

all new 2017 kia optima plug in hybrid

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All New 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid: A Comprehensive Review

The automotive world in 2017 was a crossroads between conventional internal combustion engines and the emerging wave of electrified powertrains. At the heart of this transition stood the **all new 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid**, a vehicle that sought to blend the familiar comfort of a midsize sedan with the promise of electric only driving. This in depth guide explores every facet of the 2017 Optima Plug In Hybrid—from its powertrain and technology to its safety features and real world performance. Whether you're a seasoned Kia enthusiast or a potential buyer weighing options, this article will equip you with the knowledge to make an informed decision.

1. Overview of the 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid

The 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid (PHEV) represented Kia's commitment to electrification while maintaining the brand's signature blend of value and style. Positioned as a midsize sedan, the Optima PHEV was available exclusively in a single trim: the Premium. It combined a 2.0 liter turbocharged gasoline engine with a 1.4 liter electric motor and a lithium ion battery pack that could be charged via a standard household outlet or a dedicated charging station.

1.1 Design and Exterior Styling

From the outside, the Optima PHEV retained the sleek lines and aggressive front fascia that had become synonymous with the Optima line. Key visual cues that distinguished the PHEV included a distinctive chrome front grille, a subtle "PHEV" badge on the rear, and a more aerodynamic roofline to accommodate the battery pack. The 17 inch alloy wheels, available in two design options, added a touch of sportiness to the sedan's overall silhouette.

1.2 Interior Comfort and Materials

Inside, the Premium trim offered a well-appointed cabin featuring leather trimmed seats, a 7 inch touchscreen infotainment system, and a 6 speaker audio setup. The seat upholstery was a blend of soft leather and high quality synthetic fibers, delivering a premium feel without compromising durability. Ambient lighting and a panoramic sunroof further enhanced the interior ambience, making long drives feel more relaxing.

2. Powertrain and Performance

The 2017 Optima Plug In Hybrid's powertrain was a hybrid of engineering precision and environmental consciousness. Let's break down the key components.

2.1 The 2.0 Liter Turbocharged Engine

The gasoline side of the powertrain was a 2.0 liter, four cylinder, turbocharged engine that produced 147 horsepower and 161 lb ft of torque. This engine was paired with a continuously variable transmission (CVT) that delivered smooth, responsive acceleration.

2.2 Electric Motor and Battery Pack

Complementing the gasoline engine was a 1.4 liter electric motor that produced 79 horsepower and 162 lb ft of torque. Together with the battery pack, the combined output was 210 horsepower. The battery itself had a nominal

capacity of 8.9 kWh, allowing for an all electric range of approximately 20 miles under the EPA's testing cycle.

2.3 Combined Driving Modes

The Optima PHEV offered three primary driving modes:

- EV Mode: Pure electric driving up to the 20 mile limit.
- Hybrid Mode: The engine and motor work together, optimizing fuel efficiency.
- EV+ Mode: Combines electric power with the engine for increased power output.

These modes were selectable via a dedicated button on the center console, allowing drivers to tailor their experience based on driving conditions and personal preference.

2.4 Performance Figures

While not a sports sedan, the Optima PHEV delivered respectable performance metrics:

- 0-60 mph: 8.0 seconds
- Top Speed: 110 mph (electronically limited)
- Fuel Economy (Hybrid Mode): 30 mpg city / 33 mpg highway
- Fuel Economy (EV Mode): Equivalent to 70 mpg (based on electric consumption)

These figures positioned the Optima PHEV as a practical choice for commuters seeking a blend of efficiency and everyday usability.

3. Technology and Connectivity

In 2017, the automotive industry was rapidly adopting advanced connectivity features. The Optima PHEV was no exception, offering a suite of tech amenities designed to keep drivers connected and entertained.

3.1 Infotainment System

The 7-inch touchscreen served as the central hub for navigation, media, and vehicle settings. It supported Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, allowing seamless integration of smartphones. The system also featured Bluetooth connectivity, voice recognition, and a dedicated USB port for charging devices.

3.2 Driver Assistance Features

The Premium trim came equipped with a range of safety technologies:

- Adaptive Cruise Control: Maintains a set distance from the vehicle ahead.
- Lane Departure Warning: Alerts drivers when the vehicle drifts out of its lane.
- Forward Collision Warning: Detects potential collisions and warns the driver.
- Blind Spot Monitoring: Provides visual alerts for vehicles in adjacent lanes.

These features were part of Kia's "SmartSense" suite, which aimed to enhance safety without compromising the driving experience.

3.3 Interior Connectivity

Beyond the infotainment system, the Optima PHEV included Wi-Fi hotspot capabilities, allowing passengers to stay connected during long drives. The vehicle's dashboard also featured a digital instrument cluster that could display battery status, energy consumption, and other key metrics.

4. Charging and Battery Management

Charging the Optima PHEV's battery was straightforward, thanks to its compatibility with standard charging

infrastructure.

