

Launches of 2009!

Hatchback small car

TATA NANO

Launch date: In India by: Mid 2009

Will cost: Rs 1-1.4 lakh



They said it couldnt be made, they said they weren't sure if it would be a car, but Tata Motors silenced all critics with the unveiling of the Nano in January 2008. We would have been looking at this car as a current product had it not been for the Singur fiasco, which now makes it one of the most anticipated cars of this year the world over. Expected to change the way India drives and also the way the world looks at us, and riding on its revolutionary design and compact size coupled with the invincible pricing, the Nano is all set to put the whole of India on wheels, once again

Chevrolet Beat

Launch: Mid 2009

Will cost: Rs 3 lakh onwards



The Beat was introduced as a concept at the 2007 New York International Auto Show, and can be seen as an evolution of GM's current international small car, the Spark (known as the Matiz around the world).

Designed in South Korea and powered by a 1.2- litre turbocharged petrol engine, the Beat paves the way for a new generation small cars and might just be the new affordable-small-peppy car for young India. Although the production version will differ a lot from the radical concept seen in pictures, one can expect the baby Chevy to change GM's fortunes in India.

FIAT BRAVO

Launch date: **In India by: Jan 2009**

Will cost: Rs 6-7 lakh



Thoroughly Italian in its looks and European in appeal, the Fiat Bravo was set to take CBU route into India and act as a brand builder for Fiat.

After Fiat's major investments in its Ranjangaon facility, however, the Bravo will now be made in India - a fact that will bring down its prices and increase its chances of widespread success. Competing with the Fabia and bigger sedans, this fabulous hatch features brilliant interiors, lots of space and a powerful 1.9 litre multijet oilburner. If arriving in style is what you want, the Bravo will do it in spades in 2009.

Fiat Grand Punto:

Launch: May 2009

Will cost: Rs 5-6 lakh



Another stunner from the Fiat stable up for a 2009 launch is the Grande Punto hatchback. The car has been an global success for Fiat, with markets ranging from Europe to South America enjoying the Italian large hatch.

The car looks smashing, has decent space and will be powered by a petrol and the multifarious 1.3 litre Multijet diesel unit that powers the Maruti Swift, Indica Vista and Fiat's own hatch, the Palio. With a price range of around Rs 5-6 lakh and the appeal of a thoroughly international car, the Grande Punto should be placed well to set the big hatch segment on fire in 2009

Honda Jazz:

Launch: June 2009

Will cost: Rs 5-6 lakhs



Honda Siel is expected to see mid-2009 as time 'Fit' to launch its stylish 5-door hatchback, the Jazz. Already having made its mark in Japan and across the world, this smart city car will come with a 1.3-litre inline-4 petrol VTEC engine keeping in mind the economy demands of the segment, but if Honda feels generous (we wish it does) a peppier 1.5-litre engine could also be offered, making the Jazz a nice hot hatch.

Battling it out with current large hatches like the Indica Vista and the i20, as well as new competition from Fiat in the form of the Fiat Bravo and Grande Punto, the Indian hatchback space seems set to get even more crowded in 2009. Not like we're complaining.

Suzuki Splash/ritz

Launch: Early 2009

Will cost: Rs 4-5 lakh



Maruti Suzuki's already cramped hatchback space will accommodate another model in 2009 in the form of the Ritz. Known as the Splash around the world, the spacious hatchback is expected to carry an engine from KB series just like its recently launched cousin, the A-Star.

The car will fight more premium hatchbacks like the Hyundai i20, the Honda Jazz and Fiat's new 2009 cars, and speaking in the same vein, the Fiat borrowed 1.3-litre diesel engine that does the duties on the Swift is likely to be a smart option. Same efficient engine, more space and the Maruti Suzuki brand name - all sounds like the making of another potential success for the company.

Toyota small car

In India by: late 2009

Will cost: around Rs 3-4 lakh

Toyota's small car project is the dark horse of 2009 and also one of its best kept secrets. The only news on this front is the massive investment undertaken by Toyota Kirloskar on this front, and the desire of the world's largest car maker to unlock the grand small-car volumes that India promises.

