

The Updated Sorento: Kia's Flagship SUV

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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The current generation Kia Sorento made its South African debut in June 2015. But what sets this flagship model from its competitors?

Well for starters, the new offering has an elegant design, notably improved build quality and interior finishes that is sure to challenge similar family or lifestyle orientated vehicles. It has a refreshed exterior design as well as an upgraded interior but the enhanced Sorento also features enriched standard specification levels and even better value.

Some of the notable inclusions are:

- An all-new 8 speed automatic transmission standard across all models.
- Seven-seater across all models
- Efficient Turbo-Diesel engine.

Road Test: A smooth drive

The Sorento offers a pleasant driving experience. From the moment you step into the cockpit, you know that you are in for a comfortable, smooth ride, whether you are driving with or without passengers. Before you realise it, you are on your way be it in urban traffic or open road, thanks to the all-new 8-speed automatic gearbox transmission.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

You have to virtually listen attentively to the gearbox changing gears, which is so seamless. Kia's new eight-speed unit requires fewer control valves, enabling a more direct mechanical link to the engine. This allows the transmission to shift more quickly than the outgoing six-speed automatic transmission and enables more decisive acceleration.

Eco, Comfort, Sport or Smart: It's your choice

The new transmission offers four different drive modes: Eco, Comfort, Sport and Smart. Drivers can select their preferred mode with the Sorento's electronic Drive Mode Select system. Each mode enables the driver to customise the powertrain's responses to driver inputs, enhancing fuel economy or acceleration characteristics depending on driver preference. The Sorento is equipped with the preferred Electric Parking Brake. This is so much easier to flick a switch than to pull up the hand-brake.

The enhanced KIA Sorento retains its excellent SUV proportions, but thanks to its mid-life update now sports a tighter, sharper exterior design. A striking feature of the new Sorento is the more detailed radiator grille, flanked by a new headlamp configuration featuring projection headlamps and revised LED Daytime Running Lights on higher specification models.

A newly sculpted bumper design adds to the front revamp, incorporating projection-type fog lamps, that assists in giving Sorento a more aggressive overall expression. The rear end has also been refreshed with a redesigned bumper, sleeker taillamps, and a subtly revised tailgate.

Let's look what's been revamped on the inside

Thanks to numerous enhancements, the Sorento maintains an upmarket look and feel including a new, more tactile steering wheel, a new gearshift lever, and a revised instrument cluster with improved graphics. The redesign also includes alterations to the air vents and the centre console design, which – in combination – create an up to date ambience.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

It's a Seven-Seater

Plenty of space and roomier. Another important upgrade to the enhanced Sorento line-up is that all model derivatives offer seating for up to seven passengers, with leather upholstery as standard across the board. Featuring 40/20/40 second row split folding seats for improved versatility, with a higher folding centre armrest, these seatbacks can be 'remotely' folded by conveniently located levers in the side of the cargo bay.

The third-row seats fold away flat in the luggage compartment, ensuring that luggage space is not compromised when the seats are not in use (see pic). When the seats are folded flat, Sorento offers 605 litres of luggage space, and features an under-floor cover storage compartment and integrated cargo net to secure loose items. I found that to be handy when you don't want your grocery purchases dangling all over the inside of the 'boot' area.

Revised model line-up

As part of the Sorento's mid-life enhancement, Kia Motors South Africa has also revised the model line-up of the local range. The Sorento range will now comprise a mid-spec LX and a mid-high-spec EX derivative, both available either with front-wheel drive, or Kia's renowned Dynamax all-wheel-drive system.

All derivatives feature a new 8-inch colour touchscreen with embedded Satellite Navigation, from which occupants can also control audio, whether it is a favourite radio station, via the USB/Aux jacks, or through their mobile device via Apple CarPlay. The touchscreen is simple to use, whether you are looking to tune into a different radio station or sourcing an address on the Navigation system. Sound-wise, the Sorento is equipped with 6 speakers and offers a clear and audible experience.

Cruising in Automatic

KIA has retained the popular 2,2-litre 'R' turbodiesel engine, which is synonymous with Sorento and renowned for its excellent mid- and low-range torque. Loved for smoothness and efficiency, the engine produces 147 kW of power at 3 800 r/min. With Kia's fuel-injection system, the engine delivers greater fuel economy, performance and engine response while reducing engine noise. It reaches 100 km/h in 9,4 seconds, with a top speed of 203 km/h.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

Sorento features a full complement of safety and driver assistance systems, including ABS brakes with Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD), six airbags and ISOFIX child seat anchors. Drivers will also benefit from Electronic Stability Control (ESC) and Hill-start Assist, while all models feature Park Distance Control at the rear, linked to a reverse camera displayed on the 8-inch colour touchscreen.

A new value proposition is welcomed

All Sorento models ship as standard with KIA's industry-leading unlimited kilometre, five-year warranty, as well as a standard 5-year/100,000km service plan and 3-years of roadside assistance.

What does it cost?

Price at launch:

KIA Sorento 2.2 CRDI LX: R569,995

KIA Sorento 2.2 CRDI LX AWD: R609,995

KIA Sorento 2.2 CRDI EX: R599,995

KIA Sorento 2.2 CRDI EX AWD: R639,995

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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