



Toyota RAV4 (2019 - 2026) Energizing

review | Why a RAV4? Because Toyota's Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) is a sensible choice. The RAV4 is spacious, safe, comfortable and relatively economical. However, with the arrival of the fifth generation of the RAV4, Toyota wants more. Apart from being sensible, the RAV4 should also be desirable. A test drive should reveal whether it has succeeded in doing so...

Making a desirable car is easier said than done. Designers can draw beautiful lines, but underneath the dream bodywork there must be enough space left for passengers and technology. For good handling, the bodywork must also be perfectly balanced. For comfort and for low consumption, a favourable streamline is important. Finally, a car must be sturdy to offer both good handling and safety.



To combine all these factors, Toyota has developed an entirely new platform. This so-called "Toyota New

Global Architecture" platform (TNGA) gave designers and engineers more freedom than before. Thus, while the new RAV4 is lower than previous ones, its ground clearance is greater (+15 mm) without sacrificing interior space. The bonnet is lower than before, while the nose has still become tougher. It all ensures that the fifth generation of the RAV4 has taken on a less innocent and more distinct look.

Space and equipment

The polygons that characterise the RAV4's exterior are echoed in the interior. The dashboard is relatively low, while the centre tunnel is above average in width, reinforcing the feeling that this is a tough, solid car. At the same time, Toyota uses much nicer materials than before, giving the car a premium feel. Regardless of space or functionality, Toyota therefore manages to give the intended special feeling even when getting in. For a car of this size, space in the front and rear is fine. The boot too, at 580 litres, is average-sized for a car like this.



Toyota is not going along with the trend of digitising and replacing buttons with screens. The dashboard is clean-lined but traditionally laid out. To make the RAV4 a sensible choice, the basic emphasis is on safety. Every RAV4 watches along with the driver and, if necessary, can warn of danger or even intervene to prevent accidents. Or to put it in technical terms: Intelligent Adaptive Cruise control (active from 0 to 180 km/h), Pre-Collision (with recognition for pedestrians and cyclists during the day and at night), automatic high beam, traffic sign recognition, fatigue recognition and steering assistance are all standard.

Optionally, a "digital" interior mirror is available. As a rule, it works like a regular mirror, but when the rear view is obstructed by luggage, the mirror turns into a display linked to a camera behind the rear window. Driving with this mirror takes some getting used to. Because the wide angle of the camera is very different from that of the mirror, the sense of depth is also different. LED lights and parking cameras all around are available to enhance safety.

Toyota provides an infotainment system with audio, communication and sat nav, but this is unremarkable. "Toyota Touch 2" does what it is supposed to do, but never excels with above-average clever features or exceptional ergonomics. The optional JBL Audio system sounds good and is worth the extra price, but is certainly not a top performer in the segment. Very nice are the many charging options in the car: the RAV4 has five (!) USB ports as well as being able to charge mobile phones wirelessly.



The RAV4 is the first Toyota to come with its own app. It allows the user to query the technical condition of the car, send destinations from the mobile phone to the navigation system and help find a parked car.

Hybrid

The RAV4 owes its success in part to its hybrid powertrain. Thanks to the combination of a petrol engine and an electric motor, the RAV4 is, as ever, quieter, faster and more fuel-efficient than similar cars

with a conventional engine. The new RAV4 is therefore again available with a hybrid engine. However, this time the emphasis is more on driving pleasure and less on low fuel consumption (that's what the Toyota Prius is for).



Under the bonnet, therefore, is a 2.5-litre petrol engine supported by one (front-wheel drive) or two (all-wheel drive) electric motors, depending on the version chosen. It may seem illogical: but the all-wheel-drive version is more fuel-efficient than the front-wheel-drive-only RAV4. This is because more electric motors can provide more assistance to the petrol engine and therefore consumption is slightly lower, while the overall power output is even greater (218 hp / 102 grams co2 for the two-wheel drive version, 222 hp / 100 grams co2 for the all-wheel drive version).

During braking and coasting, kinetic energy is converted into electricity, so the RAV4 never needs to be recharged from a wall socket. Electronics determine when which engine is used or when both engines complement each other. In practice, the 4hp difference is negligible and both variants respond smoothly to the throttle. The RAV4 therefore by no means feels big or heavy, but rather capable and willing. Especially when the sport mode is chosen, this is a quick SUV that is only too happy to perform. To combine the petrol engine and electric motor, Toyota opts for a so-called continuously variable transmission ("automatic"). As a result, the response to the throttle is sometimes slightly indirect and an occasional whining sound can be heard during acceleration.

However, this is a matter of getting used to and a driver who has a good feel for the mechanics can eventually (almost) avoid this.



At a decidedly sporty driving style on a challenging course (mountains, motorway), expect a practical consumption of up to 8.8 litres per 100 km. By using economy mode and adopting a calmer driving style, a test consumption of 5.8 litres per 100 km was achievable.

Handling

An SUV has a higher centre of gravity than a typical passenger car due to its high build. It is therefore much harder to make an SUV both comfortable and sporty as well as off-road. Here, too, Toyota's new platform offered a solution. The new RAV4 feels big and sturdy, but not heavy. The steering gives a confident feel and that confidence is never violated. Even at high speed and/or slippery road surfaces, the RAV4 stays the course set in an exemplary manner. Especially for the European market, the RAV4 has been fitted with extra strong brakes, enabling this large SUV to come to a stop within a short distance effortlessly and dead straight.

When an all-wheel-drive version is chosen, the RAV4 actually knows how to cope off-road. Compared to the previous RAV4, the wheels are now further on the corners, allowing steeper inclines to be taken without the bodywork touching the ground. The electric motors on the front and rear axles work perfectly

together off-road, making it easy to maintain the ideal balance between slip and grip. With no costly mechanical features (diff locks, low gearing) but smart electronics, the RAV4 therefore makes its way through the terrain.



Conclusion

With the fifth generation of the RAV4, Toyota is charting a clear course. As ever, the RAV4 is spacious, functional and safe. To make the RAV4 sensible as well as desirable, the new generation was given a more pronounced design. Thanks to a new platform, Toyota was able to retain comfort, but the RAV4 offers more driving pleasure when driven sportily.

While the competition now offers all-electric SUVs, Toyota sticks to hybrid drive. It has several reasons for this. The main one is that while Western Europe is ready for the electric car, the rest of the world is not yet. Moreover, drivers are not always ready to change and/or are looking for a four-wheel-drive car. The hybrid powertrain requires no driver adjustments, yet makes the RAV4 quieter, faster and more fuel-efficient than a traditional SUV. Moreover, in all-wheel-drive trim, the RAV4 is proficient off-road. By also opting for a combination of a particularly powerful petrol engine and an electric motor, the RAV4 is more exciting and desirable than before. Thus, the new RAV4 is more energizing than ever before! ■



Specifications

Toyota RAV4 (2019 - 2026)

Size and weight



Length x width x height	460 x 186 x 169 cm
Wheelbase	269 cm
Kerb weight	1.715 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	800 kg
Fuel capacity	55 l
Luggage space	580/733 l
Tyre size	235/55R19

Engine and performance



Capacity	2487 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
power	218 PS @ 1 rpm
Max torque	274 Nm @ 1 rpm
Drive	four wheel drive
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	8.1 secs
Top speed	180 km/h
Mileage urban	unknown
Mileage urban	unknown
Mileage extra urban	unknown
CO2 emissions	109 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 42,740
Price base model	Â£ 32,965