

The seventh-generation version of the iconic Volkswagen Golf GTI, which was introduced at the Geneva International Motor Show in March, is now available to order in the UK, with prices starting at £25,845 on the road – just £195 more than the previous model despite substantial enhancements. For the first time it is available from the factory with two power levels: the standard 220 PS GTI and the GTI Performance, a £980 option which increases power to 230 PS, adds larger brake discs and a front limited-slip differential.

The new GTI is powered by a 2.0-litre turbocharged direct-injection petrol engine (TSI) with 220 PS. In the GTI Performance version, the engine's maximum power is boosted to 230 PS. Both GTI models develop a maximum torque of 350 Nm (258 lbs ft). The standard GTI accelerates to 62 mph in 6.5 seconds and reaches a top speed of 152 mph. The GTI Performance has a top speed of 155 mph and needs just 6.4 seconds for the sprint to 62 mph. Despite its impressive performance, the new Golf GTI is in insurance group 29E – five groups lower than its predecessor.

Both versions of the GTI are equipped with a Stop/Start system and fulfil the EU-6 emissions standard that takes effect in 2014. With a six-speed manual gearbox, they attain the same low fuel consumption value of 47.1 mpg (CO₂ emissions of 139 g/km). This means that the latest Golf GTI offers an 18 per cent improvement in fuel economy compared to the previous model. With the optional six-speed DSG gearbox, the two GTI models achieve fuel consumption figures of 44.1 mpg (equivalent to 148 g/km CO₂ for the standard GTI and 149 g/km CO₂ for the GTI Performance).

Buyers who opt for the £980 Performance pack gain not just an extra 10 PS of power, but also updated brakes and a limited-slip differential. The ventilated front brake discs increase from 312 x 25 mm to 340 x 30 mm, while the rear discs, which are 300 x 12 mm solid discs on the 'standard' GTI, are changed to 310 x 22 mm ventilated discs. The front differential is a new development, dubbed VAQ. This provides more neutral and agile driving behaviour and allows higher speeds to be carried through curves. The system consists of a multi-plate coupler between the differential cage and right driveshaft, which controls locking torque electro-hydraulically. Visually, vehicles with the Performance pack are distinguished solely by 'GTI' lettering on the red brake callipers.

The sporty character of the Golf GTI is reflected in its styling, which includes the characteristic red stripe across the honeycomb radiator grille – now also extending into the standard bi-xenon headlights with LED daytime running lights – red-painted brake callipers, two chrome tailpipes and sports suspension. As standard, the GTI comes with 18-inch 'Austin' alloy wheels with 225/45 tyres, special side sills, a rear diffuser framing the exhaust pipe at either side, smoked LED rear lights and LED number plate illumination.

Interior highlights include 2Zone climate control, sports seats with the classic tartan 'Jacara' cloth upholstery, a black roof lining and red ambience lighting. GTI drivers will also appreciate the bespoke sports steering wheel, gear lever and instrument cluster, trim strips and stainless steel pedal caps. The standard touchscreen infotainment system also includes DAB digital radio, Bluetooth and iPod connectivity.

As well as high performance, a high level of safety equipment comes as standard in the Golf GTI. On top of high passive safety levels – thanks in part to a passenger cell made from high- and ultra-high strength steels – active safety features include the Automatic Post-Collision Braking system, which automatically applies the vehicle brakes after an accident to reduce the chances of a second impact; the pre-crash system, which tensions seatbelts and closes windows and the sunroof if an accident is likely to improve the effectiveness of the airbags; Front Assist, which warns the driver in the event of coming too close to the vehicle in front, can prime the brakes, and operates at speeds of up to 99 mph; City Emergency Braking, which can automatically brake the vehicle at speeds below 18 mph;

Automatic Distance Control, a radar-operated cruise control that maintains a set distance from the vehicle in front; and seven airbags as standard, including one for the driver's knees.

Optional equipment includes 19-inch 'Santiago' alloy wheels, 'Vienna' leather upholstery, keyless entry, High Beam Assist, Lane Assist, Park Assist (parking sensors are standard), a rear view camera, ACC Adaptive Chassis Control, touchscreen satellite navigation and a Dynaudio sound pack with 10-channel amplifier and eight speakers.

For more details visit www.volkswagen.co.uk.

Key facts

- Engine: four-cylinder TSI (turbocharged direct petrol injection); front transverse; displacement 1,984 cc; bore/stroke 82.5/92.8 mm; compression ratio 9.8:1
- Power: 220 PS from 4,500-6,300 rpm / GTI Performance 230 PS 4,700-6,200 rpm
- Torque: 350 Nm (258 lbs ft) from 1,500-4,400 rpm / GTI Performance 1,500-4,600
- Front brakes 312 x 25 mm ventilated discs / rear brakes 300 x 12 mm solid discs / GTI Performance front brakes 340 x 30 mm ventilated discs / rear brakes 310 x 22 mm ventilated discs
- Fuel consumption / CO₂ emissions: 47.1 mpg; 139 g/km (manual), 44.1 mpg, 148 g/km (DSG); 44.1 mpg, 149 g/km CO₂ (DSG Performance)
- Performance (manual): 0-62 mph in 6.5 sec; top speed 152 mph / GTI Performance 0-62 mph in 6.4 sec; top speed 155 mph
- Unladen weight: 1,351 kg

Golf GTI model line-up and pricing

Trim level	Engine derivative	CO ₂ , g/km	Urban mpg	Extra-urban mpg	Combined mpg	Price, £ RRP OTR
GTI	2.0-litre TSI 220 PS 3dr	139	37.7	55.4	47.1	25,845
GTI	2.0-litre TSI 220 PS 5dr	139	37.7	55.4	47.1	26,500
GTI	2.0-litre TSI 220 PS DSG 3dr	148	34.9	53.3	44.1	27,260
GTI	2.0-litre TSI 220 PS DSG 5dr	148	34.9	53.3	44.1	27,915
GTI Performance	2.0-litre TSI 230 PS 3dr	139	37.7	55.4	47.1	26,825
GTI Performance	2.0-litre TSI 230 PS 5dr	139	37.7	55.4	47.1	27,480
GTI Performance	2.0-litre TSI 230 PS DSG 3dr	149	34.9	52.3	44.1	28,240
GTI Performance	2.0-litre TSI 230 PS DSG 5dr	149	34.9	52.3	44.1	28,895