4.1 Home Charging

Using a standard 120 volt outlet, the battery could be fully charged in approximately 7–8 hours. For those who installed a Level 2 charger (240 volts), charging time reduced to around 4 hours.

4.2 Public Charging

While the Optima PHEV did not come equipped with a dedicated DC fast charging port, it could still utilize Level 2 public chargers. Kia's "Kia Charge" app provided users with a list of nearby charging stations and real time availability.

4.3 Battery Health and Warranty

The 8.9 kWh battery pack was covered by a 8 year/100,000 mile warranty, offering peace of mind for long term owners. Kia's battery management system monitored temperature, charge cycles, and overall health to maximize longevity.

5. Real World Driving Experience

To truly understand the 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid, it's essential to evaluate its performance in everyday scenarios. Below, we share insights from real world usage, including commuting, highway driving, and long distance trips.

5.1 Commuting and Urban Driving

For daily commutes within city limits, the Optima PHEV's 20 mile electric range proved invaluable. Drivers could often complete their entire commute on electric power alone, eliminating the need for gasoline consumption. The EV Mode's instant torque made city starts smoother and reduced wear on the engine.

5.2 Highway and Long Distance Travel

When traveling on highways, the Hybrid Mode offered a balance between speed and fuel efficiency. The combined engine motor setup allowed for seamless acceleration, while the electric motor contributed to overall fuel economy. Drivers reported a noticeable reduction in fuel costs compared to a conventional gasoline sedan.

5.3 Charging Convenience

Charging at home became a routine part of the ownership experience. The ability to plug the vehicle into a standard outlet overnight meant drivers rarely needed to seek external charging stations. For those on the go, Level 2 public chargers were typically located in parking garages and shopping centers, making them convenient for short stops.

5.4 Handling and Ride Comfort

The Optima PHEV's suspension was tuned for a comfortable ride, absorbing potholes and uneven road surfaces with ease. The steering was responsive, providing a sense of confidence in both city streets and open highways. The cabin's noise insulation was effective, keeping wind and road noise at a minimum.

6. Safety Ratings and Crash Test Performance

Safety is paramount for any family vehicle, and the 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid earned commendable ratings.

6.1 NHTSA Ratings

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) awarded the Optima PHEV a 5 star overall safety rating. Specific categories included:

- Front Crash: 5 stars
- Side Crash: 5 stars
- Rollover: 5 stars
- Overall: 5 stars

6.2 IIHS Ratings

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) also praised the vehicle, giving it a “Good” rating in all categories, including:

- Moderate Overlap Front
- Side
- Roof Strength
- Head Restraint and Seatbelt Use
- Small Overlap Front

These accolades underscore the Optima PHEV's robust safety architecture, making it a reliable choice for families and individual drivers alike.

7. Ownership Costs and Incentives

Owning a plug in hybrid involves several cost considerations beyond the initial purchase price. Let's break them down.

7.1 Purchase Price and Incentives

The 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid had a starting MSRP of approximately \$27,000. In many regions, buyers could benefit from federal tax credits up to \$7,500, as well as state and local incentives that varied by location.

7.2 Fuel Savings

With an all electric range of 20 miles, daily commutes could be completed without gasoline. For a driver with a 30 mile daily commute, the Optima PHEV could reduce fuel costs by up to 50% compared to a conventional sedan.

7.3 Maintenance and Repairs

Hybrid vehicles typically require less maintenance on the engine side due to reduced mileage. However, battery replacement can be expensive if it becomes necessary. Kia's battery warranty mitigates this risk, covering most battery-related repairs for 8 years or 100,000 miles.

7.4 Insurance

Insurance rates for hybrids can vary. Some insurers offer discounts for electric or hybrid vehicles due to lower environmental impact and reduced likelihood of catastrophic damage. It's advisable to shop around and compare quotes.

8. Competitor Comparison

In the midsize sedan segment, the 2017 Optima Plug In Hybrid faced competition from models such as the Toyota Prius Prime, Honda Clarity Plug In Hybrid, and the Hyundai Sonata Hybrid. Here's a quick comparison:

- All Electric Range: Optima PHEV – 20 miles; Prius Prime – 25 miles; Clarity – 31 miles; Sonata Hybrid – 0

miles (no plug in).

- Combined Power: Optima PHEV – 210 hp; Prius Prime – 121 hp; Clarity – 212 hp; Sonata Hybrid – 208 hp.
- Price: Optima PHEV – \$27,000; Prius Prime – \$28,500; Clarity – \$31,000; Sonata Hybrid – \$25,000.
- Fuel Economy: Optima PHEV – 30 mpg city / 33 mpg highway; Prius Prime – 54 mpg city / 50 mpg highway; Clarity – 52 mpg city / 49 mpg highway; Sonata Hybrid – 40 mpg city / 39 mpg highway.

While the Optima PHEV may not match the Prius Prime in terms of fuel economy, its more powerful engine, better handling, and stylish design make it an attractive alternative for buyers seeking a balance between performance and efficiency.

9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

9.1 Is the 2017 Kia Optima Plug In Hybrid still available for purchase?

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