

History of Toyota Tercel by Betsy Bearden

The Toyota Tercel is yet another one of Toyota Motor Company's break through creations. It was the very first front-wheel drive that Toyota manufactured, and some models even offered 4-wheel drive. Produced between the years of 1985-1999, the Tercel was a successful subcompact seller until the Tercel stepped aside for the production of the Toyota Echo in 2000.

The Tercel was designed as a subcompact car that was affordable to younger people, and to those who simply wanted a well-built, affordable economy car. It was slightly smaller than the Corolla or Corona, and the first generation Tercel was manufactured between 1978 and 1982 when it was marketed and sold as the *Corolla* Tercel.

From 1982-1986, the second (and markedly different) generation rolled off the production line and was reintroduced as The Tercel. The hatchback models continued to be manufactured with front-wheel drive and the 4-door station wagon model was equipped with 4-wheel drive. In Japan, a four-wheel drive sedan was also being offered at that time, along side the wagon.

Between the years of 1987-1990, the '88 and '89 model Tercel leapt far ahead of its competition with its Deluxe 4-door lift back that came equipped with a standard 5-speed manual transmission, rear defrost, and custom wheels. These amenities were unheard of in a model such as the little subcompact Tercel back in the day. It was a crowned jewel, indeed.

From 1995-2000, the little Tercel muscled up—a lot. Its redesign offered ahead-of-its-time safety features, especially for an entry-level model. Equipped with standard driver and passenger-side air bags, seat belts, and anti-lock brakes, it also met all federal mandates for side impact protection.

As of 1998, the little souped-up Tercel became the second-best selling car in Chile, and it blew the others in its class away with its 0-60 in 10.4 seconds. Again, it just goes to show you that Toyota should always be preceded with “yet another” when it comes to being ahead of its time in producing technologically advanced, passing unheard of milestones, and just doing things *better*—these things have repeatedly added to the reputation and success of Toyota.

References: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toyota_Tercel