

Toyota Land Cruiser Prado: Best of both worlds

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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It's one thing driving an all-terrain vehicle. It's another experience when you take the revamped Prado Land Cruiser on and off-road. It was a cold and wet day in KwaZulu-Natal recently and reports of snowfall in the southern Drakensberg region dominated the local media. That was more than an invitation to 'test' the Prado, both on national and inner provincial roads. But the off-roads towards the southern Drakensberg would prove to be a formidable test for the all-terrain, go-anywhere vehicle. The Prado, with different drive modes, proved more than capable on these treacherous, muddy and pot-holed roads.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

The Land Cruiser Prado was a comfortable ride indeed, with improved fuel consumption and engine efficiency. It delivered admirably when the going got tough. The Prado has established itself as one of the most accomplished off-roaders on the South African market. While many SUVs are bought for 'curb appeal', it's no wonder that Prado aficionados have come to rely on the robust construction and go-anywhere capability that the Land Cruiser badge signifies.

The engine: refined

At the heart of the revised range is an additional 30kW of power and 100Nm of torque derived from the switch to the latest-generation 2.8-litre GD-6 turbo diesel engine, which is now mated exclusively to a six-speed automatic transmission. Prado's Overlanding and towing credentials benefit from the higher-performance engine that now delivers a maximum of 150kW at 3400rpm. The latest generation 2.8 GD-6 engine has received a raft of upgrades including a new ball-bearing turbocharger with a larger turbine and impeller, and improved engine rigidity and cooling.

The new six-speed transmission has revised torque converter lock-up mapping, to provide smooth yet firm gearshifts and a newly-added paddle-shift function. A low-range transfer case makes off-roading a cinch, while user-selectable differential locks - centre and rear - keep the wheels 'in sync' when navigating slippery conditions.

New infotainment

A new-generation multimedia system is fitted across the range, which now incorporates a larger 9-inch touchscreen display - previous 8-inch, enhanced voice recognition and compatibility with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Customers are able to utilise mobile phone services such as Google Maps, Waze, Spotify, SoundCloud etc. to enhance their driving experience – while providing enhanced telephony and messaging interfaces.

An embedded satellite navigation system complements the aforementioned smartphone functionality – particularly useful when out of signal range.

Standard specification

As before a three-grade strategy is followed; TX, VX and VX-L. The TX variants come well equipped with automatic dual-zone climate control, six-speaker touch audio system, electrically adjustable driver's seat, illuminated entry, cruise control, park distance control, keyless entry, auto door lock, three power outlets, Bluetooth connectivity, USB, third-row seating and reverse camera.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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Seat heating and ventilation are provided for front-row occupants while second-row occupants also benefit from seat heating. The refrigerated centre console helps make light work of road trips or bush excursions.

The flagship VX-L versions feature Toyota Safety Sense, which encompasses Pre-Collision System, Adaptive Cruise Control, Blind-Spot Monitoring, Lane Departure Alert and Rear Cross Traffic Alert.

In addition, the Automatic High Beam function provides enhanced visibility via the LED headlamps when activated. A power-operated tilt-and-slide moonroof completes the VX-L package.

Off-road technologies

All Prado models feature Toyota's Active Traction Control system, which actively regulates wheel-slip, by directing torque to the wheel with the most traction. Hill Assist Control forms part of the standard ensemble.

The Multi-Terrain Select (MTS) system (VX and VX-L only), operated by a centrally mounted rotary knob, allows the driver to select the correct mode depending on the terrain. The system has five pre-configured modes - mud and sand, loose rock, mogul, rock and dirt and rock, to tailor the vehicle's traction control. Downhill Assist Control and Crawl Control are included on VX and VX-L models.

Model line-up and pricing

- Prado 2.8L Diesel TX - R939,900
- Prado 4.0L Petrol VX - R1,029,000
- Prado 2.8L Diesel VX - R1,060,600
- Prado 4.0L Petrol VX-L - R1,072,600
- Prado 2.8L Diesel VX-L - R1,105,800

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