

Land Rover Defender is a reinvented classic, a new benchmark in the historic marque's seven-decade lifespan. For 2024, there are five versions, eleven counting seat variants. The short Defender 90 two-door comes with either five or six seats; the most mainstream Defender 110 four-door with five, six or seven seats; and a longer Defender 130 with eight seats (or just five in the 130 Outbound). There are also Hard Tops with just two or three seats, considered commercial vehicles, in both the 90 and 110 size.

It seems like a lot of variety for what is a low volume (though well known) vehicle here, but of course it sells in a big way globally and always

has. Designed and engineered in the UK, Land Rover Defender is sold in 121 countries.

From its style, to its reputation, to its generally upper demographic market, Land Rover may strike many as being more for show than for serious off-roading. The fact is, it is top tier for both.

Engineering features that define and deliver Defender's capabilities include all-wheel drive with a twin-speed automatic gearbox, center differential and optional active locking rear differential with yaw control; a specifically engineered chassis set-up; configurable terrain response to fine-tune individual settings to conditions (or for less experienced off-roaders, an intelligent auto function);

strong numbers for ground clearance, approach-breakover-departure and wading depth (see sidebar); and ClearSight Ground View showing the area directly ahead of the front wheels, usually hidden by the hood. Land Rover emphasizes the usefulness of its systems not only for off-roading, but for negotiating crowded conditions in town, along with longer road trip comfort.

Lest any of this sound like overkill, or gimmicky, we first had our eyes opened years ago, driving the brand during our regional off-road comparison events, on diabolically engineered or wild trails, with knowledgeable reps guiding us through the features, as their capability becomes crystal clear.

Our sample is the 2024 Land Rover Defender 100 X-Dynamic SE—a potent 3.0-liter six-cylinder delivering 395 horsepower and 406 lb-ft of torque, enough for a zero-to-60 time in the fives and a tow capacity above 8,000 pounds, all while still rated at 20 mpg highway. With a base price about \$16k above the least expensive Defender and almost \$47k less than the top V8, it's a winning combination, but you have plenty of other options up and down the scale (see chart at right).

We took ours out promptly for a full day of everything—high-speed mountain highways full of curves and climbs, off-highway trails and crawls, *(cont'd)*

2024 LR DEFENDER LINEUP

Defender 90 S	\$ 56,400
90 X-Dynamic SE	68,400
90 V8	108,200
90 V8 Carpathian Edition	115,300
Defender 100 S	\$ 60,600
100 X-Dynamic SE	72,000
100 X	90,800
100 SE V8	93,000
100 V8	111,500
100 V8 Carpathian Edition	118,600
Defender 130 S w 3.0L P300 i6	\$ 69,100
130 X-Dynamic SE	81,300
130 X	99,900
130 V8	116,600
130 Outbound	84,500

SPECIFICATIONS

Some specs were only available as European and have been converted, but US builds and specs may vary; check with your dealer for the latest.

ASSEMBLY	Nitra, Slovakia
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	UK / Germany
PARTS CONTENT	UK 31% / Germany 19% US/Canada 1%
ENGINE	P300 MHEV 3.0L 24v 6-cyl
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
HP/TORQUE	395 hp / 406 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	8-spd automatic
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
TRANSFER CASE	twin-speed
MODES	Terrain Response w selectable driving & off-road modes, hill descent
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	5.8 sec / 119 mph
SUSPENSION	coil suspension
STEERING	elec pwr assist
BRAKES	(w 22-in wheels) F: 380mm, 4-piston opposed 2-piece caliper; R: 365mm vented disc, single-piston sliding fist w iEPB
WHEELS	(opt) 22-in style 5098 5-spoke gloss black (20-in standard)
TIRES	275/45 R22 XL 112W (Continental CrossContact RX on ours)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	180.43 / 118.98 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.86 in
APPR / BRKOVER / DEPART	38 / 28 / 40°
WADING DEPTH	35.43 in
TURNING CIRCLE	44.49 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	40.55 / 37.24 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	39.1 / 36.57 in
CARGO CAP	(behind 2nd row 'wet') 14 cu.ft
WEIGHT	(Euro) 5070 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(Euro, braked) 8038 lb
ROOF LOAD (DYN/STATIC)	214-268 / 804 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	unknown / (Euro) 23.8 gal
MPG	17/20/18 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$72,000
COLD CLIMATE PACK: heated windshield, heated washer jets, headlight power wash	500
COMFORT & CONVENIENCE PACK: premium cabin lighting, front center console refrigerator compartment, cupholders w cover	1000
PREMIUM UPGRADE INTERIOR PACK: 18-way heated/cooled memory front seats, leather upgrades incl steering wheel	1400
3-ZONE CLIMATE CONTROL	400
CABIN AIR PURIFICATION PLUS	375
CLEAR-SIGHT INTERIOR REAR MIRROR	570
REAR SEATS: 40/20/40 folding, heated rear seats with center armrest	500
BASIC REAR SEAT CONVENIENCE PACK	260
PREMIUM INTERIOR PROTECTION & STORAGE PACK	700
AIR SUSPENSION PACK: electronic air suspension, adaptive dynamics	1600
WHEELS: 22-in #5098 5-spoke gloss black	2200
WHEEL PROTECTION PACK	230
22-IN FULL SIZE SPARE WHEEL	200
BODY-COLOR SPARE WHEEL COVER	400
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	1000
INTERIOR: ebony/ebony Windsor leather/Robustec seats w ebony int	750
TOW HITCH RECEIVER	700
SIGNATURE GRAPHIC, GLOSS BLACK	200
EXTENDED BLACK EXTERIOR PACK	1310
AIR QUALITY SENSOR	100
EMERGENCY PACK	75
HANDOVER PACK	28
DESTINATION CHARGE	1475
TOTAL	\$87,973

