

# ROAD TRIP WARRIOR

(for us, just almost)

BY JOE SAGE

We most often seem to see the Toyota 4Runner in its more dramatic-duty forms—Off-Road, Trailhunter, TRD Pro and so on—both in person around town and in our own pages. Here we have one with the same unmistakable style and stance, but dressed instead for somewhat tamer duty. Or perhaps for a good road trip. In fact, that's what we were set to do in this one.

The ever-popular 4Runner was all new for 2025—generation six—and carries forward for 2026. Its closest sibling is, of course, the Toyota Tacoma, which entered gen-four the prior year. (This is the

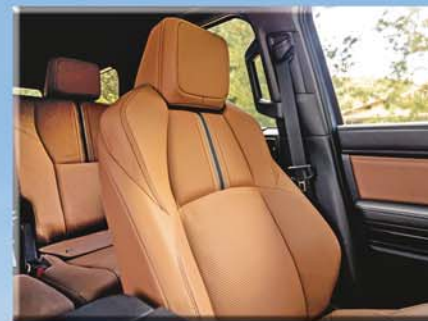
same new generation as 4Runner, but with a different number because 4Runner's pickup relatives had other names and evolutions before Tacoma.)

Last summer, we drove the new 2025 "ultimate overlanding" Trailhunter (which adds even more off-road tech for '26). This time, it's the more town and highway oriented 4Runner Limited, a next-to-top premium grade (with heated, vented, leather, power and tech upgrades, including JBL premium audio). Also available with an i-FORCE MAX turbo hybrid powertrain, ours was the i-FORCE, also a turbo, but non-hybrid. The 4Runner Limited with standard powertrain is also the top trim available as a rear-driver, for anyone interested (see chart at right), though ours had always-welcome 4WD.

We had mapped out about an 1,800-mile drive to Northwest Colorado and back—a glorious route we've driven often, through Flagstaff, Monument Valley, Moab, on into the Rockies.

The theoretical best vehicle for that trip would get 40-50 mpg for the long stretch from Phoenix through Utah and into western Colorado, about 80 percent of the distance, then be highly capable in deep snows, with proper tires, ground clearance and gearing for the final 20 percent. This vehicle falls somewhere in the middle on that impossible combination. You of course could change tires, but 4Runner gearing is a factor in fuel mileage (4Runner and Tacoma used to have pretty different gearing, but are now virtually the same, slightly different for the manual-shift Tacoma.)

But that trip was not to be. Instead, we had a



great week with it around town, closer to home.

We generally neither hypermile nor log our fuel mileage, with few exceptions. For this one per its specifications, fuel mileage numbers seemed relatively low, real world mixed duty around 20 mpg. But our actual results seemed higher. We have sometimes had some vehicle that was rated high, but the tank seemed to drop fast. The 4Runner seemed the better opposite—official numbers not so high, but the gas gauge seemed generous.

The Limited trim level will gain many fans via relativities. For someone who perhaps is eyeing a Highlander or Land Cruiser, but wants something a little smaller, but bigger than the RAV4, here y'go. And for someone who loves the 4Runner, but has found the tough-duty trims too gnarly, put the same basic vehicle in more civilized clothing, and suddenly its competitive set multiplies mightily. As with any 4Runner, the Limited will of course also please plenty of people on its own merits. ■



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Toyota Tahara, Aichi, Japan
SEATING	.....opt 3rd row: seven
ENGINE	.....i-FORCE 2.4L 4-cyl turbo, DOHC 16v, D-4ST fuel inj
HP/TORQUE	.....278 hp / 317 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....11:1
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	.....full-time 4WD w adaptive variable suspension
SUSPENSION	.....F: indep dbl wishbone w stblzr bar, twin-tube shocks; R: multi-link w coils, outboard-mounted twin-tube shocks
STEERING	.....EPS: pwr-asst rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....F: 13.4 vented; R: 13.2 vented
WHEELS	.....20-in machine-finish alloys
TIRES	.....265/55R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....194.9 / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....(Limited) 8.8 in
APPR/DEP/BRKOVER	.....(Limited) 18 / 22 / 24°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	.....39.7 / 37.8 / 35.3 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	.....41.8 / 34.8 / 31.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....12.1 / 44.8 / 84.1 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....(Limited i-Force 4WD) 4970 lb
GVWR	.....( " ) 6395 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....6000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....reg unl / 19 gal
MPG	.....20/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)
<b>BASE PRICE</b>	<b>.....\$57,400</b>
THIRD ROW SEATING	.....1330
AUTOMATIC RUNNING BOARDS	.....1005
ROOF RAIL CROSS BARS: gloss black	.....420
TOW TECH PKG: w trailer reverse assist control, digital display rear mirror	.....400
TOWING: ball mount	.....65
TAILGATE LED LIGHT	.....200
WHEEL LOCKS: bright chrome	.....90
CARGO COVER: retractable black	.....135
CARGO MAT: carpet "4Runner"	.....130
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1450
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>.....\$62,625</b>

Note: 2025 sample; see 2026 pricing below.

## 2026 TOYOTA 4RUNNER LINEUP

i-FORCE (286-hp turbo)	.....4x2	.....4x4
SR5	.....\$41,570	.....\$43,570
TRD Sport	.....48,050	.....50,050
TRD Sport Premium	.....53,410	.....55,410
Limited	.....56,200	.....▼ 58,200
TRD Off-Road	.....49,990	
TRD Off-Road Premium	.....55,770	
i-FORCE MAX (326-hp hybrid turbo)	.....4x4	
TRD Off-Road i-FORCE MAX	.....\$52,790	
TRD Off-Road Premium i-FORCE MAX	.....58,570	
Limited i-FORCE MAX	.....61,000	
Platinum i-FORCE MAX	.....63,660	
Trailhunter i-FORCE MAX	.....67,700	
TRD Pro i-FORCE MAX	.....67,900	