

# FORD

## FOCUS TDCi GHIA

Ford has long been off the diesel pace, but now it comes back punching to challenge the brilliant 130bhp Golf TDi





**AUTOCAR****ROAD TEST**  
**Number 4515****FORD FOCUS****Model tested TDCi Ghia****List price £14,550 (est)****Top speed 115mph****30-70mph 9.9sec****0-60mph 9.8sec****60-0mph 2.8sec****MPG 55.5****For** Refinement, economy, price, chassis, ride quality**Against** Not as quick as its Golf rival

**T**here has always been a critical gap in the Focus engine line-up - no advanced turbodiesel. And while its European rivals have capitalised on the diesel boom, Ford has dragged its oil-burning feet, offering only a conventional direct injection design. Until now, that is.

With the arrival of the Dagenham-designed and built TDCi Duratorq common-rail engine, Ford has produced a unit that heralds a new generation of advanced turbodiesels.

Although the company has yet to confirm prices, it's expected that the new powerplant will command a £500 premium over the ageing 90bhp TDDi models, which will continue to be sold alongside the new engine. That means the flagship Ghia model on test here should cost an anticipated £14,550 when it goes on sale next January.

The Focus TDCi has only one rival in its sights, and that's the £16,675 130bhp Golf TDi, the car that currently dominates the UK diesel hot hatch market. On paper, the Focus initially seems disadvantaged. Although the 1753cc unit boasts all the latest technology - high-pressure fuel injection system and a variable nozzle turbocharger complete with intercooler - it produces only 115bhp at 3800rpm and 207lb ft of torque at 1850rpm, which includes an extra 22lb ft of boost available during hard acceleration. Impressive stuff, but the Golf goes a fair bit further with 130bhp and 228lb ft.

Dial in the Ford's heftier 1303kg kerb

**HISTORY** Ford's diesel history is not glorious. The company's first was the 2.4-litre York engine that developed a meagre 54bhp, and made its debut in the Transit in 1972. The first non-commercial diesel application was the 1.6-litre in the 1983 Escort: a naturally aspirated indirect injection unit that soldiered on until the 1.8-litre arrived that powered both the 1988 Escort and Fiesta. It took that engine 11 years to acquire a turbo. Dubbed the TDDi and generating 90bhp, it was dropped into the Focus and Fiesta. And now it will still soldier on beside the sparkling new TDCi.

weight - 27kg more than the Golf - and it's no wonder that its performance trails that of the Volkswagen. Put the Focus through the gears and it will reach 60mph in 9.8sec and 100mph in 31.8sec, managing 30-70mph in 9.9sec on the way. A damp test track notwithstanding, these are respectable figures for a diesel hatch, and they are quick enough to worry a petrol 1.8 Focus (9.5sec, 30.5sec and 9.6sec respectively).

But it doesn't get close to the Golf. The VW hits 60mph and 100mph in 8.5sec and 25.9sec, and it's over two seconds quicker through the gears from 30-70mph. All that low-rev torque makes the Focus a formidable in-gear performer, but again it plays second fiddle to the Golf TDi. Plant your right foot in fourth and the Focus takes 6.5sec to accelerate from 30-50mph, against the 5.6sec for the Golf.

Only in top gear does the Focus have a slight edge. Although the Ford is geared to pull just under 30mph per 1000rpm, it's shorter than the Golf's intergalactic sixth gear, allowing the Focus to accelerate

**"At idle, under power and at motorway speeds, Ford's new diesel emits only a refined murmur"**

from 50-70mph in 8.5sec, a fraction quicker than the Golf's 8.8sec time.

However, what these bald performance figures fail to represent is the way that the TDCi engine delivers its power. At idle, under acceleration and at motorway speeds the Ford engine never emits more than a refined murmur. It's smooth and quiet enough to make the Golf engine seem agricultural.

Ford has achieved this clatter-to-calm transformation with a new, second generation common-rail system which delivers several smaller bursts of fuel prior to the main injection, smoothing the combustion process and reducing the typical diesel rattle. It really works. It's a lively engine that responds promptly to throttle inputs, delivering its torque in a more linear manner than the Volkswagen's Pumpe Düse engine.

