

2018 Toyota Corolla iM Matches Fun with Practicality

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Take all that's great about the Toyota Corolla – distinctive style, renowned Toyota quality and dependability, an abundance of technology, and high fuel efficiency – and add the versatility of a 5-door hatchback, and, voilà, you get the essence of Corolla iM. Enhancing the Corolla iM's experience is its double-wishbone style multi-link rear suspension. Monospec pricing means consumers get a long list of standard equipment, plus, a Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) that's under \$20,000. Its sole option: a refined Continuously Variable Transmission with intelligence and Shift Mode (CVTi-S).

Safety and Sensibility

The Corolla iM comes with standard Toyota Safety Sense C (TSS-C), as well as eight standard airbags, including a driver's knee airbag and a front passenger seat cushion airbag. The TSS-C package features three proprietary active safety technologies and combines a camera and laser beam for enhanced performance and reliability. With Lane Departure Alert (LDA), Automatic High Beams (AHB), and a Pre-Collision System (PCS), TSS-C can help prevent or mitigate collisions in a wide range of vehicle speeds.

A Sedan's Daring Alter-Ego

The iM looks the part of the sedan's daring sibling. A trapezoidal lower grille, sharp-eyed headlights and side bezels with a honeycomb mesh pattern give it a sporty face. The aerodynamic expression carries into the profile, which conveys dynamic movement from the lower front to the rear.

Details on the Corolla iM are a pleasant surprise for an affordable hatchback. The piano black grille treatment, standard sporty body aero kit, along with LED daytime running lights and taillights, leave an unmistakable nighttime signature. The color selection puts an exclamation point on the design: Blizzard Pearl, Classic Silver Metallic, Black Sand Pearl, Barcelona Red Metallic, Spring Green Metallic, and Electric Storm Blue.

Spunky, Yet Fuel-Efficient

The 1.8-liter DOHC engine is eager to rev and is easy on gas. The 137-horsepower 1.8-liter 4-cylinder engine uses Valvematic continuously variable valve timing (lift and phasing) technology to offer a broad torque curve, so the iM feels responsive in different driving situations.

The Corolla iM has a standard, easy-to-shift 6-speed manual transmission, making for an engaging and active driving experience. Both the manual and automatic iM models come standard with Hill Start Assist which helps to prevent roll-back when pulling away from a stop sign or traffic light on an incline.

The optional automatic is also perfectly suited to the 1.8-liter engine. It's a Continuously Variable Transmission with intelligence and Shift Mode (CVTi-S) that's been sport-tuned for driving enjoyment. Few CVTs operate as responsively as the iM's CVTi-S. The transmission has a Sport Mode, as well as manual shifting capability with seven stepped shift points. In Sport Mode, the CVTi-S alters shift points and provides a livelier feel through the accelerator's enhanced responsiveness. AI-SHIFT logic detects lateral G-force during cornering and maintains engine speed by restricting unnecessary shift changes.

Using the console shifter, the driver can make fast, sequential shifts through the transmission's seven predefined steps, accompanied by the familiar sense of positive shift engagement. The 4.2-inch TFT multi-information display within the instrument cluster displays M – for manual – mode activity, including the “gear” position, and other vehicle information. Like all Corolla models, the iM is fuel efficient, with EPA-estimated 28 mpg city/36 highway/31 combined for the CVTi-S model.

Sophisticated Moves

In the iM, instant gratification behind the wheel is bound to evolve into long-term love. Driving enthusiasts well know the performance advantage of a high-strength body structure and a sophisticated four-wheel independent suspension. The iM checks those boxes by using ample high-strength steel and special reinforcements in its structure. The chassis, with sophisticated double-wishbone style multi-link rear suspension and standard 17-inch alloy wheels, smooths out bumps and eagerly handles curves. Another benefit: its compact design allows for more cargo room in the trunk.

Add in meaty 225/45R17 tires and the iM delivers a tight, taut road feel and a comfortable ride. The Electronic Power Steering (EPS) system makes low-speed maneuvering a breeze and provides good feel and less assistance at highway speeds. It also helps boost fuel efficiency, because the system consumes power only when assist is needed.

Premium Interior, Affordable Price

Toyota value permeates the Corolla iM's well-appointed cabin. Standard bolstered front sport seats are designed to fit snugly around passengers' physiques and integrated Whiplash Injury Lessening (WIL) adds structure for enhanced occupant protection.

The layered dashboard design combines sports car-inspired instrument panel styling with easy-to-use controls. Borrowing ideas from the luxury car realm, the Corolla iM keeps noise outside with an acoustically-insulated windshield and foam-type cabin insulation, plus, floor silencer sheets. The result is a premium driving experience that's unexpected in this segment.

The lengthy roster of standard amenities is impressive. Its 60/40 fold-down rear seats and standard cargo cover aid everyday usability. Passengers can store all sizes of personal items in the roomy glove and center console boxes, not to mention, the numerous front door pockets and storage bins found throughout.

The Corolla iM comes with a high-grade standard multimedia system. The 6-speaker Pioneer sound system will play from a variety of sources, including iPods and other devices. It's controlled through an easy to use 7-inch Display Audio unit that also includes standard HD Radio and Aha. The same screen also provides the view for the standard rear backup camera.

Its sporty leather-wrapped wheel includes fingertip switches for audio, multi-info display, and hands-free phone calls via Bluetooth. The 4.2-inch color TFT multi-information display between the main instrument gauges provides displays for the car's features and other functions.

The Corolla iM keeps the value surprises coming. The iM's dual-zone automatic climate control helps to ensure that all passengers are comfortable no matter the climate. And on cold mornings, the color-keyed heated power-folding exterior mirrors helps to quickly clear up fog or frost. Auto on/off headlamps are yet another premium amenity that's standard on the iM.

Limited Warranty

Toyota's 36-month/36,000 mile basic new-vehicle warranty applies to all components other than normal wear and maintenance items. Additional 60-month warranties cover the powertrain for 60,000 miles and corrosion with no mileage limitation.

Standard Toyota Care is a complimentary plan covering normal factory-scheduled maintenance and 24-hour roadside assistance for two years or 25,000 miles, whichever comes first.