

Consumer Guide December 1988 – Dodge Aries

Dodge Aries America



Dodge Aries 4-door

What's New

Dodge drops the Aries station wagon and makes only minor changes in its K-car sedans for '89. The front-drive 2- and 4-door notchbacks now wear the "America" label, denoting Chrysler's program to reduce manufacturing and retail costs by offering a single trim level with most options grouped into packages. Aries' base engine remains a 93-horsepower 2.2-liter 4-cylinder. It comes with a 5-speed manual transmission standard; a 3-speed automatic is optional. Available at extra cost is a 2.5-liter four, which goes from 96 to 100 horsepower this year. It's available only with the automatic transmission. Both engines have been treated to slight internal modifications that Dodge says will make them run quieter. And Dodge says new front-suspension components will reduce ride harshness. Among the few new features for '89 are identifying paint markings for underhood service points such as the dipstick and coolant overflow-bottle cap. There's also a new 4-speaker stereo

system. Front bucket seats are standard; a front bench, air conditioning and deluxe stereos are among the few free-standing options.

For

- Value •Passenger room •Fuel economy

Against

- Handling •Engine noise (2.2)

Summary

K-cars offer few frills and even fewer thrills, providing instead functional transportation at a reasonable price. The standard 2.2-liter is adequate, but the optional 2.5 provides stronger acceleration without using much more gas. It's also smoother and quieter, thanks to its internal twin balance shafts. The 2.5 is available only with automatic transmission as part of the optional Popular or Premium Discount packages. That raises the price, but the automatic is preferable to the poor-shifting 5-speed manual. Aries has modest handling ability and is most composed when driven gently. Even then, a freeway cloverleaf will expose its poor cornering ability and rough pavement will reveal its undisciplined suspension control. You'll be most comfortable with the standard front bucket seats and full center console. The 3-place front bench seat (a no-cost option) increases passenger capacity to six, but it has a fixed seatback that's so reclined it forces an uncomfortable driving position and drastically reduces rear-seat leg room. The bucket seats have adjustable seatbacks that eliminate those problems. While K-cars are not the most solidly built sedans, they're still a fine value.

Specifications

	2-door notchback	4-door notchback
Wheelbase, in.	100.3	100.3
Overall length, in.	178.9	178.9
Overall width, in.	67.9	67.9
Overall height, in.	52.5	52.5
Front track, in.	57.6	57.6
Rear track, in.	57.2	57.2
Turn diameter, ft.	34.8	34.8
Curb weight, lbs.	2317	2323
Cargo vol., cu. ft.	15.0	15.0
Fuel capacity, gal.	14.0	14.0
Seating capacity	6	6
Front headroom, in.	38.2	38.6
Front shoulder room, in.	55.0	55.4
Front legroom, max., in.	42.4	42.2
Rear headroom, in.	37.0	37.8
Rear shoulder room, in.	58.8	55.9
Rear legroom, min., in.	35.1	35.4

Powertrain layout: transverse front engine/front-wheel drive.

Engines

	ohc I-4	ohc I-4
Size liters/cu. in.	2.2/135	2.5/153
Fuel delivery	TBI	TBI
Horsepower @ rpm	93 @ 4800	100 @ 4800
Torque (lbs./ft.) @ rpm	122 @ 3200	135 @ 2800
Availability	S	O

EPA city/highway mpg

5-speed OD manual	25/34	
3-speed automatic	24/30	23/28