If the Focus trails the Golf in straight-line performance, its on-road dynamics simply muscle the VW out of the way. The Focus's brilliant ride and handling have been well catalogued in these pages, and the TDCi serves as a reminder of just how superb the Focus is to drive. Its front strut and sophisticated multi-link rear suspension simply dismisses poor surfaces. It feels perfectly damped at all



## Performance and specifications

### Engine

**Layout** 4 cyls in line, 1753cc  
**Max power** 115bhp at 3800rpm  
**Max torque** 207lb ft at 1850rpm  
**Specific output** 66bhp per litre  
**Power to weight** 88bhp per tonne  
**Torque to weight** 159lb ft per tonne  
**Installation** Front, transverse, front-wheel drive  
**Construction** Alloy head, iron block  
**Bore/stroke** 82.5/82.0mm  
**Valve gear** 2 per cyl, sohc  
**Compression ratio** 18.5:1  
**Ignition and fuel** Direct injection common-rail head, turbocharger, diesel

### Gearbox

**Type** 5 speed manual  
**Ratios/rev per 1000rpm**  
**1st** 3.67/5.8 **2nd** 2.05/10.3  
**3rd** 1.26/15.7 **4th** 0.86/22.9  
**5th** 0.71/29.9  
**Final drive** 3.41

### Maximum speeds

**5th** 110mph/3680rpm **4th** 115/5000  
**3rd** 79/5000 **2nd** 51/5000  
**1st** 29/5000

### Acceleration from rest (Surface dry)

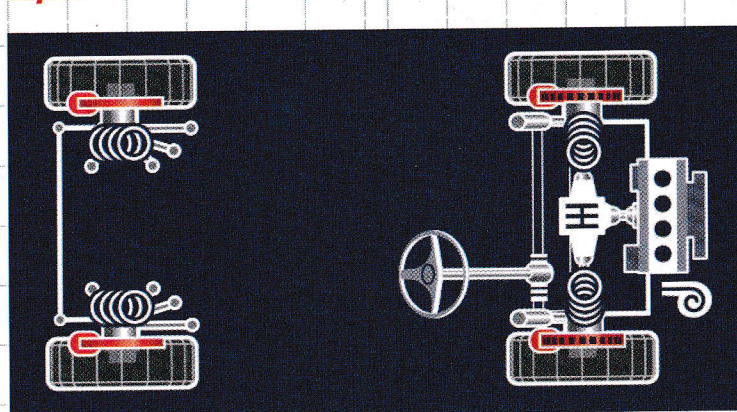
True mph	sec	speedo mph
30	3.4	32
40	5.0	43
50	7.5	53
60	9.8	64
70	13.3	74
80	17.3	85
90	22.9	95
100	31.8	106

**Standing qtr mile** 17.6sec/79mph  
**Standing km** 32.4sec/100mph  
**30-70mph through gears** 9.9sec

### Acceleration in gears

mph	5th	4th	3rd	2nd
20-40	-	8.1	4.5	3.1
30-50	11.4	6.5	3.5	-
40-60	8.5	5.3	4.1	-
50-70	8.5	5.5	5.9	-
60-80	8.2	6.5	-	-
70-90	9.5	9.27	-	-
80-100	12.7	14.8	-	-

### Layout



### Steering

**Type** Rack and pinion, power assisted  
**Turns lock to lock** 3.0

### Suspension

**Front** MacPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar  
**Rear** Multi-link with twin control blades, coil springs over dampers, anti-roll bar

