

Garmin nuvi 660 GPS receiver

Can Garmin challenge TomTom at the top end of the GPS market?

by Stuart Miles published on 14 December 2006

Not content with offering a slim handheld in the form of the Garmin nuvi 360, Garmin has released a widescreen version - the Garmin nuvi 660, but like the television in your lounge, do you really need more picture?

The nuvi 660 comes in the same slim package as the nuvi 360 making it ideal to slip into a pocket or bag when you leave the car. The big difference however is the incorporation of a larger, 4.3-inch touchscreen rather than the 2.8-inch screen found on the nuvi 360 and this according to Garmin means you can see more road on your screen.

"The Garmin nuvi 660 builds on the legacy of the nuvi 300-series while adding desirable enhancements like a wider screen and integrated traffic", Gary Kelley, Garmin's vice president of marketing told us.

That means the core of the nuvi 660 is really the 360 with some supped up elements, which is fine by us. The unit comes with a folding out SiRFIII GPS antenna, and as with the 360 a petit sized cradle, which comes in two parts to help keep it compact. We especially like the fact that the cradle has a power socket at the rear so the power lead is kept out the way.

With no buttons, control is completely orchestrated via the unit's touchscreen and luckily Garmin has designed the unit for people with large fingers (read that as fat) and the additional screen space means everything is spaced out even more rather than just displayed with black boxes either side.

On start up, the screen offers three choices - the chance to view the map, the chance to ask for directions and finally the chance to access the unit's multimedia features in the Travel Pack.



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Like the nuvi 360 the 660 offers a host of multimedia options including a translate foreign languages feature, read audible books to you via an SD card or listen to MP3 tracks via the units MP3 player. Like the 360 these functions are inhibited by the fact that the unit's speaker is rather lacklustre and certainly not a scratch on Sony's Nav-U range with its twin stereo speakers. Little has been done to improve it.

The traffic, which is supported in the 360 version, just not in the box means you can avoid the jams, however unlike some of the higher end GPS units on the market does involve you having to drape your dashboard with an FM radio.

Also similar to the 360, the unit will also speak the street names to you - so it's a case of turn right on to the A618 rather than just a big right arrow.

Garmin routing software is very good and easy to use although we personally found the preferences menu a touch confusing - we had to look in the instruction book to find out how to change road preferences for example.

Maps for all of Europe come as standard in the UK, while North American buyers will get preloaded maps of the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. All map data is provided by NAVTEQ.

VERDICT

The Garmin nuvi 660 will appeal to those who want traffic data as standard and full European maps.

The widescreen is a bonus, but in our driving using it didn't really make that much of a difference.

Yes, you can see more road on the screen and it helped in the close confines of London where perhaps you were interested in seeing what roads were around your chosen path, however no more so that any other device with a smaller screen

At a glance

What is it?

Top of the range GPS

Good

Easy to use interface, traffic support, widescreen, maps of Europe

Bad

Speaker is lacklustre, expensive

Verdict

Good, but the widescreen shouldn't be your main reason for buying it

Price £500

Our score

8/10

Your score

9/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2012/Garmin-Nuvi-660-GPS-receiver>

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that we've tested here at Pocket-lint.

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