

The new Kia Rio – Korean with a touch of Latin flair -by Liana Reiners

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True to the Latin American connotation of its name, the fourth-generation Kia Rio has plenty of personality, flair and spunk. Its styling is a complete departure from that of its predecessor and more in line with the revitalised new family of Kia products. In fact, there's more than a passing resemblance to the Sportage, especially when viewed from the front.

To complement the new exterior styling, the new Rio's interior design has also been given the once-over. The entry level 1.2 and 1.4 models feature black woven fabric, while the range topping 1.4 TEC comes with leather trim as standard. Features include items such as steering wheel-mounted audio controls, a radio CD player with MP3 compatibility plus AUX, iPod and USB connections and hands-free Bluetooth. In addition, the 1.4 TEC model boasts comfort features such as climate-control air-conditioning, a rear park assist system with four sensors, rain-sensing wipers, LED daytime running lights and 17-inch alloy wheels as standard.



The Rio five-door is available with a choice of two petrol powerplants; a 65 kW 1,2-litre unit and a 79 kW 1,4-litre engine. There are three model derivatives available in the line-up; the 1.2, the 1.4 and the 1.4 TEC.

As far as transmission options are concerned, the 1.2 Rio is fitted with a five-speed gearbox, while the standard transmission for the larger capacity 1.4 engine is a six-speed manual gearbox. As an option, a four-speed automatic transmission is also available for the 1,4-litre unit.

Of course, safety features enjoyed much attention when it came to the design and development of the new Rio. To this end, the list of safety equipment includes front airbags for driver and passenger on the 1.2 and 1.4 models, with six airbags – front, side and curtain – on the 1.4 TEC model. Child-proof rear door locks as well as rear ISOFIX-child anchors are fitted as standard on all models. Active safety equipment includes the usual list of abbreviations such as ABS and EBD.

An interesting feature of the new Rio worth mentioning is that it is equipped with a battery saver that automatically turns off the headlamps and any other active electrical systems when the engine is switched off, preventing the battery from running down when the car is parked.

Pricing for the new Kia Rio range is as follows:

Rio 1.2	R136 995
Rio 1.4	R154 995
Rio 1.4 TEC	R168 995

