

The interior of the Escape and Escape Hybrid (shown here) has been completely re-worked for 2008. One of the features is a dual bin centre console. With the smaller bin removed and slipped into a slot to the right of the transmission tunnel (shown), the main bin is big enough to stow a laptop computer.



# Escape Hybrid on the right road to helping our planet

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During our drive through downtown Ottawa and Hull, Gabriel showed how all this can be monitored on the multi function LCD display on the dash. The display gives instant read-outs of how much fuel/battery juice is being used depicted on a bar graph, as well as showing which way the power is being used/saved by both modes of power. It is easy to comprehend and fun to use.

During this ride-and-drive, teams of drivers were told to use a light touch on the gas to try and get the best fuel savings. One team came back with a 6.5L/100 km average. That's pretty good compared to the Canada Energuide rating of 5.7L/6.7L/100 km city/highway for the FWD and 6.8L/7.3L/100 km city/highway for the AWD. I think our team saw 7.1L/100 km briefly, which I thought was good for a first attempt. Time and practice would lead to greater things, I'm sure.

"You've got to use common sense when driving a hybrid," Gabriel said. "There's no trick to good mileage. Don't try jackrabbit starts. Taking off smoothly is the best bet. The greater the speed, the more gas you use. It's as simple as that."

As far as what happens if the system fails for whatever reason, Gabriel said the Hybrid has an eight-year, 160,000 km limited warranty in addition to the three-year, 160,000 km bumper-bumper warranty.

The system is based on the 330-volt Sanyo-sourced nickel metal hydride battery that sits under the floor of the trunk. The battery is smaller than you might think, making the gas tank (56 litres) only slightly smaller than that in the normal Escape (62 litres). That results in the cargo area behind the back seat being almost the same size at 706 litres in the Hybrid compared to 827 for the normal Escape.

I spent the entire time in the Escape Hybrid riding in the back seat. The reason is I wanted to see if the extra weight of the battery pack in the back, plus my XXL size would hamper handling and suspension versus traction. Throughout the exercise, my co-driver was trying to maximize fuel economy, not acceleration.

With the standard constantly variable transmission (CVT), the only way of telling when the battery or the engine was supplying traction was through the LCD display, it was that seamless. Once or twice, rounding a corner and coming back up to speed, I could feel a hint of acceleration but could not tell (with my eyes closed) if it was the battery or the engine.

The extra cost of adding hybrid drive is an issue usually raising the price of the hybrid over the standard vehicle anywhere from \$5,000-\$10,000. The FWD Escape XLS is \$25,399 versus \$31,499 for the FWD Hybrid or roughly \$6,100 more for the hybrid. It's the same \$6,100 difference for the AWD Hybrid at \$33,899 versus the AWD XLS at \$27,799.

That's a lot extra for sure, but the recent federal budget allows the Escape Hybrid to qualify for the full \$2,000 rebate and there is a \$2,000 provincial tax credit in Ontario and British Columbia, \$3,000 if you happen to live in P.E.I. The difference of \$4,000 covers about two-thirds of the premium you pay for the Hybrid drive and you should be able to make up the shortfall in fewer fill-ups long before the service life of the Escape is over.

But, there's something else, the intangible of doing something positive about the environment.

We all know now we have to do our part about preserving the planet, and doing it behind the wheel of a 2008 Ford Escape Hybrid is following the right road.

## FORD ESCAPE HYBRID SUV 2008 AT A GLANCE

- BODY STYLE: Compact SUV.
- DRIVE METHOD: frnt-engine, front-/all-wheel-drive.
- ENGINE: 2.3-litre DOHC inline four-cylinder (133 hp, 124 lb/ft) and electric traction motor (94 hp, 152 lb/ft). Net power rated as 155 hp.
- FUEL ECONOMY: FWD, 5.7L/100 km city, 6.7L/100 km highway; AWD, 6.8L/100 km city, 7.3L/100 km highway.
- PRICE: FWD, \$31,449; AWD, \$33,899.
- WEBSITE: ford.ca

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LX-AWD model shown† MSRP \$21,695\*

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\*Based on an MSRP of \$15,995/321,865 on 2007 Spectra LX MT (SP5517). \*\*Leasing plans OAC provided by Kia Canada Financial Services. Available on 2007 Spectra LX MT (ST547)/2007 Sportage LX MT (SP5517). ††Based on a 60/60 month lease rate of 0.9%/3.9%. First month's lease payment of \$187/\$199 plus \$1,350/\$1,405 delivery and destination, and a \$350 acquisition fee due upon delivery. Down payment for 2007 Spectra LX MT (SP5517) is \$3,675. Total lease obligation for the featured models based on an MSRP of \$15,995/321,865 is \$1,209/\$1,695 and the option to purchase at end of lease for \$4,786/\$7,497 plus applicable taxes. Lease has 20,000 km/year allowance (other packages available) and \$0.10/km for excess. Licence, registration, insurance, delivery and destination, dealer administration fees and taxes are not included, unless otherwise stated. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Prices subject to change without notice. † Don't pay for 6 months. C.O.B. is \$267.67. For "Don't pay for 6 months" financing, available on approved credit (OAC). Example, \$10,000 at 0.0% purchase financing per annum for 6 months, monthly payment is \$0 and total owing after 6 months is still \$10,000. After 6 months, \$10,000 financed at 1.3% equals \$213.91 per month for 48 months. C.O.B. is \$267.67. For "Don't pay for 6 months" purchase financing, 1.3% will be added to the applicable interest rate. Available on all new 2007 Kia models. See your local participating Kia dealership for full details. †† Reduction of \$1,000 off total principal or amount due on 2007 Spectra LX MT (ST547)/2007 Sportage LX MT (SP5517). Purchase financing example: \$10,000 at 0.0% purchase financing equals \$167 per month for 60 months; cost of borrowing (C.O.B.) is \$0 for a total obligation of \$10,000. Monthly payment and C.O.B. will vary depending on amount borrowed, the term and down payment. Other lease and finance options available. See your local participating Kia dealership for full details. †† Reduction of \$1,000 off total principal or amount due on 2007 Sportage LX MT (SP5517). Monthly lease or finance payments have been adjusted for reduction. Certain restrictions may apply. ††† NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) test results. Visit [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cap](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cap) for full details. \*Conditions apply to the \$500 Grad Rebate program. See dealer for details. ††† Kia's "Worry-Free Comprehensive" warranty covers most vehicle components against defects under normal use and maintenance conditions. Price, availability and specifications are subject to change without notice. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of print. KIA is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation.