

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 3
MAY-JUNE 2025

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Land Rover
Defender 110
Sedona Red
Edition

VEHICLES • EQUIPMENT • TECHNOLOGY • PEOPLE • EVENTS • DESTINATIONS • ATTRACTIONS

NEW VERSION
OF THIS
GLORIOUS
BEAST HONORS
OUR OWN RED
ROCKS

BY JOE SAGE

We drove the new Land Rover Defender last fall, to high praise (see Sept-Oct 2024)—“a reinvented classic, a new benchmark in the historic marque’s seven-decade lifespan.” Defender is available with two doors or four; five, six, seven or eight seats; and short, medium or long bodies, variously in Defender 90, 110 and 130 formats.

This may sound like a lot of variety for a seemingly lower volume vehicle, but then again, not only is Defender sold in over 120 countries, but the more we are behind the wheel, the more we notice there are a great many on the road here—and the more we are behind the wheel, the more it seems that there very well deserve to be.

Defender’s aristocratic style, bearing and royal heritage can belie its high level of toughness and utility. We’ve driven Land Rovers and Range Rovers in multiple off-road comparo events, quickly learning their rough-duty engineering is top tier, runs bone-deep, and is often extra clever, to boot.

Purpose-built engineering that define and deliver Defender’s capabilities includes its basic drivetrain (all-wheel drive, twin-speed automatic gear-

box, center differential, optional active locking rear differential with yaw control); its chassis (configurable terrain response, generous ground clearance and wading depth); and plenty of useful tech (e.g. ClearSight Ground View ahead). Land Rover emphasizes the usefulness of all this not only for off-roading, but in town or on longer road trips.

Defender’s clean, fine finish and precision build tolerances may also lead many to think it’s on the pricey side. And it can be, with the top-top trim starting close to \$170k (see sidebar). But the lineup overall starts in just the upper-mid \$50s, or our four-door 110 series just above \$60k. (And really, at a mid-lineup price like our sample, or for most of those above that, it’s not at all difficult to build a much more common nameplate up into this price range. Land Rover simply forgoes the ultra-econo-

my end of the scale.)

We caught mostly pavement time in this sample, as it had something else to show off—its Arizona-inspired Sedona Red Edition build.

First brought to the Defender 130, Sedona Red Edition now adds its red-rock-evoking color treatment to the Land Rover Defender 110 for the first time, with exclusive exterior finishes and optional Sedona Red-accented accessories. Its Black Exterior Pack includes gloss black front and rear skid plates, grille bar, checkered hood pattern, badging, lower body cladding and wheel arches. Optional exterior details include a hood decal depicting the topography of Sedona and a body-colored cover for its full-size spare tire and wheel on the rear.

We took our Defender Sedona to, of course, Sedona. A run up I-17 from the Valley showed off superb highway speed handling through the curves and climbs; on a relatively short but irresistible dirt run near Agua Fria National Monument, it hinted

at its off-road mastery without even getting into its huge bag of specialty tricks; and then on into the maximum tourist zone, even the heaviest stop-and-go traffic did not faze it.

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. Its simple eight-speed automatic transmission is an absolute dream, compared with many. And even as a six-cylinder, the powertrain has a healthy, satisfying growl. But while a pleasure all day in town, you know it has maximum utility baked in.

The experience is equal parts over the top and mainstream—a vehicle equally at home and equally way beyond capable in refined or extreme settings, in our experience so far. We don’t do a top choice kind of thing, but if we did, this could certainly be one. Defender dominates most any comparison. You won’t be disappointed. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

Many specs were European and have been converted. Doublecheck with dealer for the latest.

ASSEMBLY	Nitra, Slovakia
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	UK / Germany
PARTS CONTENT	UK 31% / Germany 19% US/Canada 1%
ENGINE	MHEV 3.0L 24v 6-cyl
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
HP/TORQUE	395 hp / 406 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	8-spd automatic
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	5.8 sec / 119 mph
SUSPENSION	coil suspension
STEERING	elec pwr assist
BRAKES	(w 22-in wheels) F: 380mm vented, 4-piston opposed 2-piece caliper; R: 365mm vented disc, single-piston sliding fist w iEPB
WHEELS	22-in wheels w spare
TIRES	275/45 R22 115W (Continental CrossContact a/s on ours)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	197.6 / 118.98 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(air susp, std) 8.58 in (air susp, off-road) 11.42 in
APPR / BRKOVER / DEPART	(air susp, std) 30.1 / 22.0 / 37.7° (air susp, off-road 37.5 / 22.8 / 40.0°
WADING DEPTH	(air susp) 35.43 in
TURNING CIRCLE	42.16 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	40.63 / 40.35 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	39.09 / 39.05 in
CARGO CAPACITY	34.3 / 80.41 cu.ft
WEIGHT	(Euro, converted) 5128 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(Euro, unbraked) 1653 lb (Euro, braked) 7716 lb
ROOF LOAD (DYN/STATIC)	220.5 / 661.4 lb (dynamic w expedition rack) 370.4 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	unknown / (Euro) 23.8 gal
MPG	18/20/19 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$83,800
COLD CLIMATE PACK: heated windshield, heated washer jets, headlight power wash	500
AIR SUSPENSION PACK: electronic air suspen- sion, adaptive dynamics	1600
DESTINATION CHARGE	1625
TOTAL	\$86,725

2025 LR DEFENDER LINEUP

Defender 90 S	\$ 56,900
90 X-Dynamic SE	68,500
90 V8	109,800
Defender 100 S	\$ 60,800
100 X-Dynamic SE	72,100
100 Sedona Red	83,800
100 X	91,800
100 V8	113,500
100 OCTA	152,000
100 OCTA Edition One	167,800
Defender 130 S	\$ 69,700
130 X-Dynamic SE	81,400
130 X	100,900
130 V8	118,900
130 Outbound	85,500