

Ford should be very happy with their decision to bring back the Bronco five years ago, after a quarter-century's absence—returning to a niche it had long inhabited prior, in multiple forms, and rising quickly again to the top tiers of that niche. While earlier Broncos had run through two sizes, one a smaller utility, the other based on the full-size F-series pickup, it returned in today's market—where utilities and pickups are available in a wide variety of sizes and formats—in a whole new size and shape, one that has clearly hit the nail on the head, quickly securing its position.

The beauty of this is not just its own glory—its popularity and volume have enabled Bronco to be further developed with incredible variety. This is significant as we drive this one—a 2026 Ford Bronco Badlands 4-Door 4x4—because, in a way, the best way to talk about *this* Bronco is to talk about all of them. And conversely, the whole point of talking about all of them is to define this one—or any of the others (see following page). While a blank-slate shopper is faced with some solid choices among off-roaders these days brand-by-brand, Bronco has created an ever-wider range

of options within its own stable, where just about anyone can find something to suit themselves. Many people in our market will buy the most extreme top trim off-roader, regardless of other factors. Many have three-car garages, room for a trail beast and a tamer daily driver. Yet many will still use their potent off-roader as a daily, just because they love it and/or they want to show it off. Beyond that, though, many want a decent level of off-roading skills, but don't want to show off—seeking potent weekend capabilities, while looking respectable on school runs or while hauling the

executive team to a posh restaurant or resort. Or they just have a different personality balance. And of course it may all come down to budget realities. Bronco's something-for-everyone lineup currently includes seven levels, plus packages atop those, plus 2-Doors and/or 4-Doors, plus manual and automatic transmissions, plus four H.O.S.S. systems according to task level (but which in some cases can be cross-pollinated—upgraded as options). The basic choice runs from a semi-unnamed Base to Ford's radical factory dirt-and-desert-racing Raptor, overall running \$40,795 to 79,995 base. Badlands is the middle of the seven by sequence, though starts toward the lower end by price. This gives it plenty of headroom to beef up further.

Our Bronco Badlands 4-Door 4x4 with standard HOSS 2.0 suspension started at \$48,890, and some people would happily stop right there. Sasquatch sounds like a trim level, but is a package, included in our Badlands at no additional cost. Wildtrak, on the other hand, has been its own trim level but is now an option package, and ours includes this, too, at about \$12 grand. Along with other options (a hard top and a creature comforts and tech group the priciest), ours is out the door at \$72,200—now close to base Raptor by price, but between build, options and personality, at this point deep into apples' n' oranges territory. And in a solid happy spot. All the Broncos except Raptor have the same engine. Four of the seven basic versions off a man-

(cont'd)

Eye on the ball.

Choices among choices

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Michigan Assembly Plant, Wayne, Michigan
CHASSIS	body-on-frame, fully boxed high-strength steel frame w seven cross members
ENGINE	2.7L EcoBoost 60° V6 twin-turbo, intercooled, DOHC, dir inj, compacted graphite iron block, aluminum head
HP/TORQUE	330 hp / 415 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.0:1
TRANSMISSION	10-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	2-spd advanced 4x4
TRANSFER CASE	auto on-demand engage
DIFFERENTIALS	4.7 rear axle locking diff, front axle locking diff
SUSPENSION	standard is HOSS 2.0; our Wildtrak Package upgrades it to HOSS 3.0. F: indep short- and long-arm (SLA) w forged knuckles, HD wheels hubs & long-travel coil-over springs, forged alum upper & lower control arms (same as HOSS 2.0); HOSS 3.0 upgrades change Bilstein off-road monotube shocks to FOX internal bypass, IFS front axle to Ford Racing severe-duty steering rack and tie-rod ends; R: long-travel solid axle, 4-link w Panhard rod, var rate coil-over springs & integrated jounce bumpers (same as HOSS 2.0); HOSS 3.0 brings same upgrade to FOX internal bypass shocks as front, plus stabilizer bar.
STEERING	selectable-effort elec pwr asst w modes via Terrain Mgmt System w G.O.A.T. Modes.
BRAKES	F: cast iron 311x34, 51mm floating caliper dual-piston; R: high-carbon cast iron 308x24, 54mm floating caliper single-piston
WHEELS	17-in carbonized gray-paint alum
TIRES	33-inch LT315/70R17 R/T
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	189.0 / 116.1 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	(4dr hard top) 40.8 / 40.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	(") 43.1 / 36.3 in
CARGO CAPACITY	(") 35.6 / 77.6 cu.ft
ROOF LOAD	(in motion) 110 lb (static, 33-in tire) 450 lb
GROUND CLEARANCE	10.5 in
APPR / DEP / BRKOVER	41.3 / 34.5 / 24.1°
SUSPENSION TRAVEL (F/R)	9.4 / 10.3 in
TURNING CIRCLE	(33-in tire) 39.8 ft
MAX PAYLOAD	(4dr 2.7L) 1204 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(4dr 2.7L) 3460 lb
WEIGHT	(4dr 2.7L) 5046 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.87 min / 91+ rec / 20.8 gal
MPG	17/17/17 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$48,890
WITH SASQUATCH PKG:	4.7 rear axle locking diff, front axle locking diff, LT315/70R17 R/T tires (35-in)incl
PAINT:	Avalanche Gray395
WILDTRAK PKG:	HOSS 3.0 w/ Fox dampers11,945
BLACK APPEARANCE PKG,	black graphic pkg, 17-in blk alum beadlock black ringsnc
HARD TOP,	black painted, sound deadening headliner2495
EQUIP GROUP 334A: BADLAND SERIES:	MID pkg, front heated seats, Pro Power Onboard 400W, Ford Co-Pilot360, Lux Pkg, 360° camera, adaptive cruise, AM/FM 12 spkrs...4500
SDARS conn pkg 1x 7yr	745
SIRIUSXM 3yr	300
FLOOR LINERS	w/o floor mats160
FRONT BUMPER	HD modular775
FRONT STBLZR BAR DISCONNECT	nc
DESTINATION CHARGE	1995
TOTAL	\$72,200

