Suzuki launches the Jimny light commercial – and celebrates 100 years!

Published: July 1, 2021

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/suzuki-launches-the-jimny-light-commercial-and-celebrates-100-years/



SUZUKI JIMNY LIGHT COMMERCIAL VEHICLE VERSION LAUNCHED THIS WEEK AS PART OF THE BRAND's CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

By Robin Roberts (and Motoring Milestones).

One of Britain's most eagerly awaited new models, the Suzuki Jimny LCV hits showrooms on

Monday and it's almost certainly going to lead to a "brown market" price war.



Its launch coincides with the brand's global 100th anniversary celebrations in 2020 but delayed in the UK from last year because of the Covid pandemic. (See history information at the end of this test drive report)

The Suzuki Jimny LCV will be limited to about 400 sales this year and they are expected to be snapped up even more quickly than the Jimny lightweight 4×4 SUV two years ago.

Priced from about £16,700 before VAT as a commercial vehicle the Jimny LCV will retail at just over £20,000 but expect to pay more unless you've already got an order in.

Thousands of Jimny lovers were frustrated when Suzuki had to cut back on the compact SUV in 2020 and used models are now fetching as much as £7,000 over list prices.

Suzuki dealers will be scrambling to stock the Jimny LCV in the knowledge they will have fans queuing to buy the latest two-seater despite its modest 120kg (265 lb) payload.

The Jimny series has been produced since 1970 and the four generations have sold about 3 million models in 200 countries.

Their on-road agility is matched by exceptional off-road ability to cope with the worst terrain thanks to a high ground clearance, slim tyres on 15-inch wheels, high and low range modes with two or four wheel drive.

The newcomer is an enjoyable and impressive performer off-road as we discovered in the uncompromising Walters Arena vehicle development & test centre near Glynneath.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Its short wheelbase and narrow track allow it to manoeuvre in tight spaces between trees or where roads sharply turn due to natural obstructions and it also has 21 cms or 8 inches ground clearance to traverse rutted tracks and stone-strewn inclines which would seriously challenge a much more expensive rival.

The modest engine’s pickup is very good thanks to the sensible gearing and 130 Nm (96 lb.ft) at 4,000 rpm and its main five-speed gear lever is light and direct with a smooth clutch action as well.

Range change is best done stationary and with firm grip but the steering and brakes need only the slightest touch to effectively turn or slow the Jimny LCV.

Suspension travel is good and while it can hit the bump-stops on severe surfaces the smoothest tracks produce a much more agreeable progress.

Dispensing with back seats usually found in the SUV has allowed a flat floor to be fitted with a protective cab guard and a small under-floor space for jacking equipment and an 863 litres (30.48 cu.ft)/120 kg (265 lb.ft) loadbed behind an offside hinged back door.



Driver and passenger have simple access and good headroom but taller users might find legroom to be short as the B-pillar bulkhead stops their seats' rearward travel.



Grab handles for the passenger are useful while the driver hangs onto the wheel, instruments are simple and clear with good straightforward heating and ventilation and powered front windows.

Noise levels are modest most of the time. The engine note rises with revs and is particularly fussy in lower gears and 4WD mode but the road noise is fairly consistent and intrusive if varied depending what's underneath the LCV.

With a comparatively high riding seating position, slim roof-pillars and very short overhangs, the visibility is excellent all round and helps to precisely steer the car through obstacles.

Suzuki GB Cars chief executive Dale Wyatt said, “The Jimny has been incredibly successful for us as a compact 4WD SUV and reached 5,000 sales so it’s good to be able to extend its appeal with the new Jimny LCV and give our customers a really practical proposition.”

VERDICT

A very capable compact 4×4.

For: Very agile and capable off road with good ground clearance and gearing, reasonable performance.

Against: Limited seat travel, modest payload capacity, short wheelbase giving rise to bumpy ride over severe terrain, average fuel economy.



Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Suzuki Jimny LCV

Price: £16,796 plus VAT

Mechanical: 101 hp 4 cyl 1462 cc turbo-petrol engine, 5 speed, AllGrip 4×4

Max speed: 90 mph

0 – 62 mph: 15 secs. estimated

Combined MPG: 36.7

Insurance group: 23D

CO2 Emissions: 173 g/km

VED road tax: £275

Warranty: 3 years/60,000 miles

Size: L 3.65 m (11.98 ft), W 1.65 m (5.41 ft), H 1.72 m (5.64 ft)

Bootspace: 863 litres (30.48 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,090 kg (2.043 lb)

Suzuki’s 100 year history highlights:

Celebration of over 100 years of Suzuki as a Global brand from its origins in Textile manufacturing to Car, Motorcycle, Marine Outboard Engines and ATV models.

- Sho-Sho-Kei-Tan-Bi' which translates to 'smaller, fewer, lighter, shorter and neater' and represents the basis of Suzuki's manufacturing since its foundation.
- Suzuki Loom Manufacturing Co launched in 1920.
- Suzuki's first motorcycle launched in 1952.
- Suzuki's first car launched in 1955.
- Establishment of 'S' company trademark in 1958.
- Suzuki's first victory at the Isle of Man TT in 1962.
- Suzuki's first outboard motor launched in 1965 with 5.5 Hp.
- Suzuki's first Four Wheel Drive vehicle – Jimny LJ10 – launched in 1970.
- Suzuki's first Snowmobile launched in 1971.
- Suzuki's first motorised wheelchair launched in 1974
- Suzuki's first prefabricated houses introduced in 1974 and general-purpose engines in 1980.
- World's first four-wheel ATV model launched by Suzuki in 1982.
- Company name changed in 1990 to Suzuki Motor Corporation.
- Return to MotoGP in 2015 with GSX-RR.
- 100 per cent 'Hybrids for all' availability across its passenger car range and unique in the industry offering 12 Volt, 48 Volt, Higher Voltage Hybrid and PHEV models.
- Suzuki pioneered the Compact and Lightweight 12 Volt Hybrid system in 2016.
- Six models in the car range have 4×4 capability optionally available which is unique in the industry.
- Choice of 19 Sports, Street, Adventure and Scooter type motorcycles available plus two Motocross models.
- 30 Marine Outboard engines in the range from 2.5 hp to 350 hp 4.4 litre V6.
- World's first Micro-Plastic Collecting Device for installation on outboard motors.
- Choice of Three different types of King Quad ATV available with 500cc, 500cc with PAS and 750cc with PAS.
- 2025 global sales plan for 2.0 million motorcycles and 3.7 million cars.