinder (138 hp, 123 lb/ft)

**FUEL ECONOMY:** 1.6-litre manual, 6.6/4.9L/100 km (43/58 mpg) city/highway; automatic, 6.8/4.9L/100 km (42/58 mpg) city/highway

**CARGO VOLUME:** 385 litres

**TOW RATING:** NA

**PRICE:** LX manual \$13,795, LX auto \$15,095; LX+ manual \$15,295, LX+ auto, \$16,595; EX manual, \$16,695, EX auto, \$17,995, EX+ manual, \$17,165, EX+ auto, \$18,495, EX LUX UVO, \$20,495, EX LUX Navi, \$21,695

**WEBSITE:** www.kia.ca



A 1.6-litre inline four-cylinder engine featuring gasoline direct injection powers the new Kia Rio sedan. Driving the front wheels, it produces 138 hp and 123 lb/ft of torque.

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