

BIG TEST

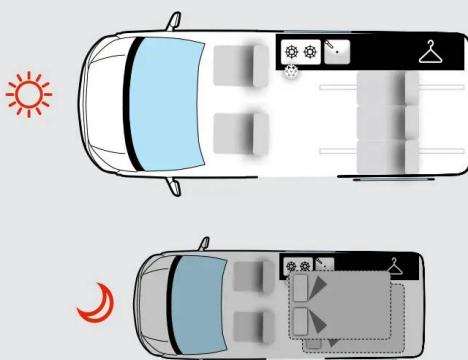
PANAMA P\10E

This four-berth hybrid EV has an arsenal of tech that's sure to appeal to couples, families and off-gridders



Price From £79,995 Sleeps 4 Belts 5

Base vehicle Ford Tourneo Custom Active Engine 229bhp, 2.5-litre petrol engine, electric motor and 13kWh battery Length/width/height 5.04/2.28/2.06m
MTPLM 3245kg Payload 465kg Water (fresh/waste) 50 litres/32 litres
Leisure battery 100Ah



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The all-electric campervan – something that relies entirely on an electric motor and has no need of gas within the habitation area – is still proving something of an elusive Holy Grail, at least among mainstream manufacturers.

But a hybrid model – using a motor that is mostly electric but has a petrol engine to back it up – seems to be a much more approachable idea, with both VW and Ford bringing out hybrid versions of the campervans that are sold under their own name.

Earlier this year Panama, still a relatively new entrant in the UK market, added a P10E hybrid model to its existing P122 and P57 conventionally powered campervans.

We took it for two spins, first in Somerset and then in Northamptonshire, to see how it performed on the road and in campervan mode.

Exterior and cab

Built on the zippy Ford Tourneo Custom Active, the Panama is equipped with 17-inch alloy wheels and a silver body with black accents, including the window trims, roof and bumper. Slick black decals with bolts of blue denote its hybrid status alongside Panama's branding.

The 'van has a short wheelbase with an overall length of just over 5m, including a short raked bonnet, which we found added to the easy and relaxing driving experience. The type 2 connector EV charging port is found to the left-hand side of the front grille. It's designed with a handy light to tell you when a successful charging connection has been made.

Water and electric hook-up points are on the rear offside, while the waste-water tank is under-slung on the same side.

Under the bonnet is a 229bhp, 2.5-litre petrol engine, with an electric motor and 13kWh battery (11.8kWh of usable power). The latter has a range of up to 32 miles. So, while you're unlikely to be driving to campsites solely on electric, it's ideal around town – one reason why the judges gave it our Best Camper for Everyday Use award 2026 (p67).

It would be hard for anyone not to be impressed by the amount of driving tech, thanks to the almost overwhelming number of gadgets in the Panama P\10E. There's keyless entry; you then step into a roomy cab (1) featuring two heated captain seats. The touchscreen Ford Sync 4 media console (2) has sat nav, DAB radio, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto and



Bluetooth connectivity, which means seamless navigation and entertainment. Along with USB-A and USB-C power ports, there is a wireless charging rest for smartphones. All in all, we found it thoroughly enjoyable and comfortable to drive, from a busy motorway in the rain to sunny Somerset country lanes.

Although we didn't go through any on our test route, the Panama comes



equipped with Ford's Green Zone Geofencing as standard. This alerts you when you are about to enter a low emission zone (LEZ) so that you can switch to electric-only driving. That is a bit of future proofing: such zones are only likely to increase in years to come.

The rear-view camera kicks in when you put the 'van in reverse, as well as the front and rear parking distance sensors.

It's well-equipped with other driver safety features, too, including blind spot and pre-collision assist, lane-keeping alert with centering and warning, sidewind stabilisation, wrong-way alert, trailer sway control and more.

In the rear, there are useful downlights on the tailgate along with fold-down hanging rails that are perfect for wet clothes and towels.

Lounging and dining

The cab and living space is delineated by a plastic trim between the carpet of the cab and cushioned vinyl flooring in the rest of the 'van. The two cab travel seats swivel to face the surprisingly spacious living/kitchen area, each benefitting from a flexible spotlight with USB charging which can be used in the living area or when sleeping in the pop-top bed.

Adding to this ambience are the three dimmable touch LED lighting strips in the living area, consisting of an overhead strip above the kitchen and two affixed to the underside of the pop-top roof.

If you're entering from outside, the nearside sliding door opens smoothly thanks to Ford Power Assist and has a narrow sunken footwell for wet shoes.

On the floor is the sliding floor track that the rear seating system uses, allowing you to adjust the position of the bench seat (3). This is great when travelling with passengers in the back, making the 'van feel more like a people carrier with the added bonus of creating a huge boot space. It also means you can all sit around the table without needing to stretch too far.

