

## Right-Sized Jeep

### Redesigned Cherokee Has Efficiency, Everyday Practicality

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

For years, automakers have pushed family SUVs toward extremes. Some keep getting larger until they barely fit in suburban parking spaces. Others chase efficiency so aggressively they end up feeling cramped, noisy or cheap.

After a week in the redesigned Cherokee, I kept coming back to the same thought: this feels like the right-sized Jeep.

The new Cherokee slots neatly between compact crossovers and larger midsize SUVs, and that balance gives it a broad kind of appeal. There is enough rear-seat room for adults to sit comfortably without negotiating for knee space, and the cargo area feels genuinely useful rather than merely adequate.

At the same time, the Cherokee still feels manageable in traffic, easy to park and far less bulky than larger three-row SUVs that dominate today's roads.

More impressively, it delivers all of that space without punishing fuel economy.

My tester, a Cherokee Limited 4x4, carried a window sticker of \$45,180 including destination and options. Under the hood sits a turbocharged hybrid four-cylinder paired with a continuously variable



The 2026 Jeep Cherokee combines efficient hybrid power, clean modern styling and family-friendly proportions in what may be Jeep's most well-balanced SUV.

transmission.

While the powertrain is clearly tuned with efficiency in mind, the payoff is substantial. Jeep estimates 39 mpg city and 35 highway.

The Cherokee's driving range became one of my favorite parts of living with it. A large fuel tank combined with hybrid efficiency means this SUV can travel more than 500 miles on a tank without much effort.

Thanks to its thrifty fuel economy, the Cherokee needs a hint of patience when accelerating. You learn to press the throttle earlier than you normally would, especially when merging into fast-moving traffic or darting through short construction-zone

openings on the interstate.

The less good news is the continuously variable transmission.

There is also no disguising the familiar rubber-band sensation and mechanical drone from its continuously variable transmission when you ask for hard acceleration.

Where the Cherokee shines is comfort. The ride stays impressively quiet and composed even on rough pavement, and the suspension tuning leans heavily toward relaxed everyday driving rather than fake sportiness.

Some Jeeps still prioritize ruggedness above all else. This one clearly prioritizes refinement.

Inside, the Cherokee feels

far removed from the stripped-down, boxy Jeeps of decades past, charming though those old SUVs may have been. The cabin has a clean, modern design anchored by a fully digital instrument panel and a large central touchscreen. Higher trims like my Limited tester also get a strong suite of driver-assistance features that make highway travel feel notably less stressful.

Not every design choice works perfectly, though.

The turn-signal stalk feels like an engineer's dare. Jeep somehow crammed controls for the turn signals, headlights, fog lights, front wipers and rear wipers into one small multifunction stalk, and the result feels overly complicated and a bit

delicate for something drivers use constantly.

Off-road capability remains part of the Cherokee's identity, but this version is clearly designed for buyers who spend most of their lives on pavement. It can handle dirt roads, bad weather and light trails without complaint, but comfort, fuel economy and road-trip usability take priority over hardcore trail performance.

That is the right call.

The new Cherokee works because Jeep resisted the temptation to turn it into something extreme. It's roomy without being enormous, efficient without being miserable and modern while maintaining its Jeep identity.

#### AT A GLANCE

##### WHAT WAS TESTED?

2026 Jeep Cherokee Limited 4x4 (\$38,000). Options: Premium paint (\$595), Limited Package 23G (\$2,000), tech group (\$995). Panoramic sunroof (\$1,595). Price as tested (including \$1,995 destination charge): \$45,180

##### BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 113.0 in.  
Length: 188.1 in.  
Width: 74.7 in.  
Height: 67.5 in.  
Engine: 1.6-liter turbocharged hybrid four-cylinder (460 hp, 516 lb.-ft.)  
Transmission: Continuously variable  
MPG: 39 city, 35 highway

##### RATINGS

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

##### WHY BUY IT?

The Cherokee combines impressive hybrid fuel economy, comfortable road manners and genuinely useful interior space without becoming oversized or cumbersome.

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Inside, the redesigned Cherokee features a fully digital dashboard, large touchscreen displays and a spacious cabin focused on comfort, technology and everyday usability.

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#### A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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