

Road test: Toyota's expanded Urban Cruiser

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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One glance at the Urban Cruiser sees a longer, wider, and higher car than its predecessor. But perhaps most importantly, these changes have been very well received by all in Mzansi, judging from the country's June vehicle sales report.



Toyota Urban Cruiser shares a platform with the Suzuki Grand Vitara and is manufactured in India. Source: Supplied

The new Urban Cruiser was among the top 10 vehicles sold within a month of its April launch, propelled by its good value for asking price offering. Toyota's model also proves that badge loyalty still drives sales, with Urban Cruiser outselling its *cheaper* Suzuki Grand Vitara identical twin – both cars are built in India.

I have to say that this model is bigger in style, bigger in practicality and bigger in space – especially in the cabin. All models now come with auto aircon and reverse camera and vehicle stability control (VSC) as standard.

Consistent sales

Since its introduction in 2021, Toyota's Urban Cruiser has consistently ranked first in the highly competitive B-SUV segment, achieving a market share of 19%, proving that it's the right product at the right price.

This market segment continuously shifts from hatchbacks towards crossovers due to the increasing need for space at an

affordable price, but recent trends are tipping the scales to the SUV because of the preferred loftier driving position.

The Urban Cruiser ride is raised 210mm from the ground.



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Naresh Maharaj 23 May 2023



Radical change

Bi-halogen projector headlamps lower in the face so that it now seems now set within the bumper. Headlamps are also neatly framed with a chrome bezel.

Slim-line LED daytime running lights have now become the focal points of the front end, splitting into two with a chrome strip in between and merging into the piano black grille.



Slim daytime running lights are now the focus. Source: Naresh Maharaj

There are rugged styling elements like the massive lower grille aperture with honeycomb design combined with a silver ornamental skid plate.

High-gloss, black lattice-design 17-inch alloys adorn XR models while the XS gets 17-inch steel wheels with turbine-inspired wheel covers.

The rear styling is refreshingly clean. The ultra-slim C-shaped LED taillights are set within a piano black panel which, in turn, is overlaid by a pale silver trim garnish.

Another design highlight is the way Toyota has uniquely put together both the indicators and reverse lamps in separate vertical clusters. There are more rugged features here too – a roof spoiler and the lower lip of the rear bumper gets a decorative silver skid plate.

New Cabin

Subtle touches of silver on satin trim inserts and chrome finish door handles add levity to the dark interior – from the satin-plated trim inserts and chrome door handles to the metallic. High-quality black striated cloth upholstery is featured throughout the interior.

Taking centre stage in the completely re-designed dashboard is the easy-to-read 7-inch infotainment screen which is, of course, Android Auto and, unique to the segment, wireless Apple CarPlay enabled.



Source: Naresh Maharaj

The instrument panel has been improved with premium touches and the storage box between the front seat doubles as an armrest with a slidable lid.

Rear seats split 60/40 split and comes equipped with a centre-mounted armrest/fold-down table. New and exclusive to the XR model is cruise control.

Four cylinders

Adapted for the new Urban Cruiser is the familiar 1.5-litre, naturally aspirated four-cylinder engine delivering 77kW and 138Nm of torque. While it is plenty power to get the Urban Cruiser up to highway speeds, overtaking in the higher gears needs some pre-planning.

What this car lacks in grunt it wins at the pumps – fuel consumption is pegged at a penny-pinching 6.1l/100km in the combined cycle.



Source: Naresh Maharaj

Buyers can choose between a five-speed manual transmission or a four-speed automatic (XR) - all driving the front wheels. And speaking of manual vs auto, in this instance I preferred the manual over the lazy auto.

Pricing

Urban Cruiser 1.5 XS MT: R 329,400

Urban Cruiser 1.5 XR MT: R 347,400

Urban Cruiser 1.5 XR AT: R 369,900

All Urban Cruiser models are now sold with a longer service plan of four years/60,000km and a three-year/100,000km warranty is also provided.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist. Contact Naresh on nmaharaj321@gmail.com

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