The car is likely to take cues from Toyota's international small car, the Yaris, but we also know is that it will be an all-new car with the involvement of both Indian and Japanese engineers, and that the car will not compete with the Tata Nano but aim one segment higher instead. Watch this space for more

New Maini Reva:

In India by: late 2009

Will cost: Rs 4.5 lakh



After their first attempt at an all-electric car, Maini is all set to launch an improved, larger version of the REVA later this year.

The new electric bug promises more features, improved battery life and flexible seating, which would mean the car could probably accommodate 4 people. The REVA has already won hearts in Europe with its electric appeal, and will be looking to use its international experience to market the car better in India. Maini is also working on a Li-Ion battery option, which would decrease the REVA's weight drastically and provide more range.

Nissan Micra:

In India by: late 2009

Will cost: Rs 4-5 lakh



Nissan has been calm and quiet with its presence in India thus far, but 2009 could mark a change in its fortune.

Its internationally popular supermini - the Micra - will be up for an international upgrade in February, and the critical piece of information is that it will be manufactured in the company's Chennai facility. No wonder then that the Micra promises to be Nissan's next big offering in India. With a 1.2 and 1.3-litre petrol and also Nissan's 1.6-litre diesel engine options, this could be the car to turn the Japanese manufacturer's fortunes around in India.

Ford Fiesta / Mazda 2 Hatchback:

In India by: late 2009
Will cost: Rs 8-12 lakh



If there is one car that Ford India needs in its portfolio to have a well-rounded catalogue, it is a good family hatchback.

Already seeing success with its ally Mazda's Mazda2 and its own international Fiesta which is based on the same platform, Ford is likely to step into the hotly contested Indian hatchback space this year. Last we heard, the company was contemplating bringing in the Mazda2 as a CKD from its plant in Thailand (much like its Endeavour SUV), which would make the car only marginally more expensive and also take care of production pressures for Ford India.

New Chevrolet Aveo U-VA:

In India by: Early 2009

Will cost: Rs 4-5 lakh



Chevrolet's big hatch has been another one of those well-made but underperforming cars in India. The new car receives a host of changes for 2009. Viewed head on, the big Audish grille makes a huge impact.

New sweeping headlights coupled with all new bumpers make the car more attractive than ever before. The engines options, however, are expected to remain the same. The new U-VA will carry a better design, sure, but will this sort of a facelift help GM establish itself in the Indian hatchback space? 2009 holds the answer.

Diesel & Automatic Transmission Upgrades

Honda CRV – Diesel:



In India by: Mid 2009

Will cost: Rs 20-25 lakh

In the wake of the Captiva's success, Honda is all set to launch its popular CR-V in a diesel avatar.

Already doing well with a guzzling petrol unit, the CR-V hopes to set the sales chart on fire with the more practical and efficient 2.2 litre oil burner.

Toyota Corolla Altis diesel

In India by: Late 2009

Will cost: To be announced



Toyota India is expected to follow up its act of updating models with a diesel option for its recently launched D-segment contender, the Corolla Altis.

The car is available in the South East Asian markets with a small and sensible 1.4-litre diesel option, and there is no reason why Toyota India shouldn't have it in order to strengthen the appeal of its long-standing brand.

Hyundai i20 diesel:

In India by: Mid 2009

Will cost: Rs 5-6 lakh



The country has already been impressed with the international appeal, refinement and build quality of the i20.

The only factor that could be keeping it away from even more success is the absence of a diesel option. Hyundai's 1.5-litre CRDi engine (previously seen on the Getz) is expected to strengthen the Korean family hatchback's appeal in 2009, and give Maruti Suzuki Swift DDiS a few scares.

Honda Accord V6 & diesel:



In India by: Mid-2009

Will cost: Rs 22-24 lakh

Honda will look to capitalize on its leadership position in the entry-level luxury sedan segment by taking the battle to Skoda with a diesel version of the Accord.

The recently introduced 2.2-litre turbodiesel engine has been receiving rave reviews internationally, and should be doing the duty on the Accord, just like it will on the CR-V later this year. A souped up 3.5-litre V6 engine that the Accord receives internationally is also expected to make its Indian debut in 2009.

