

## 2020 Mini Electric review

### Motoring correspondent Mark Gallivan test drives the 2020 [Mini Electric](#) to see if the classic genre is motoring swiftly into the all-electric future.

The year 2020 is causing automakers sleepless nights. There are the stricter WLTP (Worldwide Harmonised Light-Duty Vehicles Test Procedure) testing that gets closer to true mpg and CO2 emissions.

The 2020 EU emissions target of 95g CO2/km across a brand's entire range. Any brand that does not achieve that target faces a primed EU ready to slap hefty fines that could wipe out a single bullish financial quarter in a heartbeat. But nothing out there chills them more than the spectre of Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg in a yellow fisherman's jacket asking awkward questions.

Now BMW is launching something your average climate activist might take a right old shine to. Introducing, the 2020 [Mini Electric](#). In Ireland prices start from €27,765 once you've added in the SEAI grant and VRT Rebate. What we have here is the already spirited Mini Hatch with its gifted handling that emits nothing harmless into the atmosphere.

#### The range factor

There is, however, one thing to consider. The Mini's electric range. BMW claims it will travel up to 270km (168 miles) on a full charge from the electric motor generating 135 kW/184hp and 270 Nm. There is no defensible way of putting this – that simply isn't even close to being competitive. The Mini Electric's price rival is the Renault Zoe Play at €26,990. That French car manages a claimed range of up to 395km.

While on my test the Mini's claimed range fell quicker after an hour of city driving to 200 km (or 124 miles) than I was prepared for. And then it dropped again.

After a day's city driving, I was left with a reduced range of over 60 miles and began hunting down available charging points. My experience with street charging is mixed. The Irish EV charging infrastructure remains weak and unless you have access to a domestic charging point I would recommend you choose the petrol Mini Hatch if you are solely relying on the public charging stations.

Just be advised, buying the Mini Electric – or any electric car for that matter - with a range of, say, 270 km holds a degree of risk a primary car. It is rendered useless during one time you might need to travel long distances without stopping. The Mini can be charged from a domestic socket, wall

box or from any public charging station with fast charging up to 50 kW. A domestic and public charger as fitted as standard.

## Driving into the future

However, that is the only major caveat associated with the Mini Electric. I bonded well with the Mini over the few days I drove it earning it a place as one of my favourite EVs on sale in Ireland.

Much of the Mini's merit is how little the extra 145kg battery weight impacts on the car's snappy directional changes. BMW has located the battery deep in the floor and helps the car feel 95pc as sharp as a Mini Cooper S. Flick between the Green, Mid and Sport mode on the centre dashboard's toggle switch and for once the variations actually make a difference to the car's driving behavior. In Sport mode the steering is heavier and the already superb chassis manages to carve some neck-straining exit lines off your favourite roundabout.

Where the Mini Electric version excels is the response to steering inputs. It's like a swiveling office chair. Flick the steering left or right and the car never lunges or squats like a saloon or crossover SUV. The small wheelbase of 2,495mm makes the car rotate in the direction you point it at. For a driving enthusiast the experience is exceptional.

Another of the Mini Electric's virtues is the car's acceleration times. From standstill it will reach 60 km/h in 3.9 seconds. I can report, chiefly because I tested this, very few performance cars will keep up with the Mini Electric in traffic. Go even further and it's possible to reach 100 km/h in 7.3 seconds (Electric motor with 135 kW/184hp and 270 Nm). During my week I likened the Mini Electric's acceleration to being in a giant elastic band. Being stretched right back until suddenly released while wearing noise cancelling headphones.

Three trim options are available. Level 1 (€27,765), Level 2 (€30,405) and Level 3 (€35,695). Each level adds more standard equipment like automatic air conditioning, leather sports seats, larger wheels, parking assistance and in true Mini culture offers a range of customisation without changing the car's core performance. Fitted as standard is a Digital Dashboard, Navigation including Real Time Traffic Information updates, front LED headlights and questionable tail lights with clusters in the shape of a Union Jack flag.

As a Mini the cargo capacity is restricted with a 211/731 split between rear seats in place/folded and the rear seating is very compromised. But we knew that already. If you compare the Level 2 Electric version with the Cooper S Classic petrol the pricing is almost identical. This leaves the choice between a traditional petrol and electric car.

For me the absence of the tuneful petrol engine – a true Mini characteristic - aligned with the convenience of accessible fuel top-ups and a far longer range between stops would clinch it. Though if you still want an electric car then the Electric version remains a welcome EV choice.

Among the soulless EV genre Mini has built something quite special here – a fully electric car with a heart.

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