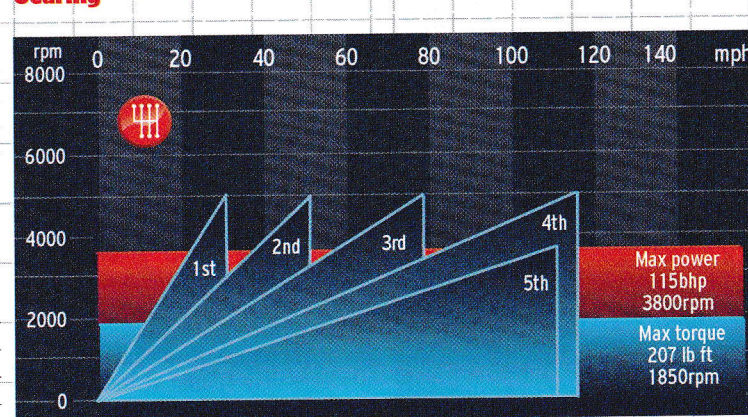
### Wheels & tyres

**Wheels** 6Jx15in  
**Made of** Alloy  
**Tyres** 195/60 VR15 Goodyear Eagle NCT5

### Brakes

**Front** 258mm ventilated discs  
**Rear** 253mm discs  
**Anti-lock** Standard

### Gearing

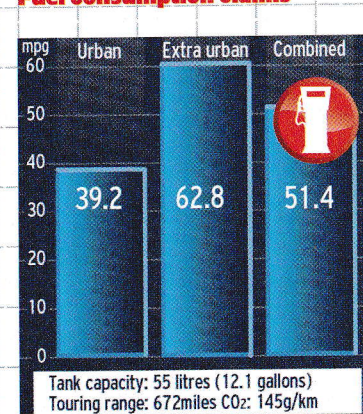


All Autocar road tests are conducted using BP Cleaner Unleaded Fuel or BP Cleaner Diesel with additives to help keep engines cleaner

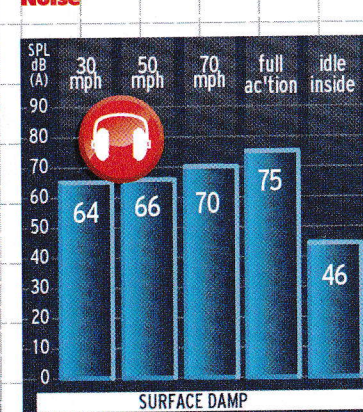
### Fuel consumption test results



### Fuel consumption claims



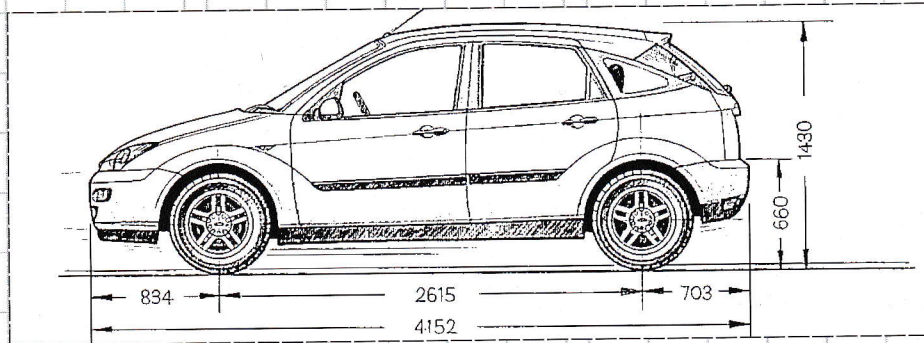
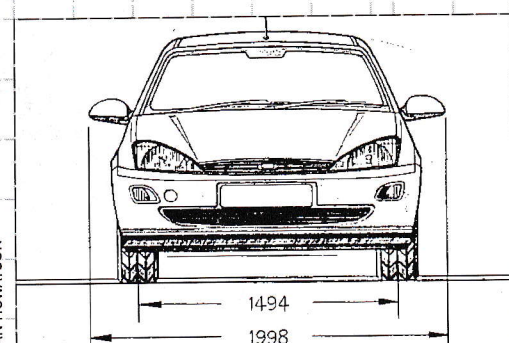
### Noise