Suzuki SX4 Diesel:



In India by: End 2009

Will cost: Rs 9 lakh

Maruti Suzuki's grip over the upper C-segment with the SX4 has been loosening of late, thanks to the assault of the Ford Fiesta Duratorq and Hyundai Verna CRDi.

But Suzuki's international alliance with Fiat for its versatile diesel engine is the best solution to counter this, as Maruti Suzuki is expected to do.

Internationally, the SX4 comes with the 1.6 and the 1.9-litre diesel options, but Maruti could throw a stinker and employ the Swift's 1.3-litre diesel.

Hyundai Verna Automatic:



In India by: mid 2009

Will cost: Rs 9-11 lakh

Hyundai would be looking to capitalize on the wave it has started with the i10 and i20 hatchbacks to improve the standings of its other cars as well. First up amongst these is the Verna, which despite being a competitive car has not set the charts on fire.

Attempting to widen the reach of the city sedan and have it compete with those in a higher segment, Hyundai is expected to announce a variant with an auto-box later this year.

Chevrolet Captiva automatic:

In India by: Jan 2009

Will cost: Rs 22 lakh



The Chevrolet Captiva is GM's contender in the budding softroader market. Being a diesel, the Captiva has been selling quite well and bringing in an automatic version will only add to the numbers and the convenience of driving this big car around town.

Captiva auto will hopefully also feature a four wheel drive system which is missing in the manual version

SEDANS

NEW TATA INDIGO:

In India by: March 2009
Will cost: Rs 5-6.5 lakh



The new TATA Indigo borrows design directly from the new Indica Vista.

The TATA Indigo has been one of the top sellers in the entry-level sedan segment and with this new stylish look it will simply add more charisma to this already popular car. With Nano and the new Indigo, TATA Motors will be a significant player this year on the Indian automobile scene.

Chevrolet Cruze

In India by: 2009

Will cost: Rs 12-15 lakh



GM's flagship sedan, the Optra started off with a bang, but sales declined steadily with only the diesel Optra Magnum doing decent numbers. To fix that GM is all set to debut the Cruze.

While the Optra highlighted its Korean roots on the design front, the Cruze looks like an all American muscle. The interiors on the concept looked extremely futuristic and we expect much of it to be carried over to the production version. For the Indian market the Cruze will be offering two engine options. A 1.8 litre petrol and a 2 litre diesel. A price range between 12-15 lakh brings it bang in Civic-Corolla territory. From the looks of it, GM definitely has a winner on its hands.

FIAT LINEA

In India by: 14 Jan 2009

Will cost: Rs 7-9 lakh



The much awaited Fiat Linea is all slated to be launched on 14th Jan

The car has loads of presence owing to its size and looks more in the Corolla-Civic league. With nicely designed interiors and the frugal 1.3 litre multijet unit, the Linea should be excellent value for money

New Skoda superb:



In India by: March 2009

Will cost: Rs 20 lakh

Skoda's luxury-segment car, the Superb, didn't make too many waves when it first arrived in India.

But Skoda plans to fix that in the upgraded version expected to launch in a few months. With space and comforts easily comparable to an E-Class Merc, the Superb costs half as much, making it the perfect luxury car for those not obsessed with brand image. And with the new design dramatically improving the old car's plain-jane looks, the Superb seems to be set to do just that.

New Mitsubishi Lancer:

In India by: Mid 2009

Will cost: Rs 11-13 lakh



The new Mitsubishi Lancer has made its mark internationally by its design which it shares with the Evolution X.

Sometime in the middle of the year, this aggressive shark-like looking car will land on Indian shores and will come armed with a 2.0-litre 4-cylinder petrol engine, which, based on the international version, will be a tuner's delight. The new Lancer will compete with the likes on the Civic and Corolla.

