

## Back To Basics

### Toyota Refocuses a Legend on Dirt Over Decadence

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

The first thing you notice about the latest Toyota Land Cruiser is the weight.

It's not the number on a spec sheet, but the way it settles onto a road or trail with a dense, deliberate and unapologetically trucklike sensation that draws attention.

This is not an SUV pretending to be rugged. It is rugged, and it wants you to know it.

Spend a week with it, and the beefy personality comes through quickly. The steering is slower than modern crossovers. The ride has heft. You sit high, looking out over a squared-off hood that feels more Yellowstone than valet stand. It drives like something designed to survive remote places, not carve freeway ramps.

That personality pays dividends the moment the pavement ends.

The Land Cruiser is an absolute off-road weapon. Locking differentials, serious articulation and available stabilizer disconnect make it feel almost unfair on technical trails. Against a Ford Bronco, Jeep Wrangler or Land Rover Defender, this is the one I would take if I actually planned to go exploring instead of just talking about it.

Power is another pleasant



The 2026 Toyota Land Cruiser leans into a boxy, retro-inspired design that emphasizes strength and utility.

surprise. On paper, a turbocharged four-cylinder hybrid does not stir the soul like the old V8s.

In practice, it delivers effortless thrust and a deep, confident surge that feels anything but small. With 465 pound-feet of torque on tap, the Land Cruiser moves with authority and never feels strained. If you drove it blindfolded, you would never guess what is under the hood.

On the road, the Land Cruiser reminds you of its priorities. There is noticeable wind and road noise at highway speeds, especially on rough pavement.

The ride is firm and a little busy. It does not isolate you from the world the way

the old luxury-leaning Land Cruiser did. This one is built for trails first, highways second.

That shift in mission defines the entire vehicle. The interior is solid and thoughtfully laid out, with big controls and a clean, functional design. It is comfortable and spacious, but not indulgent. Materials are durable rather than plush, and the overall vibe is purposeful instead of pampering.

If you want a truly upscale off-road experience now, Toyota would prefer you go to a Lexus store.

Emotionally, that is a tough adjustment. The previous Land Cruiser blended ruggedness with old-school luxury in a way

nothing else really did. This new generation is smaller, cheaper and more focused. From a business standpoint, it makes sense.

There also is the lingering question of long-term durability. Toyota has earned enormous trust over decades, but turbocharged four-cylinder engines have not yet built the same legend as the naturally aspirated V8s of old. I'm inclined to believe Toyota got it right, but only time will truly answer that question.

Visually, though, Toyota nailed it. The retro-inspired design feels authentic without being cartoonish. The boxy proportions, flat surfaces and heritage cues look fantastic in person and

suit the vehicle's mission perfectly. It looks like it belongs in the wild, not just parked outside a coffee shop.

Value is where the Land Cruiser quietly strengthens its case. Even loaded up, it undercuts some luxury-branded rivals while offering capability that few can match. Factor in Toyota's reputation for quality and resale value, and it becomes easier to justify the price.

In the end, this Land Cruiser feels honest. It is not trying to be everything to everyone. It is an off-road machine first, a daily driver second and a luxury vehicle a distant third.

For the right buyer, that clarity is exactly the point.

#### AT A GLANCE

##### WHAT WAS TESTED?

2026 Toyota Land Cruiser 4WD Wagon Hybrid (\$62,045). Options: 20-inch wheels (\$1,240), rear bumper guard (\$230), premium package (\$4,355), stabilizer disconnect (\$1,230), lift gate light (\$195), two-tone roof (\$350), ball mount (\$80), roof rack (\$1,440), rear skid plate (\$355), front skid plate (\$805), wheel locks (\$105), cargo mat (\$140), carpet floor mats (\$199). Price as tested (including \$1,495 destination charge): \$74,264

##### BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 112.2 in.  
Length: 193.8 in.  
Width: 77.9 in.  
Height: 76.1 in.  
Power: 2.4-liter turbo four cylinder plus electric motors (combined 326 hp, 465 lbs. ft.)  
Transmission: Eight-speed automatic  
MPG: 22 city, 25 highway

##### RATINGS

Style: 10  
Performance: 8  
Price: 6  
Handling: 7  
Ride: 7  
Comfort: 7  
Quality: 9  
Overall: 8

##### WHY BUY IT?

The 2026 Land Cruiser delivers unmatched off-road capability with real-world power and Toyota dependability in a purposeful, handsome package.

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Inside, the Land Cruiser blends modern technology with a durable, no-nonsense cabin built for long adventures.

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#### A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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