Speaking of the table, Panama has added a handy storage bag for it, attached to the underside of the boot.



You might find getting it out from here a bit of a struggle, especially if you are shorter than average.

The table can be used inside, where there is a low-profile rail to fix it to, and outside, with one of its three legs being extendable for use on uneven ground. You do have to tighten it securely to avoid the table top slipping down when you put weight on it.

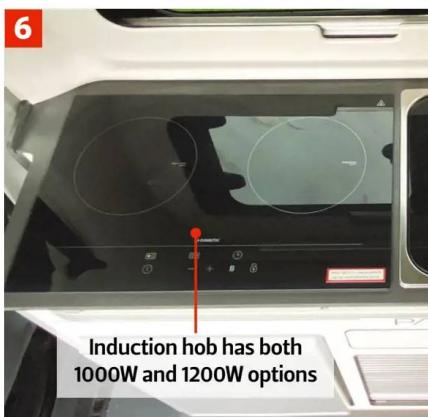
When the pop-top is raised, natural light pours in through the small offside window in the canvas roof and the

panoramic front mosquito screen. The trade-off is that you must choose between keeping the screen open for light or zipping it closed to stay protected from the weather, at the expense of natural light.

There are removable insulated blinds for the cab, while every other window has a pleated pull-down blind as well as quite a dark privacy tint.

There is a 12V and mains socket at the end of the kitchen unit, as well as a USB port where a small TV could go. ☐

Kitchen



As is the nature of compact 'vans, the Panama P\10E asks its users to compromise on kitchen space (4). To remedy this is a good-sized fridge with a freezer compartment (5) along with a stainless steel sink and cold water tap, finished with a black glass lid. To the left is the kitchen's headline act, its gas-free induction hob with touch controls (6), comprising a 1000W and 1200W option. It's recommended to use the 1000W hob when off-grid, but it

still packs a good punch in terms of power and heating time.

All kitchen surfaces are made from water- and scratch-resistant laminate, and cupboards feature black positive catches to keep doors secure. There is a small top-loading cupboard built into the worktop, the lid of which doubles as workspace. With the addition of the table, we found it was adequate when preparing and cooking for two, but the lack of worktop space was a rather noticeable at times.

Washroom

You won't be surprised that the Panama P\10E – at five metres long – doesn't have a dedicated washroom. However, it does come with a Porta Potti which fits snugly in a storage cupboard in the kitchen (7).

Although we didn't use it while we were on site, there is space to keep it at the end of the downstairs bed when it's folded out.

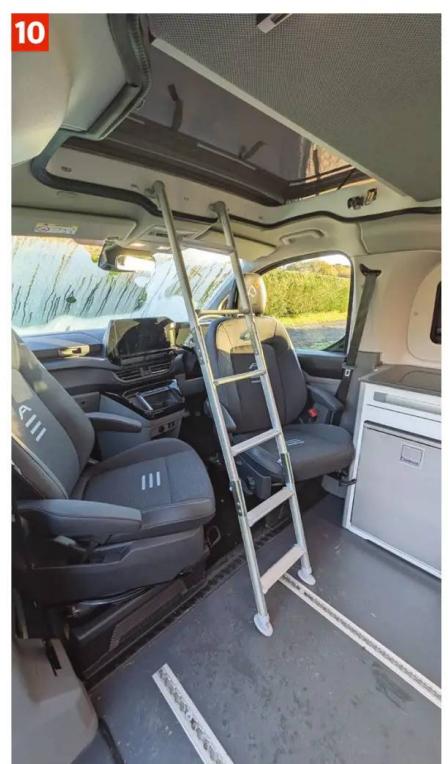
Sleeping



Although there are five travel seats (with two ISOFIX points), the Panama offers four berths for sleeping. The bench seat uses the sliding floor track system to become an 1890 x 1140mm rock'n'roll bed (8). You aren't expected just to lie on the folded down seats, because a mattress topper folds over to provide a very smooth and comfortable surface.

That little cubbyhole in the kitchen worktop proved a useful place to leave mobile phones where you can easily reach them without any light disturbing you at night. The rearmost section of the bed can be left only partly lowered, which is great for night-time reading, and the two striplights under the roofbed meant you had plenty of light for this. But we were a little disappointed that, when it came to turn these lights off, you have to reach right forward to press the front section of each strip.

The other two berths are located in the pop-top roof, by way of a 1980 x 1160mm double with a 4cm high density comfort mattress on a sprung and slatted base (9). There is a handy ladder and anchor points to access the pop-top (10), which we chose to sleep in for the duration of our stay since it was so comfortable and spacious. ☺



Storage



Even with the bench seats pushed all the way back, there is a decent amount of boot space (11). There is a main sliding-door locker split into two sections (12), along with two under-seat side cupboards running the length of the bench, both of which are closed off with tambour doors and can be accessed from the rear and the living area.

