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Mio C250 GPS receiver

Looking for a budget satnav option?
This might be the answer

by Stuart Miles published on 26 December 2006

Did you find that you got lost over the Christmas break? GPS units are great, but if you're one of these people that don't really drive that much then trying to justify the outlay for an expensive GPS system is tough.

Mio thinks it has the answer with its entry-level model, the Mio C250. Priced at just £170, the small easy-to-pocket unit (it weighs only 110g) features a 3.5-inch touchscreen with which to control everything.

Turn it on and the interface is easy to use, but not as fool proof as either Navman or TomTom.

The unit uses MioMap v3 software with 7-digit postcode search so you can find where you are going and comes bundled with UK maps and the major road of Europe pre-installed on the unit. It's a case of open the box, plug in the power cable to your cigarette lighter and away you go.

Admittedly there aren't any extras here like traffic control (although you can add this with an optional dongle) or Bluetooth connectivity, but then you wouldn't expect any of those for the price. However you do get an MP3 player so if you really must, you can listen to your favourite tracks on the go and speed camera locations as Points of Interest are built-in.

The speed camera database features all the speed cameras in the UK and you get free downloadable updates for the first year and the ability for users to enter additional, new safety camera locations in the database. You can also set the unit to warn you when they are only in your direction of driving or in the case of those cameras that regularly change to be warned whenever you are approaching the location whichever way you are heading.



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The Mio C250 also gives an audio and visual warning when you approach a safety camera location so you don't have to hit the brakes hard. Furthermore there is an on-screen logo indicating the speed limit on the current road and the user can set up audio and visual warnings should this be exceeded.

In-use and the interface is easy to read and master. Finding certain elements such as road avoidance and toll road settings did cause us some issues, but a quick check of the manual solved the query.

As with most GPS systems you can opt to see a step-by-step overview before setting off a those looking to go "Green" in the new year will also be pleased to see that the unit features a bicycle mode that will set road preferences accordingly (there is also a truck mode which helps you avoid low bridges for all you truck drivers reading this).

VERDICT

Overall the performance of the unit was very good with a decent battery life away from the charger.

Out of the box we had no problem tracking a signal no doubt thanks to the SiRFStar III GPS technology, and the default male voice was a change from the prim and proper female voices so many manufacturers use as standard.

For the price, this is a great no frills unit that will get you from A to B without hassle. The interface could have been a touch easier to use and setup, but then once you've got the main preferences how you like them they aren't likely to give you a problems.

At a glance

What is it?

Budget GPS

Good

Large screen, small and compact, speed camera locations

Bad

Interface is fiddly at times, no added extras like Bluetooth

Verdict

For the price, this is a great no frills unit that will get you from A to B without hassle

Price £169.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10