

## History of the Toyota Highlander by Betsy Bearden

Take the *High Road* in the Toyota Highlander. It's a taller, larger version of the world's best-selling car, the Camry. The gene pool doesn't get much better than that. The Highlander was introduced to the U.S. in 2001 and it was the first car-based midsize SUV or Midsize Crossover. For those looking for a midsize SUV that is quiet, handles like a car, has room to seat up to seven, and offers all the creature comforts a vehicle has to offer, then the Highlander is for you.

It is nice to look at and great to drive, while it offers excellent visibility that always gives you a safer feeling. It also offers 95.4 cubic feet of space with the second and third-row seats folded down. From a full load of seven passengers to a boatload of cargo space without them, who could ask for more? The second-row bench seat can move forward or backward and has a unique 40/20/40 split design that allows you to remove the center section for easier access to the third-row seat. Furthermore, you can stow it and take it with you because the middle seat can be stored in a department beneath the center console. How convenient is that!

Available in three models, Base, SE and Limited, the 2012 Toyota Highlander is available with a choice of two engines. The base model offers a 2.7-liter inline-4 engine with 187 horsepower under the hood and 186 lb-ft of torque and has a six-speed automatic transmission. You can expect to get 20 mpg city/25 mpg highway. The base and SE models come with many options that will bring you up to snuff with the Limited.

The Highlander Limited offers these standards: a 3.5-liter V6 with 270 horsepower under the hood and 248 lb-ft of torque. It's equipped with a five-speed automatic and front-wheel drive is standard with an optional all-wheel drive. The front-wheel drive V6 will give you 18 mpg in city and 24 highway and it can tow up to 5,000 pounds. If you opt for the Highlander Limited AWD you will realize zero to 60 mph in just 7.5 seconds and this makes the Highlander quicker than most of the competing classes. Pretty impressive for a midsize SUV, wouldn't you say? As far as the V6 goes, it is among the most fuel-efficient in its category: a winner, for sure.

As far as safety, government crash tests earned the Highlander an overall rating of four stars. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety deemed the Highlander as "Good" (the highest possible) in both frontal-offset and side impact tests.

When it comes to driving a dependable, comfortable, and performance-minded midsize SUV, some may take the high road, some may take the low road, but you can take the sure road with The Toyota Highlander.

*References:*

*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toyota\\_Highlander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toyota_Highlander)*

*<http://www.edmunds.com/toyota/highlander/2012/#fullreview>*