

PARKERS CAR CHECKLIST

CITROËN BX (1984-1995)

Welcome to the Parkers Car Checklist for the Citroën BX. It covers potential issues that relate specifically to this model and is designed to supplement Parkers general car buying advice



BODY

Facelifts

The BX was facelifted in 1986 with a restyled front end and a revised interior. Earlier models can be identified by their orange (as opposed to clear) indicator lenses next to the headlights.

Bodywork

Give the car a thorough inspection for rust. Pay particular attention to the sills (below the doors), the front and rear wheelarches (open the back doors for a proper look), and the pillars either side of the windscreen. Most BX models have plastic bonnet and boot panels.

Engine bay

With the bonnet open, look for rust, where the inner wings meet the wheelarches.

Find the green reservoir on the driver's side at the front of the engine bay, containing the mineral oil (known as LHM) that is essential to the BX's

hydropneumatic system. Open the lid, the contents should be bright green, a sign it has been well looked after. If it's brown, or any other colour, the system needs attention. Also, the pipes can deteriorate with time, so look for any leakage around the reservoir and under the car. If so you'll need new pipework, which can cost around £100 to renew.

Glass

Look for a white/opaque area on the windscreen, a sign that it is starting

to delaminate. If it's bad enough to interfere with the driver's view out, or the glass has cracked, it'll need a new screen to pass the MoT.

Boot

Check for damp carpet, pointing to a rusted-through boot floor. Lift the carpet to assess the condition of the boot floor.

CHASSIS

Suspension

When first started, the BX will rise

Rust can occur in the sills, wheelarches and windscreen pillars



up as it's suspension inflates. (An on-board lever gives a choice of four height levels.) If it fails to move, jerks as it rises, or one end is higher than the other, there's a problem, usually with one or more of the five gas-filled spheres, which need renewing every three or four years at a cost of £50 each. With the engine running, you should be able to hear a 'clack' sound every 30 seconds or so as the system maintains pressure. If it is more regular than this, the system needs attention. If, when driving, the ride is very hard, the whole system needs an overhaul, costing at least £250. If you can hear a knocking noise when going over bumps, the cause is most likely to be worn bushes or anti-roll bar drop links.

Wheels/tyres

Look at the rear wheels, if they appear to lean inwards at the top, or the tyres show more wear on the inner edge, the wheel bearings or suspension arms are worn out.

INTERIOR

Trim

Check carpets and seats for dampness. The most likely cause of leaks is the sunroof. The heater also causes occasional leaks.

The BX was designed to be lightweight rather than durable, so it is almost certain that some of the trim will be tatty.

Equipment

Check the central locking opens and closes all doors. If it's inconsistent, it is likely that the central locking unit



Damp seats? The sunroof is probably leaking

contacts have deteriorated and need cleaning or the wiring passing into the driver's door has fractured. Switches and motors also fail in time.

If air conditioning is fitted and doesn't blow cold air be dubious of any claims that it just needs a £40 re-gas. It's a persistently leaky system.

When starting the engine, look at the dash to see the array of warning lights that come on and should then go out again. If any warning lights remain on after starting, usually accompanied by a STOP light, it suggests a problem. Often it's no more serious than a dodgy sensor, a poor contact, or even just a bit of coolant needed in the radiator, but it could point to a serious engine problem.

SAFETY

Some models had anti-lock brakes

fitted, which reduce skidding during emergency braking. If it's fitted, an ABS light will briefly illuminate on the dash when the engine is started. If the light stays on, the system is faulty.

DRIVING

Petrol engine

The 1.6 and 1.9 petrol engines are capable of reaching 150,000 miles if properly looked after. If mileage exceeds this, the engine is particularly noisy at idle, or there's no indication of recent attention, then it probably won't have much life left in it without considerable expense. On fuel-injected cars, hesitant running is often caused by a worn air-flow sensor.

Diesel engine

The diesels can last for more than 200,000 miles, but again make sure there is evidence of recent service history. If the camshaft, cylinder head, injection pump or a new turbo are needed, the bill can top £500. Lots of black smoke points to worn injectors or injection pump, lighter coloured



BX should attain its correct ride height smoothly and give a comfy ride. If not, suspect the hydropneumatic system



Interior trim isn't that hard wearing. Check it and haggle



Diesel engines can top 200,000 miles if they've been well looked after

smoke suggests a problem with the cylinder head.

Exhaust (inc catalyst)

Look at the exhaust tailpipe. If it seems to be pointing upwards, possibly even touching the bumper, then it's likely the exhaust mount on the boot floor has rusted off. The exhaust won't last long in this state.

Steering

Not all BXs have power steering, but if fitted, check that it works consistently. If assistance seems to come and go or is very heavy, the steering pressure regulator (known as flow divider valve or FDV) is the likely cause. These cost £400 new, but a reconditioning kit costs under £40. If the steering feels lumpy, then the steering rack is worn.

Brakes

Healthy BX brakes should feel very sharp. Poor brakes point either to worn braking components or a fault with the hydropneumatic system, which also

provides braking pressure. Brake pipes on earlier models corrode easily. Check the handbrake works properly - many owners leave their BX in gear when parked rather than rely on the handbrake.

Gearbox

The design of the manual gearbox means it is often difficult to get into first gear. An oil top up and lubrication of the linkage can improve this, but if it's very bad, the gearbox is probably worn out.

PAPERWORK

Service history

Unless treated to constant maintenance, the BX can age badly. The oil and filter must have been changed every 6000 miles. The cambelt change interval is officially 48,000 miles, but if there's no evidence of a new belt within the last 36,000 miles, budget £150 for a new one. If there's no sign of a tensioner or water pump having been fitted, pay an extra £60-70 to get these

changed at the same time. The fuel filter should be replaced every 18,000 miles. This is critical on diesel models. The hydropneumatic system will need an overhaul every three years or so, costing at least £200 in parts alone.

ESSENTIAL CITROËN BX CAR CHECKLIST

- Look out for rust in sills, wheelarches and windscreen pillars
- Check the LHM fluid in its reservoir under the bonnet
- White or opaque patches on the windscreen can lead to an MOT failure
- Check for damp carpet in the boot, interior and seats
- The car should rise up on its suspension when the engine is started and stay there
- Poor brakes point to a fault in the hydropneumatic system
- Does first gear go in smoothly?
- Has the car been serviced at the correct intervals?



The pre-facelift BX has orange front indicators



Don't forget to check that the price is right

BEFORE YOU BUY

If you've followed this guide and it all checks out then things are looking good, but there are a few more steps you should consider:

- Consider getting an expert to look over the car, especially if you're buying privately, as you'll have little comeback if there's a hidden problem.
- Make sure you're paying the right price for it. Just because a seller is asking a certain price, it doesn't mean the car is worth that much. Most sellers expect to haggle a bit too. You can find out what a car is worth from Parkers website (www.parkers.co.uk) or a copy of the Parkers Car Price Guide.



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