Also beneath the travel seats is a roomy middle drawer housing the

ladder for the pop-top but, while on site, we used this as extra storage and kept the ladder elsewhere. In the kitchen you'll find a cutlery drawer, inset worktop cubby and a kitchen-front cupboard, as well as a sliding-door cupboard designed for the Porta Potti. This also works well as supplementary storage if, like us, you choose to store the toilet in the boot when you're not using it.



You'll notice another cupboard, above the heating vent. This is only accessible if you slide the rear bench seat right forward, but that's not much of a loss, as most of it is taken up with the heater.

All in all, even with two of us, storage space felt a little scant at times; but, again, that's a sacrifice to be expected in a 'van of this size and unlikely to be much of a concern if you're only on a shorter tour.

Equipment



Water and power is controlled and monitored via a digital panel above the kitchen, accompanied by two dials that control the heating (13). Since this is a gas-free model, the heating is a 1000W electric heater. One tester tried the 'van during a warm September, so didn't need to use it, but another found that in late November the 'van took around an hour to warm up fully.

The 50-litre fresh-water tank was sufficient and the 32-litre waste-water tank is underslung for easy emptying. There's also a handy rear cold water shower point.

The cooker, heating and 230V mains plugs run off the EV battery, courtesy of the Pro Power Onboard system, which uses a 2.3kW inverter. There's also a 100Ah leisure battery fitted, which runs the fridge, water pump and more.

The last word



Highs

- Comfortable beds
- Enjoyable drive
- Nicely finished and lit

Lows

- Limited kitchen space
- Biggest storage spaces are taken up by Porta Potti and ladder

Buy if...

You want to be eco-friendly but want the reassurance of a hybrid rather than fully electric model, and also want the peace of mind of being able to go off-grid. It's great for solo travellers, couples and small families.

Verdict

The P10E is a modern-looking 'van on both the inside and outside. It's nicely finished with a solid feel to the build, and is extremely well equipped, particularly in the cab. It feels surprisingly spacious yet is small enough for you to drive it comfortably around town centres.



OR YOU COULD TRY...

FORD NUGGET PHEV

FROM £63,150

Featuring five seats (with a rear bench that is heated) and an end-kitchen layout.



VW CALIFORNIA EHYBRID

FROM £63,481

The hybrid version of this popular campervan sleeps four and has five seats.



TECHNICAL DATA (AS TESTED)

BASE VEHICLE

Chassis Ford Tourneo Custom Active

Engine/motor 2.5-litre petrol engine with electric motor and 13kWh battery (with 11.8kWh usable power)

Power 229bhp **Transmission** Automatic

Features include Keyless entry and start, touchscreen Ford Sync 4 media console with sat nav, DAB radio, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto & Bluetooth connectivity; speed sign recognition; electronic handbrake; lane centering with stop & go; driver alerts; traction and torque vectoring control; trailer sway control; Electronic Stability Control (ESC); LED headlights with static bending lights; adaptive cruise control with Intelligent speed assist; pre-collision assist with automatic emergency braking and hill-start assist; electric travel range up to 32 miles; FordPass connectivity; heated front windscreen; electric, heated wing mirrors with powerfold function; climate control dual air-conditioning

CONVERSION

Ford Tourneo conversion with swivelling cab seats, 17" alloy wheels; silver body with colour-coded front bumper and wing mirrors; 30mm XPS flooring giving insulation, noise reduction & temperature control

LOUNGING AND DINING

Cushioned vinyl flooring; dimmable touch LED ambient lighting; LED spotlights with USB charging for upper bed/cab area; Ford power assist sliding door; secure black positive catches on all furniture doors; freestanding table for use inside/out; front detachable windscreen thermal privacy blinds; pleated blinds to all side windows and sliding door; pull-down clothing rail on rear tailgate

KITCHEN

Induction hob with two burners; stainless-steel kitchen sink with cold-water tap; fridge with freezer compartment; plentiful storage cupboards with high-performance water/scratch-resistant laminate; dimmable touch LED ambient lighting

SLEEPING

Pop-up roof bed with mosquito nets and panoramic view; upper roof bed with 4cm high density comfort mattress on sprung and slatted base (max 175kg weight limit); sliding floor-track rear seating system; rear bench seats, with two ISOFIX points, that converts into a double bed

EQUIPMENT INCLUDES

Pro Power onboard inverter system with two 230V sockets; six USB charging ports; 12V socket; one USB-A and 1x USB-C socket in cab area; mains consumer unit with mains isolator; 12V fuse board; Porta Potti in dedicated storage cupboard; 1000W electric heater; 50-litre fresh-water tank; 32-litre waste-water tank; 12V LED low-energy lighting; 100Ah leisure battery; external cold-water shower point