



A Taycan road trip to Hyderabad

15/02/2023 A return journey in the Porsche Taycan from Mumbai to Hyderabad: to mark the first Formula E race in India's history, Porsche invited a group of journalists on a road trip to experience e-mobility off the race track. The adventurers share their experiences in the Newsroom.

India is booming: before the end of this year, it is set to replace China as the world's most populous country, with a predicted 1.6 billion people. The Indian economy is also on the rise. Almost 800,000 millionaires live on the subcontinent, more than Frankfurt has inhabitants. There are also 166 billionaires, putting it in the top three in the world. Porsche is also doing well in India. Last year, Brand Director Manolito Vujicic and his team sold 779 sports cars there – an increase of more than 60 per cent over the previous year.

Furthermore, the Taycan accounts for 10 per cent of that total in only its first full year of being on sale in India, with 78 examples of the all-electric sports car having been delivered to customers. Despite India being now the world's third-largest car market, electromobility is still in its infancy. Although about 300,000 battery electric vehicles (BEVs) were sold there last year alone, there are fewer than 2,000 charging stations, although 100,000 chargers are planned by 2027.

The preparations

The charging infrastructure is not exactly an ideal prerequisite for a road trip across the country. Added to this are temperatures of almost 40 degrees Celsius. It's the depths of winter in India, but the automatic climate control is in constant use.

The test cars are also equipped with the Performance Battery and not the optional Performance Battery Plus. An incomplete charging infrastructure, small battery, high temperatures ... what could possibly go wrong?

Day one

Thursday morning at 7 a.m. sharp, we set off from Mumbai. We have 750 kilometers ahead of us. A good 400 kilometers on the first day and just under 350 on the second. Distances that can be covered in Europe in one day are impossible to manage in India - regardless of the drive technology. Average speeds are very low due to the sheer mass of vehicles of all kinds. In addition, there are potholes in XXL format, roadways with the topography of a motocross track and animal road users of all kinds. After we have struggled through the rush hour, which lasts 24/7 in Mumbai, we take the freeway towards Pune. The tarmac here is new and smooth. It takes us about three hours to cover the 150-kilometer distance. Although the battery of the rear-wheel drive Taycan is still well filled, we drive to a charging station next to the freeway. We want to find out whether we have prepared well enough and can charge at all.

To load electricity in India, you need four things: a smartphone with an Indian phone number, an Indian credit card, the right app and every ounce of patience you can muster. Charging rarely works on the first attempt - either the charging station, the app or both are likely to go on strike. With time, however, you get a feeling of how to handle things in India. In essence, you just have to keep trying until you get the hang of it. Restart the app, reconnect the charging plug to the charging station, open the app again, and so on.

Another peculiarity is that in India, you need the right app for each provider. There is still no superordinate charging service. So, especially at the beginning, a lot of time must be spent downloading apps, registering and entering credit card details. With 75 kW, the first charger is particularly potent. Here, the norm is 30 kW in the high-power charging (HPC) sector. However, at 20 cents per kWh, charging also remains quite cheap. The price is about a third of what a user would typically pay in Germany.

After about 45 minutes, we continue our road trip and continue on the highway. The Taycan's air suspension has to give its all when driving through towns. The speed bumps here are several, high asphalt bumps in a row. Even with the best suspension, the passengers are jolted. Walking speed is far too fast here, and lift mode is mandatory. If you miss one of these traps, you at least lose your landing gear. But that is just when you enter a town. Outside the roads are in very good condition for the most

part. At lunchtime, we make another stop. We find a charging station and restaurant right next to each other thanks to our app. The Taycan charges for a good hour at 30 kW, during which we sample Paneer Masala and Aloo Jeera Dry. Delicious. Compared to the average rest stop in Europe, the Indians serve star cuisine at a fraction of the price. Saturated for less than four euros.

Our destination for today is Solapur. It sounds like pure solar energy, but it's a city of millions in the western Indian state of Maharashtra. Here, the Taycan looks like a UFO in the streetscape. Almost everyone turns to look at the Frozen Blue Porsche, waving, smiling, and pulling out their cell phones to shoot a video or take a selfie with the car. Every time we stop, we are immediately surrounded by curious locals. Children in particular react to the Taycan, perhaps because they've probably never seen one in the flesh before. We reach our hotel at about 18:00. It has taken 11 hours to drive 400 km, at an average speed of about 50 km/h. The rest of the time was spent on the charging stop, lunch break and photo opportunities. At the hotel there is a pleasant surprise: three AC chargers in the underground garage, each with 7.4 kW of charging power. Interestingly, the kilowatt hour of electricity here costs more than the DC electricity at public charging points. But what wouldn't you do for 100 per cent State of Charge (SoC) the following morning?

