

## Motoring New Car Road Test

# The Audi Q5 Sportback brings

Audi has given its Q5 SUV the Sportback treatment. Is it still appealing with coupe styling?

WE'RE getting used to niches in the car industry, so it's no longer a surprise to see a coupe version of an SUV. And that's what we have here, the latest addition to Audi's 'crossover utility vehicle' line-up.

The Q5 Sportback is essentially Audi's mid-sized SUV with a sloping rear end, boasting the same imposing styling but with a little less practicality. It seems like an odd compromise to make, but Audi isn't the only manufacturer seeing huge sales from these sleeker SUVs.

We've been testing a left-hand-drive model in the UK ahead of the car's launch, so let's see what it's like to drive.

### What's new?

This is a new model, but it's largely the same as the Q5 SUV. The key differences are in the styling, with the rear end dipping early in the roofline to give an elongated appearance, which coupled with the high rear bumper gives the back a pinched appearance.

Although that roof puts a dent in boot space, there's an optional sliding rear seat that can increase luggage capacity. Elsewhere, it's largely as you were with the SUV version, with the same range of engines, air suspension and driver assistance systems.

### What's under the bonnet?

At launch there are two diesels, one petrol and a hybrid. The entry diesel is a 40 TDI making 201bhp and 400Nm of torque. It gets mild hybrid electrification for improved efficiency, registering about 44mpg and CO2 emissions of up to 176g/km on the Sport trim.

Meanwhile, the SQ5 Sportback has a 3.0-litre diesel making 336bhp and 700Nm of torque, with a five-second 0-60mph time. It's naturally less efficient, though, with fuel economy of about 34mpg and CO2 emissions of up to 222g/km.

The plug-in hybrid starts at £50,270 and promising up to 188mpg and CO2 emissions up to 37g/km. There are two versions, with the 50 model making 295bhp and the 55 making 362bhp.

We've been testing the 45 TFSI petrol, which makes 261bhp and 370Nm of torque, recording about 32mpg and up to 202g/km CO2. With a 0-60mph time of about six seconds, it's not considerably slower than the S model, either.



### Fast facts

- Model as tested: Audi Q5 Sportback 45 TFSI
- Price: Starts at £44,565 from Jacksons
- Engine: 2.0-litre petrol
- Power: 261bhp
- Torque: 370Nm
- Max speed: 149mph
- 0-60mph: 5.9 seconds
- MPG: 31.4-32.8
- Emissions: 205-197g/km CO2

■ With a punchy engine, the Q5 Sportback has all the performance the average buyer could ever want

### What's it like to drive?

It's a punchy engine as the numbers suggest, responding quickly to inputs and surging towards the red line with an aggressive thrum. Considering it's not the S model, it has all the performance the average buyer could ever want, and sounds great with it.

However, despite these sporting abilities from the engine, in everyday driving the Q5 Sportback settles into a relaxing cruise easily, whether at slow speeds in town or out on the motorway. The adaptive air suspension will be playing a big part in this, though it does give the ability to stiffen up when fun roads lie ahead.

Flicking the drive mode to dynamic sharpens the car up a little, but the dif-

ference between that and normal modes is minimal. In tight corners it's hardly agile, feeling heavy and quick to understeer when pressing on, but dial back your enthusiasm and it can be a fun steer in the corners.

### How does it look?

Audi's SUV range has a bold and imposing look to it, and since the front half is basically identical in the Sportback that's something that remains true here. It gets large side air inlets in the front bumper and a prominent front grille, sitting between LED headlights.

At the rear, the sloping roofline looks great and works far more seamlessly than rivals from other brands. The rear window blends into a small spoiler-like section in the tailgate, with a chunky lower bumper helping to add to the sporty look. Overall it's a handsome if unexciting car.

### What's it like inside?

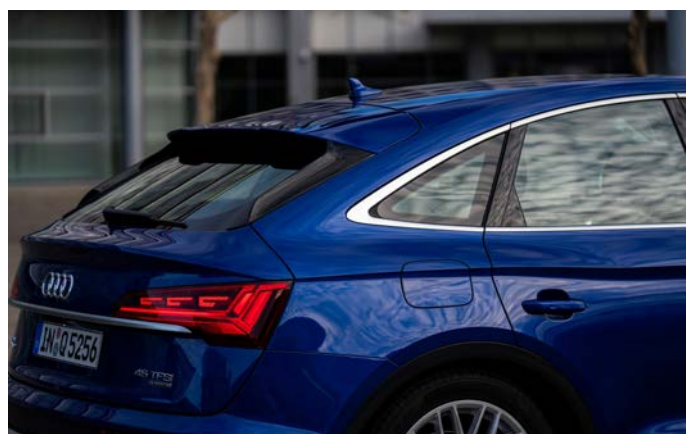
The cabin is very classy and typically Audi, with high-quality materials used throughout. It's not the most interesting to look at, though, with plenty of black and Audi's simple button layouts. It's all very functional but certainly lacks character.



■ The cabin is classy with high-quality materials throughout



■ The 45 TFSI petrol makes 261bhp and 370Nm of torque



■ The rear end dips early to give the car an elongated appearance

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# extra style to the SUV line-up

Meanwhile, the tablet-like central infotainment screen is responsive with great resolution, and Audi's infotainment menus are well-designed and intuitive to use. However, the single screen set-up looks a little dated compared with the dual-screen setups found in other new Audi models, but it's nice to have physical buttons and dials for the climate controls.

### What's the spec like?

The Q5 Sportback starts with the Sport trim, so it's pretty well-specified even from the entry model.

Prices start at £44,945 for this model and equipment includes 18-inch alloy wheels, drive mode selection, LED headlights and tail lights, twin-leather sports seats with heating and various sporty styling additions to the exterior.

Inside you get a 10.1-inch touchscreen infotainment system with navigation, 12.3-inch virtual cockpit, cruise control, reversing camera and a variety of safety systems.

Upgrade to S line from £47,495 and you get 19-inch wheels, S line sport suspension, S line body kit, Alcantara and leather upholstery and brushed aluminium interior inlays. Finally, the top-spec Vorsprung starts at £62,645 and gets 21-inch wheels, adaptive air suspension, OLED rear lights, panoramic sunroof, Bang & Olufsen sound system, wireless phone charging and adaptive cruise control.

Hybrid versions have two even higher trims, called Competition and Competition Vorsprung. The top model gets 21-inch alloy wheels, a black styling pack and extensive safety kit and starts at £71,070.



■ The Audi Q5 Sportback is a fantastic all-rounder

### Verdict

The Audi Q5 Sportback is a fantastic all-rounder, providing a small sprinkling of fun when required but excelling at being

a casual, everyday cruiser. Its USP is that it's a sensible SUV that's perfect for completing the school run without any added stress, and despite its big alloy wheels remains remarkably composed on a potholed road.

However, these are all things that the Q5 SUV does without losing out on boot space.

Those opting for the Q5 Sportback will not be disappointed, but it's a purchase made purely for aesthetic reasons.