### AUTOCAR ROAD TESTS...

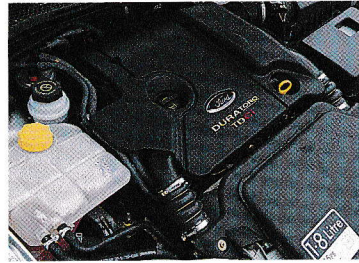
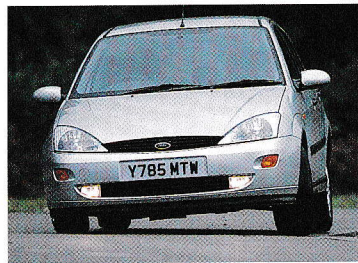
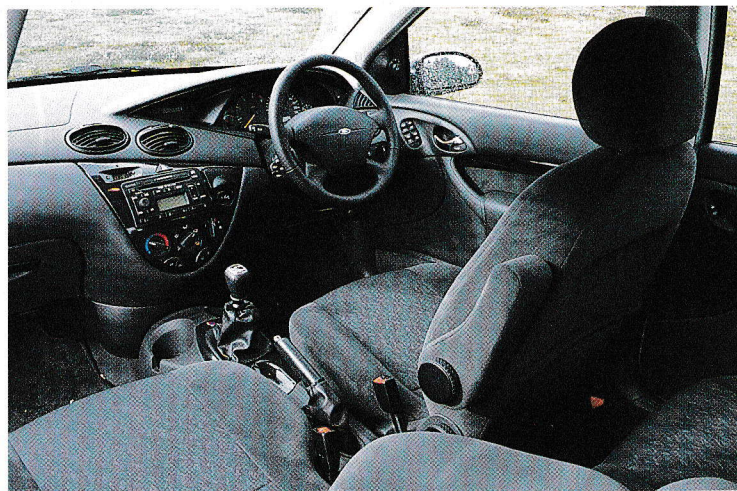
...are the most exhaustive published in the UK. Each car is measured in detail, then performance, speed and brake tested. We also try to cover at least 500 miles on all types of road, and measure economy in all conditions. In the interests of safety, all performance testing is conducted at a neutral proving ground by our trained road testers.

**Body** 5dr hatch **Cd** 0.32 **Front/rear tracks** 1494/1487mm **Turning circle** 10.9m **Min/max front legroom** 860/1075mm **Min/max rear legroom** 640/870mm **Min/max front headroom** 925/940mm **Interior width f/r** 1400/1395mm **Rear headroom** 935mm **Min/max boot width** 1030/1320mm **Boot length** 800/1310mm **VDA boot volume** 350dm<sup>3</sup> **Kerb weight** 1303kg **Weight distribution front/rear** 61/39 **Width (inc mirrors)** 1998mm



The performance figures were taken with the odometer reading 1552 miles. **AUTOCAR** test results are protected by world copyright and may not be reproduced without the editor's written permission





**Spacious boot and interior; respectable performance for a diesel hatch; quiet engine needs a bit more grunt; excellent brakes feel fade-free**

◆ speeds and seems to float over rippled and scarred roads that would easily fox the stodgy Golf. What's more, the Ford's rack and pinion steering is sharp and delightfully accurate, and there's a noticeable absence of body-roll.

Despite its shortage of outright pace, the Focus feels quicker than the Golf for two reasons. First, its silent soundtrack means engine noise never intrudes on your enthusiasm. And secondly, its sparkling chassis lets you exploit more of its power, more of the time. That means the Focus is both an excellent motorway cruiser and a delight to drive hard on a favourite backroad.

Powerful all-round discs ensure excellent braking, too: backed up by electronic

anti-lock, the car needs just 2.8sec for the standard 60-0mph run, even on a damp track. For a family car the centre pedal in the Focus has exceptional feel, and no matter how hard they were pushed the brakes always felt strong and fade-free.

Not only is the TDCi engine quieter than the Golf's, it's also more frugal – its 44.3mpg average figure bettering the VW's 41.2mpg. Use a light right foot, and this rises to the exceptional 55.5mpg that we recorded on our touring route. An overall average of 44mpg makes a convincing argument for choosing the diesel over the 1.8 petrol Focus, which managed just 29.2mpg. As do a lower insurance rating, lower depreciation and cheaper running costs.

Although the Ford is over £2000 cheaper than the Golf, it carries a similar level of equipment to the German car, including air-conditioning, electric mirrors and windows, remote central locking, twin front airbags and trip computer. The Focus is also likely to benefit from even higher levels of safety equipment when the facelifted version arrives next month.

