

# Nissan Navara

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What's in a name? Someone clearly thought about this one, with the name Navara no more applicable to its appointed machine than its meaning.

**“Vivid imagination who can bring inspired messages to the world, you like to enjoy the pleasures of life.”**

South Africans have always had a passion for Light Delivery Vehicles, presumably by the nature of our rugged and active outdoor lifestyles. This is reflected in vehicle sales figures, with LDV's always rating high and will no doubt remain so.

In years gone, the hardcore bunch would have sniggered at the thought of Aircon, electric windows and electric seats; that has long gone. Now, your mates tease you about the lack of modern luxury conveniences your LDV has. It has been around for a short while now, so what is it really like. I love detail and specs, but I am not going to cover every detail, you would do that yourself if you were considering the Navara. What I will do, is highlight the real life important bits that you should consider important and guide you realistically.

Internal space overall, including the simply massive headroom and rear passenger seated space is really impressive.



Nissan is rock solid brand that has at stages and perhaps cleverly so, weathered the automotive storm quietly in the background. Yet has always been there, perhaps not as in-your-face as some others, but with a proven motorsport heritage and reliability in the sedan and Light Delivery Vehicle sector.

At first appearance the 2.3 4x4 LE model I was provided simply says that this being a further iteration, lets you know that Nissan knows what they are doing. The 5 colors suite most taste, that said, the silver I was driving was rather staid for such a hulk of a vehicle, the Orange or Red are a must have. From all angles, there can be absolutely no doubt that it is impressive.

With bulky but modern and sleek lines, any vehicle has to look good to start with, that it does. The tailgate with a rear spoiler adds a little appreciated character, without being ridiculous.

Climbing in, your immediate senses make you feel the seat, the steering and have a general look around. It is that immediate sense of comfort, safety and ease that you look for, it has that. Following, you fiddle and quickly discover the important bits. The headlights, windscreen wipers, door controls, climate controls, blue tooth connection and sound system controls all fall to hand and are quickly fettled. The sound system very easily accommodates modern USB and other connections and is as good as almost all competitors. The leather-wrapped steering wheel and seats are very comfortable.

As standard on all models, and impressively so, you have a very capable full navigation system & reverse camera, all accessible from steering functions. These are typically extras in most other brands.

In cabin storage is a given requirement, there can never be enough. Glasses holder on the roof as a standard feature is a small but important feature in such a recreational vehicle. Another great feature is the extra charger facility on the upper dash in the tray area.



Similarly and a really impressive feature being the industrial style charger in the load bin area. You may not think you need it, but once it is available, you will never stop using it. Under rear seat storage, another nifty feature.



Safety is a given, with a 4-star Euro NCAP rating, Airbags standard, ABS, EBD, Vehicle dynamic control and Traction control, all as standard systems.

The engine is excellent. As a twin-turbo diesel engine, pushing out 140kW and 450Nm of torque, towing a triple loader motorcycle trailer with load, I had to occasionally remind myself to slow down! My driving, mostly around town returned an average of around 9.5 l/100, on the open road without effort, I saw 8.5l/100. A fuel tank at 80 liters.

The gearbox, a seven speed auto, was very well mated. Although at lower speeds it felt somewhat quick and short in shifting, this is due to the capability of hauling massive load effortlessly. This was not of any inconvenience, with smooth precise shifting.

Much has been ranted about the new 5 link Coil rear suspension setup. Again, this would be commentary from the absolute hardcore bunch. In reality, the smoothness and handling of the vehicle and maintaining its composure under towing and load is exception. A massive plus to anyone that is serious about having a daily use LDV.

Being such a large vehicle, brakes always something that I earmarked for careful consideration. The brakes are simply excellent, with superb feel and response, something that is not so on some other LDV's



The load bin size is as good as any, at 1.503 / 1.560m. The securing systems are often a pain with insufficient securing points or external points, no hassles here. The Utili-Track tie down system for securing has two channels, running the length of the bin walls, with heavy duty moveable cleats that can be locked anywhere along.

Lights, like overall visibility from the driver's seat, are critical, with such poor driving and road conditions we have the LED lighting, excellent all round visibility and rear view mirrors are simply spot on.

Pricing starts at R461.900, already impressive even at a lower spec vehicle of this size and ability. Servicing and maintenance is an excellent 6-years/150000 km warranty as well as a 3-years/90 000 km service plan, all upgradeable, no surprises here.

The Nissan approved and fitted towbar with undercarriage lighting was an impressive facility. An extensive Nissan accessories kit also ensures that you can customize to your hearts content. To mention a few of the important items that would be popular sees; Side

steps, nudge bar to include light and heavy duty front and rear fully integrated bull bars, fender flares, a range of Matt Black 18 inch Allow Wheels, side window visors, Bonnet guard, head light and taillight surrounds, load bin sports bar, tow bar, seat covers, decals and various load bin canopy styles.

I did not venture anywhere near 4x4 territory and therefore cannot comment on the prowess. That said doing the usual urban excursion such as pavement crossing, verge parking, very steep driveway and a little sandy road excursion, as the bulk of any LDV's tend to see, the Navara is excellent. In particular, living with an LDV as a daily drive multipurpose vehicle, the suspension ride comfort and handling is simply excellent in even such light city "off-roading".

So, is this a vehicle that I would consider if I were purchasing an LDV? Absolutely. All other usual considerations aside the little conveniences of extra chargers, securing points, comfort and imposing good looks make this a serious final contender.

Although a personal preference, the only negative issues would be getting used to a high steering ratio lock to lock at low speed. Perhaps this is moreover something I am not used to as I don't drive an LDV. Likewise, the upper bound of the steering height adjustment is not a problem, however is a little low for my liking. That said, the Navara has known exceptional turning ability for such a big and 4x4 vehicle. The low position of the climatic controls on the central console are somewhat difficult to see while driving.

Safe driving