New Nissan Teana:

In India by: Early 2009
Will cost: Rs 25 lakh



After seeing the same old options like the Accord and Camry in the entry-level luxury segment, Indian buyers are set to receive the new Nissan Teana. Based on Nissan's international Maxima and Altima platform, the Teana offers a stylish body with a refreshingly-new look. Engine-wise, the Teana will have similar engine options as its competition, a 2.4-litre 4-cylinder power plant and a 3.0-litre V6.

Volkswagen Passat CC:

**In India by: Mid 2009
Will cost: Rs 30-35 lakh**



The Volkswagen Passat CC is a 4-door coupe version of the Volkswagen Passat. The suffix CC stands for comfort coupe. Much in the line of the Mercedes-Benz CLS, the Passat CC is for those who find the original Passat boring. Slightly longer, wider and lower, the CC is for you if style is your priority.

Skoda Fabia Combi:

In India by: Mid 2009
Will cost: Rs 7-9.5 lakh



The estate version of Skoda's premium hatchback will cater to buyers looking for a spacious and comfy small car.

The new car will offer massive luggage space of 1,460 litres with seats folded flat, which is 235 litres more over the previous model. The new Fabia Combi is 7 mm longer and 46 mm higher than its predecessor

Renault Sandero:

In India by: End 2009
Will cost: Rs 4-5 lakh



The first collaboration of Mahindra and Renault yielded an inexpensive and cheerful car in the form of the Logan.

At the end of this year, the Logan's smaller cousin, the Sandero is expected to land in the country. Though the Sandero is pretty-much based on the Logan platform, Mahindra-Renault is likely to cut corners on the pricing front and give this hatchback a slightly more up-market feel than its sedan counterpart. The Sandero and will compete with cars in the mid-range large hatchback segment like the Hyundai i20 and the Honda Jazz.

SUV / MPV

Mahindra Xylo:

In India by: Jan 2009

Will cost: Rs 6-8 lakhs



M&M will venture into the MPV market this year with the launch of their all-new Xylo.

The company has been pretty hush-hush about the details of the car and the spy shots haven't revealed much, other than the fact that it looks about the same size as its main competitor, the Toyota Innova. However, we can guess that we'll likely see M&M's mHawk common-rail diesel engine doing business in this car, at least in one of the variants.

Toyota Fortuner:

**In India by: mid 2009
Will cost: Rs 18-20 lakhs**



The Fortuner will be Toyota's answer to the Chevrolet Captiva and the Honda CRV in the SUV bracket.

Powered by a 3.0 litre diesel engine, this will be most meatier and powerful car in its segment. The Fortuner is expected to offer a 7-seater variant like the Chevrolet Captiva.

New Nissan X-Trail

In India by: Early 2009
Will cost: RS 20-25 lakh

Nissan's X-Trail has been around for quite some time.

For 2009 the Japanese SUV get subtle changes on the outside. Under the hood the car gets a more powerful diesel mill coupled with the electronically activated four wheel drive system. Going head on with the CR-V, Outlander and the Captiva, the X-Trail has its work cut out

TATA Indicruz:

In India by: Mid-2009

Will cost: Rs 9-10 lakhs



2009 will mark Tata's foray into the MPV market with a new car based on the X-over concept called the Indicruz.

It will be based on the existing Safari platform and should be available with the 2.2-litre DiCOR common-rail diesel engine that has been doing rather well so far. Based on what we've seen Tata do with their new Indica Vista, we can expect the Indicruz to be fairly up-market, and will probably do well placed amongst its rivals, the new M&M Xylo and the Toyota Innova.

Facelifts / Variants

Skoda Laura Facelift:

**In India by: Mid 2009
Will cost: Rs 15-19 lakh**



One of the most successful models from the Skoda model range, the new Laura gets a beauty treatment with redesigned front bumpers and headlights as well as minor tweaks to the rear.

The new Laura now looks more contemporary and elegant in its appeal and carries the design philosophy seen on the new Fabia and the Superb.

M &M Logan Facelift:

**In India by: Early 2009
Will cost: Rs 5-7.8 lakh**



Despite being a competent and well-priced car, the Mahindra-Renault Logan has failed to click with the Indian masses in the way it was expected to. Attempting to kick-start the Logan's new lease of life will be a more contemporary facelifted version, with a new grille and more modern looks.

