

Karbonn Quattro L52 VR

PRICE ₹8,790

**SPECIFICATIONS**

5-inch IPS display (1280 x 720 pixels), 1.3Ghz quad core processor, 2GB RAM, 16GB storage, 8MP rear camera, 5MP front camera, 4G, WiFi, Bluetooth, dual SIM, microSD slot (up to 32GB), 2,250mAh battery, Android 5.1, 143 grams

**KARAN BAJAJ**
NEW DELHI

Virtual reality (VR) has seen major traction this year thanks to many new products as well as content availability. To take advantage of this hype, Samsung and Lenovo already have smartphones bundled with VR headsets and are promoting it heavily. Karbonn is the latest brand to get onboard with this budget smartphone called the L52 VR.

The box includes Karbonn's own VR headset. Constructed of plastic, the headset doesn't feel as premium as the Samsung GearVR but considering the price, it is high value. The L52 perfectly fits inside the VR headset and there are two suction cups inside to keep the device in place. There is a VR center as well as various preloaded VR games and videos. Karbonn has also included a VR calibration option in the settings using which you can adjust the gyroscope for best results.

While the overall VR performance was good, we did feel that the field of view is quite narrow. This limits the VR experience. You can use the supplied headband to keep it in place. The headband itself doesn't seem like the best quality — it looks like it won't last. Kudos to Karbonn for making the effort and actually delivering a decent VR experience on a budget — we hope other manufacturers will follow this trend soon.

Hardware in the L52 VR is similar to other budget phones at this price. You get a 1.3Ghz quad core processor, 2GB RAM, 16GB storage and a 2,250mAh battery. With day-to-day performance, the phone manages to impress with zippy navigation and seamless switching between running apps. We noticed that with basic apps social media, multimedia, games and news apps, the L52 had between 500MB to 900MB RAM free at any given time.

It managed to play Asphalt Nitro without any hitch but with Dead Trigger 2, we noticed that it was struggling a fair bit. The phone does tend to get hot during heavy gaming and extensive VR usage. Battery life lasted from 9 am to 5pm without any issue but where the phone impressed was with standby battery life. It drained

only 4% battery overnight and this is with constant WiFi connectivity. You can't say the same with VR though. VR usage drains the battery very fast — one occasion, the phone lost 20% battery in just 5 minutes of VR.

For a sub ₹10,000 phone, the L52 VR has premium looks mostly thanks to the 2.5D curved glass up front. The 5-inch display has a resolution of 1280 x 720 pixels which keeps things crisp on the screen, but in VR you can make out individual pixels due to this low resolution. Also, the screen had thick bezels around it which is a turnoff.

The Android navigation buttons are below the screen and like other phones in this price range they are not backlit. Under the removable back panel is the removable battery, dual SIM slots (nano + micro) and a microSD slot. The metal finish on the back compliments the overall look of the phone.

Camera performance is a mixed bag. While the rear camera manages to take sharp images with good details, it takes ages to

The L52 VR includes a good quality VR headset and built in apps for a good first step into VR for the budget conscious buyer

focus and there is lots of shutter lag. Images taken outdoors are excellent indoors and in low light there is lots of noise. The front camera is a fixed focus unit which suffers from the same slow shutter speed issue along with loss of details and visible noise in the images.

As a smartphone, the L52 VR stands out due to the inclusion of VR headset making it easy for first time users to get a taste of VR. The only other mid-range phone that had a VR bundle was the Lenovo K4 Note — though the VR bundle offer is no longer available. The issue is, there are a number of third party VR headsets now from Zebronic and AntVR, all priced under ₹2,000. They can be used with any Android smartphone. So here's an alternative: get the Coolpad Note 3 Lite that offers a similar display, 3GB RAM, better battery life, superior cameras and a fingerprint scanner for ₹6,999. Add a VR headset and you're at the same price as the L52 VR.