

RAV4 goes TRD Off-Road

BY JOE SAGE

The first Toyota RAV4 went into production in 1994 as a 1995 model and was an instant hit—well before the crossover term was coined or compact crossovers displaced sedans as the default vehicle in America. But surely it is one of the reasons those things happened.

RAV4's presence has never wavered, with each generation's popularity as durable as the vehicle itself—in just its fifth generation, it is completing its 30th year here. We received our first gen-five RAV4 in late 2018 with no particular expectations—and liked it so well, it went straight to our cover.

This current round of RAV4 has in fact proved so popular that it has been America's top seller in the red hot compact SUV category for six years running and last year became America's top-selling vehicle, period, other than the perennial full-size pickup. It's not just in the US, either—RAV4 is now built in five countries around the world to keep up with demand. (Ours was built in Ontario, Canada.)

In the US, there are currently a whopping 15 basic builds of Toyota RAV4—with six pure gasoline,

seven hybrid and two plug-in hybrid versions.

Already very capable, RAV4 has heard the call of the wild from its siblings—4Runner, Tacoma, Tundra, Sequoia, Land Cruiser and others—and now receives its first TRD Off-Road treatment.

We discovered the magic of the TRD Off-Road trim years ago—in short, a highly capable member of the TRD family at considerably lower cost than TRD Pro. As an example, the eleven-version Tacoma lineup starts at \$36,200 and tops out with TRD Pro at \$63,900, but Tacoma TRD Off-Road slots in at just \$41,800—well up the scale for off-roadiness, while still well down the scale on cost.

These were our wheels on the ground during the NWAPA Mudfest comparo (also in this issue), which did not mean taking it on the event's engineered off-road courses—those twain never meet. Rather, we used it to tackle the already rugged Pacific Northwest drive from Sea-Tac Airport, across the Tacoma Narrows, out into the lower Olympic Peninsula, back and forth between hotel and track, then returning via Washington State Ferry, through the compacted urban spaghetti of Seattle, back to Tacoma, then back up to Sea-Tac. No dirt, no rocks, but we tackled the sturdy steel ramps of the ferry, the tight maneuvers and parking of the cities, and rain—lots and lots of rain on our last day.

2024 TOYOTA RAV4 LINEUP

2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cyl, 203 hp, 8-spd auto	FWD	AWD
LE	\$28,475	\$29,875
XLE	29,985	31,385
XLE Premium	32,875	34,275
Limited	36,780	38,180
Adventure		34,670
TRD Off-Road		▼ 38,095

+(7) Hybrids (no TRD): 2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cyl, combined 219 hp, CVT, eAWD**\$31,475-39,780**

+(2) PHEVs (no TRD): 2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cyl, combined 302 hp, CVT, eAWD**\$41,590-45,460**

We don't use nav a lot, but did here, for reasons of tight event and boat timing, coupled with some big changes in the roads in recent years. It, too, was a delight, automatically diving into animated 3D at turnoffs and interchanges, then returning promptly to our favorite simple north-up map.

In short, this new RAV4 was a champ at all we threw at it, our trip notes calling it a fantastic vehicle, just reconfirming and continuing to multiply our pleasure with the Toyota RAV4 overall.

We would not be surprised if a RAV4 TRD Pro joins the lineup in the future—such patterns have happened before. When both are available, it can present a complex buying decision. But when just the TRD Off-Road is available, as now on RAV4, the decision is easy. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Woodstock, Ontario, Canada
ENGINE	2.5L Dynamic Force 16v 4-cyl, DOHC, VVT-iE intake, VVT-8 exhaust
HP/TORQUE	203 hp / 184 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	13.0:1
TRANSMISSION	Direct Shift 8-spd auto, electronic w intelligence (ECT-i), sequential shift mode & Snow Mode (AWD only)
DRIVETRAIN	AWD, Multi-Terrain Select
SUSPENSION	F: TRD-tuned indep MacPherson strut, 25.5mm stblzr bar; R: multilink, 23.5mm stblzr bar, TRD unique shocks, struts, red coil springs, jounce bumpers
STEERING	elec pwr-assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 12.0 vented; R: 11.1 solid
WHEELS	18-in six-spoke matte black TRD flow formed alloys w black lug nuts
TIRES	225/60R18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	(TRD) 181.5 / 105.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(TRD) 8.6 in
APPROACH / DEPART	19 / 21°
TURNING CIRCLE	(TRD) 37.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	37.7 / 39.5 in
LEGGROOM (F/R)	41.0 / 37.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	37.5 / 69.8 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3615 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(TRD) 3500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	87 oct reg unl / 14.5 gal
MPG	25/32/28 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$38,095
TRD OFF-ROAD TECH PKG	640
TRD OFF-ROAD WEATHER PKG	1015
DIGITAL REARVIEW MIRROR w Homelink Universal garage door opener	625
DESTINATION CHARGE	1350
TOTAL	\$41,725

