

Jeep Grand Cherokee L ***Review: Hiking around the city***

By Jeremy Chua, Torque



Driving the Jeep Grand Cherokee L is like wearing a pair of high-end hiking boots no matter where you're going and what you're doing.

Getting behind the wheel of a Jeep always feels like an occasion, especially if it's the Wrangler or Grand Cherokee. Apart from being a rare sight, it's also not every day that one gets to experience a slice of Americana, and a large one at that.

After all, the Grand Cherokee hails from the U.S.A, where everything there is relatively huge compared to the rest of the world. From cars and carparks to food and clothes, everything in America is huge.

Speaking of clothes, it's only right to dress properly for an event or activity. That means going to a beach party in your best "resort chic" getup and attending your good friend's wedding in a suit. Driving a Jeep means looking outdoorsy, so I at least wore Timberland boots before getting into the SUV.



L = Limited and Large

The previous Grand Cherokee I drove was a five-seater model powered by a turbocharged 2.0-litre engine. This Grand Cherokee L, on the other hand, is a seven-seater and has a more sizeable (and more American-like) 3.6-litre V6 as well.

Jeep didn't just cram two more seats into this SUV, though. The Grand Cherokee L's wheelbase measures 3092mm long, or 128mm longer than that of the 2-litre variant. Overall, the Grand Cherokee is also 302mm longer, measuring 5202mm from tip to tip.

Standing nearly two metres tall, this Jeep's physical presence makes smaller SUVs look even tinier. Coupled with the high shoulder line and boxy angles, one might feel reluctant when walking up to it for the first time.



It may be burly, but you'll find the Jeep's character to be surprisingly friendly. Climb aboard (those running boards are useful) and there's lots of room to stretch out, despite the wide centre console separating the two front seats.

The cockpit layout is identical to the Grand Cherokee 2.0, with a configurable instrument panel that also offers multiple layout options. The infotainment menu is organised enough so getting the hang of it won't take too long either. Connectivity is also pretty good, with four USB ports (two USB-A and two USB-C) and a 12-volt outlet for charging your smartphones.



Passengers in the second row get the same treatment, along with a 230-volt outlet that one can even use to charge their laptop. They'll be comfortable, too, thanks to the air vents on the B-pillars and centre console.

This being an SUV, access to the third row of seats is tricky, since one must climb into the rear as well. I'd say it's roomy enough for short trips, with the tall backrests and full-size headrests being a bonus.

If it's any consolation to occupants here, you do get another pair of air-con vents and additional USB ports as well. At least even if you must be back here, your devices won't run out of juice. Just don't forget to bring the necessary cables.



Nautical Feel

The naturally aspirated 3.6-litre V6 that motivates the Grand Cherokee L is a willing worker, providing 282 ponies (18 more than the 2.0-litre variant) to help shift its over-two tonne mass. The 344Nm of torque, though, is 56Nm down on the smaller motor, so you'll have to crank the revs to enjoy the quicker progress.

That said, the additional output makes it finish the zero to 100km/h sprint in 7.7 seconds, or half a second faster than the turbocharged variant. The sensation of speed is rather muted though, given the car's heft and size.



Besides, despite being better suited than a Wrangler for on-road duties, the Grand Cherokee's off-roading capabilities mean that the ride can become busy and doesn't always feel settled. This is because the suspension needs to have the articulation to say, crawl over boulders, should the driver be faced with such obstacles.

As a result, driving the Grand Cherokee feels like you're helming a land yacht. Yet it's surprisingly easy since other road users willingly give way (and give you a wide berth) wherever you go.

So, while you might worry about handling a 'vessel' of this size, you'll at least worry less about idiots attempting to cut you off. I even witnessed drivers of lorries and panel vans behaving more tentatively rather than aggressively towards this SUV.



Kerb Appeal

The Grand Cherokee, offers plenty of passenger space, compels reckless drivers to behave in your presence, and more than enough off-road abilities for the concrete jungle. To enjoy these, you must increase your petrol budget, and accept the reality that is limited carpark options.

But if this chunk of Americana appeals to you and you're willing to live with its requirements, make sure you're properly attired before you pilot the Grand Cherokee, because instead of boots, you should consider boat shoes instead.

2023 Jeep Grand Cherokee L 3.6 (A)

ENGINE: 3604cc, 24-valves, V6

MAX POWER: 282hp (210kW) at 6400rpm

MAX TORQUE: 344Nm at 4000rpm

POWER TO WEIGHT 130.9hp per tonne

GEARBOX 8-speed automatic with manual select

0-100KM/H 7.7 seconds

TOP SPEED 210km/h

CONSUMPTION 8.3km/L (combined)

PRICE INCL. COE \$375,888