

BMW 1 Series (F20)

Hot diesel BMW 1 Series serves up plenty of thrills – Especially the 125d M Sport

BMW F20



Overview

Production June 2011–2015 (F20)

Model years 2012–2015

Assembly [Leipzig, Germany](#)
[Regensburg, Germany](#)
[Araquari, Brazil](#)
[Kulim, Kedah, Malaysia](#)

Designer Nicolas Huet (2008)

Body and chassis

Body style 3-door [hatchback](#) (F21)
5-door [hatchback](#) (F20)

Related [BMW 2 Series](#)

BMW 1 Series (F20)

Dimensions	
Wheelbase	2,690 mm (105.9 in)
Length	4,324 mm (170.2 in)
Width	1,765 mm (69.5 in)
Height	1,421 mm (55.9 in)
Curb weight	1,360–1,590 kg (3,000–3,510 lb)

The second generation [BMW 1 Series](#) range comprises three-door hatchback (model code F21) and five-door hatchback (F20) models. Like its [E87](#) predecessor, it uses a [longitudinally-mounted](#) engine, aluminum multi-link suspension and a [rear-wheel drive](#) chassis (however some models are available with [all-wheel drive](#)).

Transmission options are a six-speed manual or an eight-speed [ZF 8HP](#) automatic.

The F20 five-door hatchback was unveiled in 2011 Frankfurt Motor Show. Early models included the 116i, 118i, 116d, 118d, 120d. In 2012, the 125i, 125d and *116d EfficientDynamics Edition* models were introduced. The 114d, 120i and [xDrive](#) models were also introduced.

The F21 three-door hatchbacks were added in 2012. The M135i was unveiled in 2012 Geneva International Motor Show. In November 2012, the M135i xDrive, 118d xDrive and 120d xDrive were released.

Trim variations include the *Sport Line* and *Urban Line*, which differ by alloy wheels, kidney grille and other appearance-related features. There is also the M-Sport line that is optional on the rest of the 1-Series range and standard on the M135i.

Diesel engines

Model	Engine code	Power	Torque	0–100 km/h (s) (MT/AT)
114d	N47D16	95 PS (70 kW; 94 hp) @4000	235 N·m (173 lb·ft) @1500–2750	12.2/na
116d EfficientDynamics Edition		116 PS (85 kW; 114 hp) @4000	260 N·m (192 lb·ft) @1750–2500	10.5/na
116d	N47D20	116 PS (85 kW; 114 hp) @4000	260 N·m (192 lb·ft) @1750–2500	10.3/10.7 (2011) 10.3/10.3 (2012–present)
118d		143 PS (105 kW; 141 hp) @4000	320 N·m (236 lb·ft) @1750–2500	8.9/8.9 (2011) 8.9/8.6 (2012–present)

BMW 1 Series (F20)

Model	Engine code	Power	Torque	0–100 km/h (s) (MT / AT)
120d		184 PS (135 kW; 181 hp) @4000	380 N·m (280 lb·ft) @1750–2750	7.2/7.3 (2011) 7.2/7.1 (2012– present)
125d		218 PS (160 kW; 215 hp) @4400	450 N·m (332 lb·ft) @1500–2500	6.5/6.3

The Twin-Turbo 125D 5Dr Hatchback 8 speed auto is the most expensive BMW 1 Series you can buy, with prices starting from £29,310. Is it a worthy flagship? Well, the 125d M Sport certainly looks the part, and it packs hot hatch acceleration with the potential to return almost 60mpg.



M Sport trim gives you 18-inch alloys, a lower and more aggressive front bumper and blue brake callipers. Other subtly sporty additions include lower side skirts and wider, gloss black kidney grilles, as well as a diffuser complete with chromed twin exhaust pipes.

Inside, there are figure-hugging sports seats clad in suede, and a chunky steering wheel and gear knob. The performance is all you'd expect of the M Sport badge. Like the 120d, the 125d uses a 2.0-litre turbodiesel engine, with an output of 215bhp – up 34bhp on the 120d. As a result, 0-62mph takes 6.5 seconds (against 7.3 seconds for the 120d) when hooked up to the slick eight-speed automatic gearbox

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in our test model. Fuel economy is also impressive. BMW claims 58.9mpg, against 62.8mpg for the 120d. The only downside is that the 125d can't quite match the 120d on emissions – it puts out 7g/km more CO₂, at 126g/km, which means road tax costs an extra £70 a year.

This is "What Car" has said about this stunning sporty 5 door Hatchback. The BMW 125d is the most powerful diesel version of the BMW 1 Series hatchback yet and is one of the best small family estate cars. It's desirable, good to drive and surprisingly cheap to run. It has excellent performance, good ride comfort with best infotainment system in the class. The new 125d also averages 57.6mpg, while CO₂ emissions of 129g/km put it in the 19% company car tax band; just one band above the 120d. On the ROAD price for the 125d M Sport ranges anywhere between £29,310 to £34,225, depending on the options you select. Efficiency improves to 58.9mpg and 126g/km if you specify the optional eight-speed auto gearbox, as fitted to our test car, although this isn't enough to bump the car into a lower tax band. The 125d comes exclusively in M Sport trim, which brings a range of sporty touches, including 18-inch alloy wheels, sports seats and firmer, sports suspension. The 2.0-litre diesel engine feels strong and flexible in all traffic conditions, while the smooth auto gearbox perfectly compliments it. You can knock the box into a sport mode that makes it kick down earlier, but the engine produces so much torque (332lb ft) that there are few occasions where you would want or need to use this option. Unlike most of its rivals, the 1 Series is rear-wheel drive, and this helps give it excellent balance. It darts into bends and then grips hard, while the steering is well weighted. The firmed-up M Sport suspension also helps agility because it allows little roll in bends. With an enormous 450Nm of maximum torque from just 1,500rpm, though, the 125d always has razor-sharp response and lots of deep-chested urge, which makes it as fast as a petrol hot hatch like the Ford Focus ST. The sports suspension is 10mm lower than standard, and certainly helps put a smile on your face on a twisty road. Thanks to BMW's Drive Performance Control system, the ride's not uncomfortable, however. The dash layout is pretty faultless; the instruments are clear and the centre console is easy to navigate. Most of the materials used in the car look smart too. The M Sport trim comes with all the gear you are likely to want, including sports seats, a DAB radio and BMW's slick iDrive system. It also brings a smattering of M Sport badges both in and out the car, plus a chunky leather steering wheel. Should I buy one? Definitely – as the 125d makes some sense as a company car because it combines its strong performance with low emissions.

You can choose from four driving modes, ranging from economy-minded ECO PRO to Comfort, Sport and Sport plus. This means the 125d can be smooth and relaxing one moment, but racy the next.

The thrills don't come cheap, though. With the £1,490 optional eight-speed auto gearbox – which we'd recommend – the list price reaches almost £30,000. And that's before you add leather trim or any other options.

Verdict

BMW 125d M Sport is at the top of the 1 Series range, and feels like it. With a subtly sporty body-kit, incredible performance, great handling and amazing fuel economy, this is a worthy alternative to petrol-engine hot hatches. It does not come cheap though and when you add a few options, you'll be paying well over £32,000.