ual transmission. Only Base and Badlands offer a Two-Door as well as a transmission choice—and even as ours was a Four-Door automatic, this mix confirms Badlands as a great starting point for a combination of most capability with most choice.

In addition to plenty of town time, we took our Badlands on a fairly extensive off-road run. Its 2.3-liter EcoBoost four offered ample smooth power in all cases, as well as running quieter and cooler than our recent Ranger Raptor, more support for its town-use quotient. Ford's beyond-intuitive electronic modes and differentials impressed us again.

Our highly outfitted Badlands comes across as a value pack built on extremes and equally an extreme build rooted in value. It's not a luxury build, but rather one you can give the toughest duty to and still hose out—a factor arguably missing from many lineups for years.

Bronco's success has enabled complexity that echoes the endlessly variable F-Series, making Ford's Order Guides—packages and such—as important as fundamental specs. You may want to dig deep to custom-order, or even just to educate yourself for cruising the dealerships with a solid idea of your basic goals and favorite features—say, door count and transmissions—then seeing what's on the lot. You clearly can't go wrong. ■

BRONCO BADLANDS (base inclusions)

ALL BIG BEND® SERIES
STANDARD EQUIPMENT PLUS:

- MECHANICAL:**
- advanced 4x4 w auto on-demand engagement
- EXTERIOR:**
- powder-coated steel bumpers, front/rear
 - full vehicle steel bash plates
 - carbonized gray paint grille, w white "BRONCO" lettering
 - LED fog lamps
 - rock rails
 - LED taillamps
 - LT285/70R17 rugged-terrain R/T tires (33-in)
 - full size spare tire, TPMS
 - tow hooks (2 front, 2 rear)
 - 17-in carbonized gray-painted aluminum wheels

- SAFETY/SECURITY:**
- LED headlamps w LED signature lighting
- FUNCTIONAL:**
- high clearance fender flares
 - HOSS 2.0 off-road suspension w rear Bilstein® position-sensitive dampers
 - Terrain Management System™ w G.O.A.T. Modes (normal, eco, slippery, off-road, sport, rock-crawl, Baja)

- INTERIOR/COMFORT:**
- auxiliary switches w pre-run accessory wires in over-head console w front map lights
 - carpet floor mats (front, 4-Door only)
 - interior grab handles, front row (one in center floor console, passenger side)
 - marine grade vinyl seats, MOLLE strap system (front driver/passenger seat back)
 - rubberized flooring (washout capable w drain plugs)

2026 FORD BRONCO LINEUP

This list of trims, builds and availabilities barely scratches the surface, even as it itself is quite a list. You will want to visit the consumer website for a deep dive. And deep it is.

BASEfrom 40,795
2-DOOR or 4-DOOR
300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost four
7-spd manual or 10-spd auto
* AVAILABLE SASQUATCH PKG

BIG BENDfrom 41,295
4-DOOR
300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost four
7-spd manual or 10-spd auto
* AVAILABLE BLACK DIAMOND PKG

OUTER BANKSfrom 48,190
4-DOOR
base: 300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost four
- available 330-hp 2.7L EcoBoost V6
10-spd auto
* AVAILABLE 60TH ANNIVERSARY PKG

▼ **BADLANDS**from 48,890
2-DOOR or ✓ 4-DOOR
base: 300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost four
✓ - available 330-hp 2.7L EcoBoost V6
7-spd manual or ✓ 10-spd auto
✓ AVAILABLE SASQUATCH PKG

HERITAGE EDITIONfrom 51,625
4-DOOR
base: 300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost four
- available 330-hp 2.7L EcoBoost V6
7-spd manual or 10-spd auto
* AVAILABLE SASQUATCH PKG

STROPPE EDITIONfrom 69,995
HOSS 3.0 advanced off-road build
4-DOOR
330-hp 2.7L EcoBoost V6
10-spd auto

RAPTORfrom 79,995
HOSS 4.0 highly advanced off-road build
4-DOOR
418-hp 3.0L EcoBoost V6
10-spd auto

BRONCO H.O.S.S. SYSTEMS

- High-performance
Off-road Stability Suspension
- HOSS 1.0:** Base, Big Bend, Black Diamond, Outer Banks
- HOSS 2.0:** Badlands, Everglades, Heritage Edition, Heritage Limited, and First Edition trims. It is also standard on any Bronco equipped with the Sasquatch Package
- ✓ **HOSS 3.0** system is primarily tied to the Ford Bronco Wildtrak. It was introduced as a \$2,515 option in late 2022 and became standard on all Wildtrak models for 2023. For the 2025 and 2026 model years, the Wildtrak was removed, but Ford made the HOSS 3.0 package available as an optional upgrade on the Bronco Badlands trim.
- HOSS 4.0** is exclusively equipped on the Ford Bronco Raptor.