Toyota Innova facelift:

**In India by: Early 2009
Will cost: Rs 5-7.8 lakh**



Toyota Innova has been ruling the MPV segment since its launch and none of its rivals have managed to challenge it for the top spot.

However, Toyota is not resting on its laurels and it is all set to launch a face lifted Innova with more sophisticated design with minor tweaks to the

Hyundai Sonata Embera Facelift +pumper up engine:

In India by: Early-2009
Will cost: Rs 13-15 lakhs



With the sales of the Sonata Embera never having climbed much in the Indian market, Hyundai has decided that an upgraded version of their top-of-the range sedan might pick them up.

This year, we can expect this upgraded Sonata to arrive with a facelift and a slight increase in power from the 2.4-litre 4-cylinder engine, though exact figures are unknown at the moment

Luxury / Premium

New Audi A6:

**In India by: Early 09
Will cost: 41 - 54 lakh**



The 5-series and E-class competitor from Ingolstadt receives subtle changes for '09. The most prominent ones include changes to the grille, bumper and headlamps.

Slight changes on the suspension front will make the big German handle and ride better as well. The interiors get minor updates and so will the engines.

BMW 3 – series facelift:

In India by: March 09

Will cost: 30-35 lakh



BMW's topseller in India is all set to go under the knife as well.

Changes include a redesigned front and rear bumper, new-look tail lamps and possibly a hotter set of alloys. The interiors and engines remain unchanged.

New BMW 7 – series:



In India by: Jan 2009

Will cost: Rs 75 lakh upwards

S-Class beware. The latest luxobarge from Bavaria is practically an all new car. The double decker boot is gone and the car gains a muscular look.

All new interiors include a more user friendly i-Drive system. Under the hood, the 7 gets a host of all new engines with India getting the 750Li and 740i petrol units and the oil burning 730d.

Lamborghini Gallardo LP560/4:

**In India by: Mid 2009
Will cost: Rs 2.5 crore**



Right up there in the annals of the super-hyper-zyper cars lies the Italian bull, the Lamborghini Gallardo.

Already having thrilled its loaded Indian patrons, the Gallardo will be seen with a new 5.2-litre V10 engine, which now makes 560bhp (hence the new name). Won't make much of a difference on Indian streets, but staying at speed with the world is a kick in itself.

New Mercedes-Benz E-class:

**In India by: late 2009
Will cost: Rs 50-55 lakh**



The Fascination concept at the Paris Motor Show gave us a hint at how the new E-Class is going to be.

Sharper and more muscular than ever before, it still remains loyal to the twin-headlamp face, but instead of the oval design, you're greeted by rhomboid clear lens headlamps featuring the latest LED technology. Expect new engines and innovative technologies galore

Audi Q7 V12:

In India by: late 2008

Will cost: Rs 1.2 - 1.5 crore



Audi's monstrous Q7 is all set to be more monstrous than ever with Audi plonking in a massive turbo-charged V12 diesel unit under that muscular hood.

With 495 PS and a gut wrenching 1026.5 Nm of torque, this behemoth will be just short of climbing walls. So you get sportscar performance with seven people on board along with tons of street presence. Expect to pay northwards of a crore to get one though.

Audi Q5:

In India by: March 09

Will cost: 40 lakh



Think the Q7 is too big for you? Worry not the Q5 is here.

The baby Q7 is expected to sell in huge numbers considering the bigger and more expensive Q7 is already a hot seller. Featuring Audacious interiors, handsome exteriors coupled with brilliant 2.0 petrol and 3.0 diesel engines, Audi definitely has a winner on its hands.

BMW X6:

In India by: Early 2009

Will cost: Rs 80 lakh



Latest in the group of cars with personality disorders is the new BMW X6.

Whether it's a sports coupe or an off-roader is upto you to decide. But if you like SUV's and corners this one's for you. Great insides and choice of a 3 litre diesel or a 4.4 litre petrol coupled with BMW's famed xdrive system promise a lot of fun. This ones breaks away from the mould of traditional SUV's and is a complete enthusiast's package.

