

Middle heavyweight

Light on its feet, tough as nails BY JOE SAGE

It's complicated. And it's simple. The Land Cruiser name is familiar on our shores for two types of vehicle—a burly utility-type vehicle and a large premium SUV. Both have evolved globally under a range of names and have been among Toyota's best selling and most widely adapted vehicles for decades.

Variations of both have been sold in the US over the years, with the bigger Land Cruiser

SUV bearing the badge for the past couple of decades. That one, however, was dropped from our market after 2021 (although Lexus has kept its cousin, the LX). The Land Cruiser name and market niche have now transferred to a new fifth generation of the more utilitarian Land Cruiser (Prado in much of the world).

The timing seems right (so much so that it has also been applied to the Lexus GX). The

off-pavement niche is hot, boxier styling ditto. (Note that Toyota engineers are longstanding champions at creating crisp geometry that is nonetheless highly aerodynamic.)

The lineup is minimal. One core model, as driven here, is simply called Land Cruiser. And there's a special version, the Land Cruiser 1958, a nod to the lineup's first year. Unlike most special editions, this is \$6,000 less expensive—nicely equipped, but with fabric seats and other simplifications. The 1958 is immediately recognizable by its heritage-evoking round headlights. And for 2024, if still available, there has been an upfitted trim, the First Edition (stretching the lineup's pricing

from the \$50s into the \$70s).

Our sample here is a 2024, though everything is basically the same for 2025, though even simpler, as that First Edition goes by the wayside, with our nameless trim now top dog in the \$60s. (Prices for 2025 rise only \$500.)

What's not to love? On style alone, this is one very Land Cruiserly Land Cruiser.

Power is ample, while i-FORCE MAX hybrid integration provides prodigious torque—465 lb-ft—making the Land Cruiser feel not only more powerful than its horses, but more nimble and precise than its 5,445 pounds suggest. It's not just power-to-weight that makes this handle so well—it's its front/rear distribution, or so it feels, in the absence of a specification for that at this time. But part of that weight is placed down low with the 288-volt hybrid bat-

tery, contributing to excellent balance.

The new Land Cruiser's spacious interior and bold shape give it a presence that belies its trim actual dimensions and maneuverability, while it still boasts strong ground clearance and off-roading specifications.

We thought we might have to go easy on our Land Cruiser off-highway, as ours had 20-inch wheels and tires, rather than the standard 18s. Even these, however, have plenty of sidewall, and the vehicle was a top performer on aggressive dirt trails. We had also just driven multiple Land Cruisers at the TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo a few weeks prior (also in this issue), on dirt trails and an assortment of engineered obstacles. Those winners are, for debatable reasons, not revealed until later. But we do know we voted it extremely high. ■

One of the coolest features in the Land Cruiser is its Cool Box, an optional refrigerated bin in the console, which does reduce the bin's volume, but is GREAT to have in Arizona. The Toyota Land Cruiser is a two-row—surely for reasons of heritage, but also because, while its interior is spacious, its hybrid battery pack does impact volume. For this reason, some shoppers may check out its cousin, the Lexus GX, which is available with either two or three rows.



SPECIFICATIONS

Specs not yet fully available; info from multiple sources; accuracy may vary accordingly.

ASSEMBLY	.....Hamura, Tokyo, Japan
ENGINE	.....i-FORCE MAX 2.4L turbo-4
HYBRID BATTERY	.....288V, 1.87 kWh NiMH
ELECTRIC MOTOR	.....48V integrated in transm
HP/TORQUE	.....326 hp / 465 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd electronically controlled automatic w intelligence (ECT-i); sequential shift mode and uphill/downhill shift logic
DRIVETRAIN	.....full-time 4WD system w Active Traction Control (A-TRAC), Torsen limited-slip center differential w locking feature, electronically controlled locking rear and center differentials, drive mode select w sport, eco, normal, snow modes
SUSPENSION	.....front stabilizer bar disconnect mechanism, crawl control, downhill assist control, Multi-Terrain Select (functional in both 4H and 4L) w auto, dirt, sand, mud, rock and deep snow
	F: indep dbl wishbone, coils, stblzr bar; R: 4-link w coils, stblzr bar & semi-floating axle
STEERING	.....veh speed sensing, var ratio power-assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	..... power-assist front/rear vented disc w hydraulic brake booster, Star Safety System
WHEELS / TIRES	.....opt 20-in alloy / 265/60R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....193.7 / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....8.7 in
APPRCH / DEPART / BRKVER	.....31.0 / 22.0 / 25.0°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....40.0 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....39.3 / 38.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....33.0 / 26.7 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....37.5 / tbd cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....5445 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....6000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....91 oct prem unl / 17.9 gal
MPG	.....22/25/23 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$61,950
20-INCH ALLOY WHEELS	.....1240
LAND CRUISER PREMIUM PKG:	14-spkr JBL Premium audio, illum entry, digital key capability, pwr moonroof w pwr sunshade, center console cool box, digital RV mirror, Qi-compatible wireless charge, leather-trimmed memory/pwr driver's seat, heads-up display, driver assist/alert (4G req'd); lane change, front cross-traffic, traffic jam) .....4800
ROOF RACK	.....1440
TWO-TONE ROOF	.....350
BALL MOUNT	.....80
CARPET CARGO MAT	.....130
CARPET FLOOR MATS	.....179
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1395

TOTAL\$71,364
Prices increase by \$500 for 2025; see below.

2024 LAND CRUISER LINEUP

Land Cruiser 1958	.....\$55,950
Land Cruiser	.....\$61,950
Land Cruiser First Edition	.....74,950

2025 LAND CRUISER LINEUP

Land Cruiser 1958	.....\$56,450
Land Cruiser	.....62,450