

Toyota Rumion TX: no, #&^%#!, I'm not an Uber driver

 By [Alan Duggan](#)

6 May 2022

It may have an unfortunate association with the taxi industry, but there's something quite compelling about the super-spacious Toyota Rumion. I spent a week with the popular seven-seater and enjoyed the ride.



Image credit: Alan Duggan

Okay, let's start with the obvious: Toyota's Rumion MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) is essentially the Suzuki Ertiga, barring the badge, the price and a couple of other minor details. In other words, choosing one over the other will probably have less to do with the vehicle's mechanical and comfort features than factors such as brand loyalty, service plans, special offers and your relationship with your local dealership.

Buying a new car can be scary, partly because it involves a lot of money but also because even the most sensible people second-guess themselves. Did you choose a certain model for the right reasons, and could your choice backfire as your circumstances change?

I never cease to be amazed by people's choices and wonder what goes through their heads when parting with big bucks for vehicles that appear grossly unsuitable for their needs. If you spend 95% of your time on your own in the urban commute, do you really need that big SUV? How about that double cab 4x4 bakkie? Must you have that extra diff to climb pavements when picking up your child from school?

When you visit a car showroom, do you sit behind the wheel, adjust the seat for optimum comfort, and then try the seat behind to check out the knee room? (When I tried this in my wife's car, I found that the rear seats were suitable only for passengers with no legs.) Do you really need a lot of expensive boot space for those annual family holidays, or would a tow hitch and cheap trailer do the job?



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Which brings us to the huge chasm between need and want. A family member recently took delivery of a little Suzuki Jimny, a compact cutie that has proven so popular that there's a waiting list extending to months in some parts of the country. She loves it, and I'm a little envious.

Here's the fun part of new-car buying: if you feel the need to make a bold statement about your social status, financial acumen or sexual prowess, you don't have to justify your purchase to anyone because it's your constitutional right. (To keep things simple, let's extract your partner and accountant from the conversation.)

Having driven literally hundreds of different cars over the years, including some very quick and horrendously expensive machines (Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsche, McLaren, et al), I can safely say that I no longer lust after anything in particular, with the possible exception of the sumptuous, go-anywhere Land Cruiser 300.

Which brings us back to the Rumion, a roomy and versatile seven-seater MPV that sells for R258,000 and up and is unlikely to make a bold statement about your social status, financial acumen or sexual prowess (see above). The derivative I tested was the 1.5 TX with manual transmission, costing R316,800. Considering what you get for your money, it's a bargain.

Yes, the Rumion has an unfortunate Uber image. I know this because I've read about it and because a random guy approached me while I was on the school run and asked to be taken home. He was outraged when I said no.

Anyway, spending a week with the Rumion answered some of my most pressing questions. Does it have plenty of passenger and luggage space? Yes, and then some, although the third row of seats is best suited to kids. Are there seat configurations to suit every conceivable need? Pretty much. For instance, I flattened two seatbacks and easily accommodated a trio of 1.9m surfboards, with space left over to seat myself and three passengers.



Image credit: Alan Duggan



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Is it affordable? Definitely, especially when you consider some of its family-friendly competitors. Is it a little basic and

boring? A teensy bit. For the record, the cabin is comfortable rather than luxurious, and as for the plastic “wood” trim on the dash, door and steering wheel... no, a thousand times no.

You get a fair spec for your money, though. Electric windows (obviously), stop-start button, park distance control, reversing camera, multi-function steering wheel, modest-sized touchscreen display, automatic aircon, alloy wheels, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay services, anti-lock brakes (ABS), and two airbags in front.

Toyota Rumion TX manual: just the facts

- Price: R316,800
- Engine: 1.5l petrol
- Transmission: five-speed manual
- Power: 77kW @ 6,000r/min
- Torque: 138Nm @ 4,400r/min
- Top speed: 175km/h
- Fuel consumption: 6.2l/100km
- Safety: ABS, twin front airbags
- Warranty: three years/100,000km
- Service plan: four services/60,000km

ABOUT ALAN DUGGAN

Alan Duggan was the founding editor of *Popular Mechanics* in South Africa and is a former motoring correspondent for the *Sunday Times* and other publications.

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