New Mercedes-Benz GL-class:

In India by: Mid 2009

Will cost: Rs 85 lakh



Adding to the expanding range of Premium SUVs in the country this year will be the Mercedes-Benz GL-Class.

This massive tank on wheels will also be one of the bigger cars in its class and will offer seating for seven. As with the other Mercedes-Benz models, the GL will be available with a large range of engines, starting from a 3-litre diesel to a 5.5-litre petrol.

Ferrari:

In India by: Mid 2009
Will cost: Upwards of a crore



The prancing horse is all set to make inroads onto Indian shores.

. With Lamborghini and Porsche already here, Ferrari also wants its share of the small but very very expensive market. From their line-up, the 612 Scaglietti, the 599 GTB and the F430 seem to be the most likely contenders to make it here.

Porsche Cayenne diesel:

In India by: 2009

Will cost: To be announced



As production of the new diesel-engined Cayenne has already started at the Porsche factory in Leipzig, Germany, talks are currently going on about getting this car to India sometime in 2009.

This oil-burning variant of Porsche's SUV will sport a 3.0-litre turbo diesel engine supplied by Audi, and will produce about 240PS of power and 550Nm of torque. This new engine will come mated to Porsche's standard Tiptronic S transmission and will offer great fuel economy in its class.

Porsche Panamera:

In India by: Late 2009

Will cost: To be announced



Another car that represents the new direction of one of the most reputed car makers in the world, the Porsche Panamera will be the first four door car to wear the enviable German badge.

Luxury comforts, legendary handling and all the power you'd want from a sedan, the Panamera is one of the most anxiously awaited models of 2009 internationally.

Jaguar Cars:

In India by: 2009

Will cost: To be announced



The other brand which Tata salvaged from the verge of collapse was Jaguar, which has been famous for its luxury and sports cars.

We estimate that Tata would want to bring in Jag's latest luxury saloon, the XF to India sometime this year. This plush four-door sedan will taken on the likes of the Mercedes-Benz E-Class and the BMW 5-series when it arrives in India

Land Rovers Cars:

In India by: 2009

Will cost: To be announced



With Tata recently buying out the premium all-terrain and multi-purpose vehicle manufacturer, Land Rover, there is word that we're quite likely to see some cars from the British marque making their debut in India sometime this year.

While there is no confirmed news as to which models will make their way over, we estimate that their flagship model, the Range Rover would be the first to arrive. That being said, Tata might opt for the safer option and get the bigger (and cheaper) Discovery 3 to India first.

Volvo S60:

In India by: Late 2009

Will cost: To be announced



Still in the concept phase and rapidly heading for production in 2009, the Volvo S60 will see the Swedish car maker head towards smaller and more sensible grounds as opposed to those that the XC90 and the S80. A great crossover concept and still expected to be priced under the higher level luxury crossovers, the S60 represents the bright new direction that Volvo Cars is headed towards

VW Scirocco:

**In India by: Late 2009
Will cost: Rs 30-32 lakh**



Volkswagen has returned to its sporty-hatchback past with the smoking hot Scirocco, revealed recently at the 2008 Geneva Auto Show.

The two door hatchback is firmly into the luxury CBU territory, but with its fast looks and faster manners (a 140bhp turbo-diesel, no less), it could make for an interesting buy for those with the dough

VW Beetle:

**n India by: mid 2009
Will cost: Rs 15-25 lakh**



Luxury may still be equated with long and elegant in India, but with the ever-increasing Mercs and Beemers on Indian streets, the elite with the sort of spending power to buy these imports may have a perception change.

Offering a less expensive and more stylish choice (a la the Fiat 500) in the luxury segment will be Volkswagen's 'people's carrier', which has now gone hep and chic. Coming through in 2009.

Mini:

In India by: late 2009
Will cost: Rs 15-25 lakh



BMW is also expected to join the retro-fashion brigade with Fiat and VW with its own acquired British icon, the MINI. Slightly larger than both the Beetle and the 500 and inarguably classic yet chic, the MINI has had its fan-following increase since its revival, and we'd love it if the same happens in India.