



Toyota Highlander



Tim Saunders is an advanced motorist and journalist. He has always been passionate about motoring and regularly reviews cars from the leading manufacturers. His Youtube channel videos have been watched more than 325,000 times. Tim aims to boost his subscribers from 300 to over 1,000.

The first thing that strikes me when I see the Toyota Highlander is that I haven't driven a burgundy coloured vehicle for years. It really enhances this SUV. It's a colour that holds a strong place in my heart because my parents had a 1988 Vauxhall Carlton with the same finish. Over the years various manufacturers have chosen this palette but it seems to have gone out of favour in recent times. That is until I get behind the wheel of the Highlander and then notice that it's still a reasonably popular choice... Isn't it funny how you only recognise certain things when they relate to you? Or is that just me?

The key facts about this vehicle are that it is a self-charging hybrid petrol electric. Already this scores highly with me because it will not interfere with my lifestyle like an electric vehicle will. I don't need to worry about any aspect of charging because it does it itself. Then it will accommodate no less than eight occupants; that's got to be a first – unless of course you have a van and even those would struggle to transport so many. And thirdly it has a nice large panoramic glass roof making it a very light vehicle.

The automatic gearbox complete with paddleshifts makes for easy, some might say boring, driving.

For me the driver's seat could do with a little more support – I've been hedge cutting and my back is feeling the strain so needs all the help it can get.

I quickly discover that it will travel in EV (electric vehicle) mode up to about 27mph and then no matter how light your right foot, the petrol engine will kick in. In theory it makes it ideal for travelling through town centres and situations where traffic moves more slowly. That makes it perfect for motorways then during rush hours and holiday getaways. As usual there are lots of roadworks and travelling through the New Forest we have to patiently wait in a queue for the best part of half an hour. The Highlander is great in situations like this because not only does the ignition automatically cut out when the car stops, reducing those pesky emissions but it then restarts when the traffic starts flowing again. At such low speeds EV mode then takes over which means that for about 30 minutes we are being as clean as can be. All the while the strong sunlight is shining through that enormous glass roof. A good proportion of this is also an electric tilt/slide sunroof, which is much appreciated on a warm day. Toyota claims that this vehicle will return up to 39mpg. I can report that we

actually get 43mpg – this is a first for me – usually the vehicles I test prove to be less efficient than claimed. On a full tank it should easily travel 400 miles, if not more, depending on driving style. As far as I can tell these economy figures only take into account the petrol engine so adding the miles that might be travelled on EV mode should show a figure closer to 50mpg, I would think.

Facts at a glance

- Toyota Highlander Excel 2.5-litre petrol hybrid
- Price: £51,670
- Top speed: 112mph
- 0 to 60mph: 8 seconds
- Economy: 39.2 to 43 mpg



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