

2008 KIA Sorento

by Gary Dickinson

INTRODUCTION

The 2008 KIA Sorento midsize SUV keeps in line with its predecessor as one of the sportiest, most powerful and safest vehicles in its segment. Sorento has earned its second National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) five-star side crash safety rating for all seating positions.

For 2008 the new 3.3L V6, like the 3.8L, is mated to an electronically controlled five-speed Sportmatic™ transmission, allowing drivers to choose between automatic or manual shift mode.

The full-time automatic Torque-On-Demand™ four-wheel-drive system automatically detects wheel slippage 200 times per second, transferring power between the rear and front wheels without requiring driver input.

The 2008 Sorento also offers standard safety features such as: advanced two-stage airbags, full-length side curtain airbags, driver knee airbag, four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, electronic stability control (ESC), traction control, tire pressure monitoring system, active front headrests and energy-absorbing steering column.

OVERVIEW

I was impressed by KIA's comprehensive warranty program, which offers a 10-year or 100,000-mile limited power train warranty, a five-year or 60,000-mile limited basic warranty, and a five-year or 100,000-mile anti-perforation warranty.

Also impressive is the engine performance. The 3.8L provides smooth but powerful acceleration.

TESTED VEHICLE

Vehicle: 2008 KIA Sorento EX.

Class: 4 door 4X4 midsize SUV.

Engine: The 3.8L 24 valve DOHC V6 yields 262 HP at 6,000 RPM and 260 lb-ft torque at 4,500 RPM.

Transmission/Drive Train: Electronically-controlled five-speed automatic, overdrive with Sportmatic™ shifting. Part-time, two-speed, electronically control (4WD).

Brakes: Dual-diagonal, split-circuit, power-assisted braking system with EBD and ABS.

Steering: Engine-speed sensitive, power rack-and-pinion.

Base MSRP: \$26,195.

Tested Vehicle MSRP with Options: \$30,095 (which includes a destination charge of \$700).



TEST DRIVE

☺ **Acceleration:** Zero-60 MPH tested at 7.2 seconds, 55-65 MPH passing performance tested at 2.8 seconds.

☺ **Steering:** The Engine-speed sensitive, power rack-and-pinion steering provided good on center response.

☺ **Handling:** Minimum body roll.

☺ **Ride:** Good road isolation.

☺ **Braking:** Sure and responsive.

☺ **Transmission:** Extremely smooth operation.

☺ **Interior Noise:** Good isolation from road and engine noise.

☺ **Test drive mileage:** 20.1 MPG (mostly highway driving); EPA estimates 20H/15C.

EXTERIOR

☺ **Engine Service Points:** All fluid service points are located for easy access.

☺ **Body:** No exterior fit or finish problems found.

INTERIOR

☺ **Room:** Roomy cabin with plenty of shoulder room, leg room and 1st row headroom.

☺ **1st Row Seats:** Provides good back support but thigh support is limited.

☺ **2nd Row Seats:** Adequate seat support but only enough room for two adults and headroom is limited for tall passengers.

☺ **Ventilation:** The dual zone automatic climate control operated seamlessly with well designed and easily accessible controls.

☺ **Storage:** Well designed and ample storage areas in dash, console and door pockets.

☺ **Fit and Finish:** No interior fit or finish problems found. Quality craftsmanship and materials were evident throughout.



VEHICLE CAPACITIES

Seating: 5

Interior Volume: 137.5 cu. ft.

Cargo Volume: 31.7 cu. ft.

Base Curb Weight: 4,290 lbs.

Towing w/Trailer Brakes: 5,000 lbs.

Fuel Tank: 21.1 gallons.

Test Drive is conducted and written by the Motor Watch staff, who contribute their own unbiased and unfettered comments in order to meet our mission: "To help save consumers time and money, and to help save motorists lives."