Day two

It's 08:00 and time to embark on the 350 km journey to Hyderabad, where a thrilling Formula E race awaits. As we make our way out of the city, every inch of road is used. The constant honking of auto-rickshaws, cabs and trucks is omnipresent. What is usually interpreted as a grim warning here is considered a well-intentioned hint. The horn replaces the wing mirror. 'Attention, I am next to you and behind you' is something of a motto. It works – somehow. Perhaps this is because the Indians drive without any aggression. On the highway we reach the limits of the Indian charging infrastructure for the first time. Between Solapur and Hyderabad we only find the charging stations of one provider. And not a single one works. Most of them are not even connected.

Friendly fuel station employees tell us about stations that are not shown in the app and are 'supposed' to work. But here too all the screens are blank. Fortunately, the Taycan proves to be an efficiency miracle under these conditions. Consumption drops to 16 kWh / 100 km. Despite the smaller battery, more than 400 km is possible. We decide to put our lunch break far back and drive to the outskirts of Hyderabad in one drive. There is a hotel with two HPC chargers. Again it takes 20 minutes until the charging process starts. We learn to charge a little more than is necessary – because it is impossible to know when there will be fresh electrons again. Shortly before sunset we reach Hyderabad.

Day three

The third day is all about the reason for this road trip: the first Formula E race in India. After an accident during practice, Porsche driver Pascal Wehrlein has to go to hospital briefly on Friday for observation. However, the doctors give him the green light and he takes part in Saturday's qualifying alongside

Antonio Felix da Costa, who is contesting his 100th Formula E race. The two put their Porsche 99X Electric racers in P12 and P13.

In the main race, things go much better: da Costa sensationally finishes third on the podium, while Wehrlein extends his lead in the drivers' championship in fourth place. In the team standings, Porsche sits at the top after four of 16 races. There are happy faces among the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E team. In the evening, Wehrlein is also smiling. Even if he does fly back to Germany with a few bruises.

Day four

On Sunday morning, we set off back to Mumbai. This time we plan to cover 350 km on the first day and 400 on the second. Much of Hyderabad is still sleeping and the traffic is not as heavy as usual. We drive again through bustling towns and over two-lane country roads towards the west. To everyone's surprise, there is a charger on our route that is supposed to work. After just under 200 km, we leave the highway and turn onto a dusty back road reminiscent of northern Africa. The Taycan is immediately covered with a layer of the finest dust that is reminiscent of the Dakar Rally. It turns out the 30kW charger next to a tyre dealer does work and we combine the charging stop with a lunch break.

When we return, another electric car is charging. We strike up a conversation. Mr Singh is an IT specialist from Pune and on a family trip with his wife and parents-in-law. He is interested in new technology and has therefore bought a BEV, but he's also reaping the rewards of the cost advantage over his diesel car. By way of comparison, driving 100 km in a Taycan costs less than five euros in India. A comparable combustion engine costs almost three times as much because of the relatively high fuel prices. At 14:00, we start to tackle the last leg of the day back to Solapur. We need three hours for the 150 km route and we can make use of the hotel's AC chargers again to fully charge the Taycan overnight.

Day five

Our final day of driving begins at 07:00, with 400 km ahead of us. Leaving at sunrise means there is time to enjoy a roadside Chai Tea – a sugary black tea made with milk and traditionally spiced with cardamom, ginger, cloves, cinnamon and black peppercorns. Locals pay 7 rupees – the equivalent of just eight cents – although tourists and road-trippers are charged a little more. Again, the incredibly friendly locals immediately come to take photos and for a look inside the Taycan. The additional passenger display causes a lot of excitement.

Back on the highway, the drive is repeatedly interrupted by toll stations similar to those in Italy. Since the Taycan has a coated windshield, the scanner doesn't always recognise the toll sticker. But again, immediate help is at hand, and a manual scanner is held up to the sticker inside. We plan our lunch stop this time in the centre of Pune. Here there is a charging station of a provider with whom we have had the best experience so far. Despite the city's permanent traffic jam it is worth it. At 14:00 we begin to

tackle the final 150 km. On this section, the road goes downhill for quite a while. This influences the Taycan consumption, which drops to just under 12 kWh / 100 km. On the highway, we are allowed to drive at 100 km/h. Until we reach Mumbai, the consumption rises again to 13.5 kWh / 100 km, and this is in part because the traffic is even heavier than usual and we need four hours for the trip.

Conclusion

If 1,500 km of electric driving through India in the Porsche Taycan sounds like a great adventure, that's because it is. The country is only at the very beginning of its electromobility journey. Considering this, it was extremely easy to cover our long distance in a BEV. With the right apps, a lot of patience, and an efficient electric car like the Taycan, it is not just an adventure but a chance to experience amazing things in connection with electric mobility as well as some pleasant surprises.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



Sandro Kälin

Head of Communications Porsche Schweiz AG
+41 41 487 91 16
sandro.kaelin@porsche.ch

Consumption data

Taycan with Performance Battery (Predecessor model)

Taycan with Performance Battery (Predecessor model)

Taycan with Performance Battery Plus (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO₂ emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO₂-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO₂Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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