But there's no area that better accounts for the price difference between the Focus and the Golf than the cabin. While there is nothing wrong with the ergonomics and fit and finish of the Focus, the Golf's exudes an opulence and sophistication that the Ford simply cannot match. You could argue that the same comments

could also be made of the Ford's styling. Despite its ubiquity – it is Britain's best-selling car – the Focus still looks fresh and striking but, in the final reckoning, it lacks the Golf's sophistication and presence.

Ford may be a late arrival on the front-line diesel scene, but it has been a worthwhile wait. The TDCi is very quiet, exceptionally economical and has enough pace to make the 1.8 petrol feel a little sluggish. That it is dropped into the most talented chassis in the class makes it even more appealing. Only slightly more constrained straight-line performance than the VW stops it winning the full-house verdict. But that doesn't stop it being the most complete diesel family hatch on sale.

## What it costs

<b>On-the-road price</b>	£14,550 (est)
<b>Total as tested</b>	£14,550 (est)
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	145g/km
<b>Cost per mile</b>	42p
<b>Monthly contract hire</b>	£295 (est)

### Equipment

(**bold** = options fitted to test car)

Air-conditioning	●
Cruise control	—
Leather seats	£1000
Rear spoiler	—
Sat-nav	—
Height/tilt-adjust steering	●/●
Sunroof	£250
Airbag driver/passenger/side	●/●/£500
Alarm/immobiliser	●/●
RDS stereo/CD player	●/●
● standard — not available	

### Insurance group

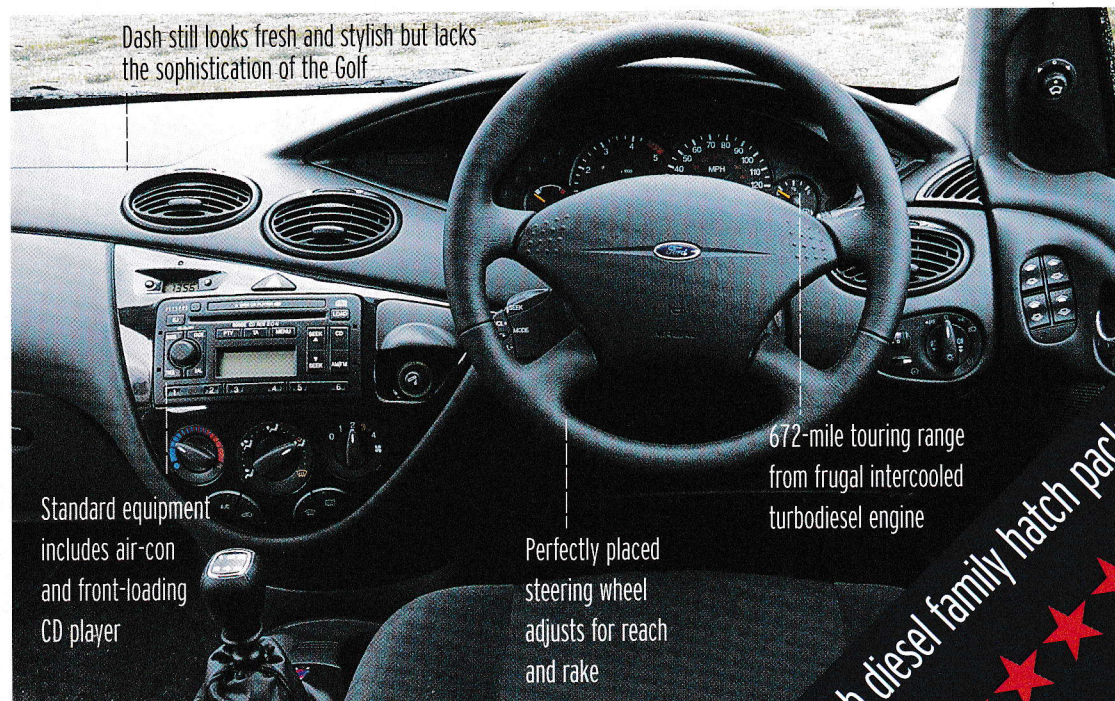
Typical quote	6 (est)
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### Warranty

36 months/60,000 miles, 12 years rust

### Servicing

12 months or 6000 miles



**Focus's tidy cabin carries a comprehensive range of equipment**

Superb diesel family hatch pack