Used Kia Seltos inspection checklist

What to check on a used Seltos, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.

COVERS **SP2 (first generation)** 2019–2023 **SP2 (facelift)** 2023 on

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☐ **Tick it** if it's fine. **Cross it** if it isn't, and note what you found so you can price it into your offer.

! **Safety critical:** affects how safely it drives or protects you in a crash. Best to have a mechanic check it before you buy.

$ **Negotiate:** costs money to fix, from wear to major repairs. Get a quote and take it off the price.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Panel gaps.** Walk around the body checking panel gaps and paint colour match, including door and bonnet seals. Uneven gaps or overspray on trim point to earlier crash repair. $
- ☐ **Wheels.** Look over the bumpers and alloy wheels for scrapes, cracked trim and kerb damage. A badly kerbed wheel can be bent and need replacing. $
- ☐ **Lights.** Test that every light works and check the windscreen for chips and the lenses for fogging inside. Moisture trapped inside a light means a failed seal. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick and check the oil sits between the marks and looks brown, not black or gritty. Ask how often it needs topping up between services. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant reservoir is at the mark and the fluid is brightly coloured, not rusty or oily. Frequent top-ups point to a hidden coolant leak. $
- ☐ **Belts.** Check the drive belts for cracking or fraying and the hoses for bulges or soft, spongy spots. A perished belt or hose can fail with little warning. $
- ☐ **Leaks.** Look over the engine bay and surrounding pipes for wet oil or fluid. Any wetness underneath means an active leak worth quoting to fix. $
- ☐ **Cold start.** Ask the seller to start the engine from cold and watch the exhaust; it should settle to a smooth idle with no smoke or knocking. Blue smoke on startup means the engine is burning oil. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Tyres.** Check all four tyres for even wear above the wear bars and look for a date code under six years old. AWD models need four matching tyres as mismatched ones strain the system. $
- ☐ **AWD leak.** AWD models: look underneath the rear axle and driveshaft area for oil leaks. A leak here signals an expensive drivetrain repair. $
- ☐ **Rust.** Look under the car for rust on the floor and around suspension mounts, and check for bent metal or fresh welds. Fresh underseal in one spot can hide a crash repair. !
- ☐ **Brakes.** Check the brake discs through the wheel spokes for deep grooves, a raised lip or blue discolouration. A blue tinge means the disc has been overheated from hard driving. $
- ☐ **Towbar.** If a towbar is fitted, check it and the wiring plug for rust or damage and that the mounting bolts are tight. A loose towbar mount is unsafe when towing. $

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key to "on" without starting; every dash light should come on then clear once the engine is running. An airbag, brake or engine light that stays on needs explaining before you buy. !
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt out fully and let it retract, checking the webbing for fraying and the buckle for a solid click. A belt that doesn't retract smoothly may not hold properly in a crash. !
- ☐ **Infotainment.** Turn on the touchscreen and connect a phone, checking Bluetooth or CarPlay works and the screen responds smoothly. A screen that lags or won't connect may need resetting repeatedly. $
- ☐ **Cargo area.** Check the spare wheel or repair kit and jack are present, then lift the cargo floor and check underneath for water. Water staining under the floor can mean a boot seal leak. $

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Manual clutch.** Manual: feel the clutch bite smoothly at a normal pedal height and check it doesn't slip under hard acceleration. A clutch that bites very high or slips means it's worn. $
- ☐ **Automatic gearbox.** Automatic: accelerate firmly from a stop and check the car picks up power smoothly without flaring, droning or hesitation. Shuddering or jerking under load points to a failing automatic transmission. $
- ☐ **Suspension.** Drive over bumps and listen for knocks or clunks coming through the body or steering wheel. Clunking over bumps often means worn suspension bushes or links. $
- ☐ **Brakes.** Brake firmly from speed on a quiet road and check the car stops straight without pulling, pulsing or grinding. Grinding or pulling to one side means the brakes need attention soon. !

! **Stay safe.** Never go under a car held up only by a jack, and never open the radiator or coolant cap on a hot engine. Keep hands, hair and loose clothing clear of fans and belts when the engine is running, and do checks under the bonnet with it switched off where you can. On the test drive, hold a current licence, confirm the car is registered and insured, obey road rules, and only brake hard when the road behind is clear. Meet in a safe, public-facing place, take someone with you, and don't carry large amounts of cash to a viewing.

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Service history.** Check the logbook is stamped on schedule and matches any receipts, and ask about timing or drivetrain work done. Gaps in servicing can mean deferred maintenance. $

- [ ] **Registration.** Check the registration is current online and a roadworthy certificate is supplied if your state requires one for sale.

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4
common faults reported on Seltos built since 2019*

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owner complaints on Seltos built since 2021*

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