RIDDEN HARD AND PUT AWAY HAPPY

BY JOE SAGE



plus the miles of boulevards and busy streets that get us out of town.

While Defender's specifications and heritage suggest a vehicle with highly specialized capabilities, its deeper personality is far more universal—it's an immediate pleasure to drive. Even as a six-cylinder, the powertrain has a healthy growl. But you know it has maximum utility baked in.

Passing over substantial rain troughs in town could not be smoother. You are in command.

On the open road, Defender also proves to be a fantastic highway cruiser. And as we approached civilization on our return leg, crossing a series of rumble strips in advance of the first traffic light in a hundred miles or so, we simply buzzed across, with acoustics just enough to serve their purpose, but otherwise firm, quiet and compliant (with high marks also to its Continental tire fitment).

We had expected this Land Rover to be far more expensive. But you can easily spend this kind of money on a full size pickup, any number of sedans, or on other very familiar high-profile off-road-capable utilities. And Defender is certainly more distinctive. (Expect parts and service to run higher than those others, though.) Proportions and form factor provide an ideal driving position.

We noted few feature or interface oddities, none of which represent flawed implementation, rather simply style or function decisions any user will adjust to, even embrace. Auto start-stop, a feature we usually promptly turn off, is so quick and near-transparent, you don't even need to. Rare. It even has a full-size spare, tailgate-mounted.



2025 DEFENDER SEDONA EDITION

Defender 130 has its own color palette, including a new, exclusive Sedona Red option. It can be enhanced by an optional Extended Bright Pack with lower body panels finished in Ceres Silver Satin.

2025 DEFENDER OCTA

The new Land Rover Defender OCTA brings extreme performance and durability on- and off-road. Its 626-hp 4.4L twin turbo mild-Add 6D Dynamics intelligent suspension, heavily reworked chassis components for top performance over a range of surfaces and conditions., an all-new OCTA Mode—the first performance-focused off-road mode on a Defender, dedicated anti-lock braking, and launch control. New Body and Soul performance seats are immersive, yet made with highly durable materials.

A first-year Defender OCTA Edition One features exclusive new paint options and Chopped Carbon Fiber detailing. Orders are opening soon: [landrover.com/defender](https://www.landrover.com/defender). ■

The Land Rover badge alone suggests a sense of presence. This vehicle guarantees it, in town or in the wilderness. Its styling is quite distinctive, and its performance backs it up.

The experience is equal parts over the top and mainstream—both of which are good places to be. Reviewing our voice memos (the gist of many of which you have just read), we asked ourselves whether our high praise was over the top at first, then stabilized, or whether by the end of our week we had become jaded—the logical or emotional journey any owner at this level might have—ultimately simply summarizing it as a fine drive.

Land Rover Defender seems a great match for our market—with power, style, a wide range of offerings, all with deeply rooted panache, heritage and capability. It's a vehicle you may first approach thinking it's not for everybody. But driving it and re-viewing the lineup will have you concluding that it clearly has the chops—in town, off-road or on the long haul—for anybody. ■

