

This press pack accompanied the UK launch of the revised first generation Toyota RAV4 and the introduction of a soft-top three-door model in 1998. Some changes were made to the model range during its time on sale, which can be tracked using the Timeline feature available on the first generation Toyota RAV4 archive web page. Additional assets and information relating to the RAV4 range can be obtained from the Toyota press office.

January 1998

THE TOYOTA RAV4 - ORIGINAL AND BEST VALUE

THE NEW RAV4 RANGE COMPRISES:

- EX three door
- Soft-top
- GX three and five door
- VX five door

TOYOTA'S trend setting RAV4 (Recreational Active Vehicle with 4 wheel drive) model has been face-lifted and improved.

Firmly established as one of the UK's favourite off-roaders with nearly 23,000 sales to date, the RAV4 has struck a chord with UK motorists for its commanding driving position, car-like handling and GTi-matching performance. So-much-so that the three door model is the best-selling three door off-roader in the UK and has been since launch.

1998 sees a revised RAV4 range on sale boasting new looks, more equipment, better value for money and the introduction of a fun and individual Soft-top model.

Key Points

- Three door model is the best-selling three door off-roader in the UK
- All-new Soft-top version
- New front grille, wrap around front bumper and multi-reflector front headlights and integrated rear lights
- Locking/unlocking of all doors now operated from both driver's and passenger's side front door lock
- All 1998 RAV4s equipped with extra equipment at minimal cost
- Electric front windows and electric door mirrors now as standard
- Standard Connolly leather interior on VX grade
- CD autochanger

.../more

- Chunky alloys wheels and wider wheelarch extensions on VX grade
- 16v engine developing punchy 126bhp
- 0-60mph in only 11.6 sec (manual)
- Permanent four-wheel drive with lockable centre differential
- Driver and passenger front airbags
- Anti-lock brakes fitted to GX and VX
- Low, flat floor means easy access to rear
- Wide range of accessories including holders for bicycles, skis, surfboards

New RAV4 Soft-top introduces better value RAV4 range

Headlining the 1998 RAV4 range is an all-new Soft-top version which arrives perfectly equipped to exploit the vagaries of the UK's summer months. A versatile folding hood arrangement and removable rear side windows ensure the Soft-top can be readied for some 'top down' action in short order.

Based on the three door RAV4, the Soft-top is positioned as the second cheapest model in the 1998 RAV4 line up and carries a clear price advantage over other soft top off roaders currently on the market. It comes with a manual gearbox only (full details on Soft-top from page 6).

Like the new Soft-top, all 1998 RAV4s adopt a tougher look via a new front grille, wrap around front bumper and multi-reflector front headlights and integrated rear lights.

The exterior door mirrors and door handles are now colour keyed for a more coherent look and a new design has been chosen for the steel wheels fitted as standard to EX and GX models. Four new exterior colours are now available depending on the model - Magna Red, Cool Water (blue), British Green and Electric Green.

A host of detail changes keep the new RAV4's interior a fun but functional place to be. All models are treated to cloth headrests and fabric door trims, a titanium-look finish to the instrument panel surround, and the standard airbag steering wheel becomes a sporty three spoke design.

The instrument dials now have a carbon fibre pattern and on automatic transmission cars a gear selector display is now included. The twin manual/removable sunroofs previously available on the three door GX model are now replaced by a single electric sunroof. Two new seat trims are introduced on the five door models.

Better sounds come courtesy of a new four speaker audio system with detachable front control security panel and an automatic 'one-touch' facility is added to the driver's electric window function. For convenience, the locking and unlocking of all doors can now be operated from the passenger side front door lock as well as the driver's side front door lock.

New badging scheme and more standard equipment on all RAV4s

A new badging scheme has been adopted for the 1998 RAV4 range. The EX (three door only), introduces the range followed in price ascendancy by the Soft-top, GX (three and five door) and top-of-the-range VX (five door only).

All 1998 RAV4s have been equipped with extra equipment at minimal cost to the customer. For example, the volume selling RAV4 GX three door model now has anti-lock brakes and air-conditioning as standard but has only risen in price by £162 over last year's model.

RAV4 EX

EX specification replaces the former GS specification and electric front windows and electric door mirrors are now added to the standard specification. A tilt-adjustable steering column and power door locks are also fitted as standard to the EX.

RAV4 GX

In addition to EX specification, air conditioning and anti-lock brakes are added to GX models. A single electric sunroof replaces the twin manual/removable sunroofs on three door GX models, and the electric mirrors are now heated.

.../more

RAV4 VX

In addition to GX specification, the VX's standard Connolly leather interior is now offered in two new colours: black and grey. A CD autochanger is also added as standard plus VX models already ride on chunky alloy wheels and wear wider wheelarch extensions.

Gti-like performance in an off-roader shell

One of the original aims of the RAV4 concept was to offer strong all-round performance. To this end all RAV4s are powered by a two-litre, twin-cam, 16v engine which develops a punchy 126bhp at 5400rpm and an even spread of torque peaking with a meaty 131lb ft at 4400rpm. The RAV4 accelerates from 0-60mph in only 11.6secs (12.3secs for automatic models and 11.6 secs for the Soft-top) and has a top speed of 105mph. Combined fuel consumption figures show the RAV4 is a frugal animal as well returning 30.1mpg with a manual gearbox and 28.8mpg with an automatic gearbox.

All versions put their power to the road via permanent four-wheel drive with a lockable centre differential to assist off the highway driving. All-round independent suspension is by McPherson struts at the front with L-shaped lower arms and anti-roll bar, while double wishbones and trailing arms are fitted at the rear. The rear transaxle is flat with compact springs and shock absorbers located outside, resulting in minimal intrusion of the wheel housing inside the vehicle.

Safety first

As well as the inherent safety of permanent four wheel drive and a commanding driving position, the RAV4 offers driver and passenger front airbags and front seatbelt pretensioners with force limiters as standard. Anti-lock brakes are also fitted to GX and VX specification RAVs as standard.

High strength sheet steel, reinforced body members and front and rear subframes provide a highly rigid body structure. Toyota's Crushable Impact Absorbing Structure construction transfers the impact energy in a collision beneath the passenger cell, via the car's underbody structure.

.../more

The 5-door also offers height adjustable shoulder mountings for the front seat belts with five positions for maximum comfort. The five door version also offers extra interior and luggage space thanks to being 16 inches longer than the three door RAV4. There are also useful storage facilities for the rear seatbelt buckles when not in use.

Safety is enhanced by the wrap-around bumpers, protective mouldings on the doors and wheel arches, side impact beams, front seatbelt pretensioners, ventilated front disc brakes, and a high mount rear stop lamp. The steering wheel features tilt adjustment on all models.

Practicalities

THE RAV4 offers a host of practical details including cup/can holders in the front and back, internal adjustment of the headlamp beams, a rear wash/wiper, remote fuel flap release and a full size spare wheel mounted on the outside of the rear door.

The RAV4 is practical to get in and out of thanks to its low, flat floor. This means loading children or assisting elderly relatives into the rear is a simple operation.

Additional features include electric windows and door mirrors, remote control central locking, a tilt-adjustable steering column and intermittent front wipers. The 5-door RAV4 features a window locking facility and rear door child locks are additional handy features.

For greater individuality, the RAV4 offers a wide range of accessories including holders for bicycles, skis and surfboards, a luggage platform, roof rails and a towing hitch. There is also a dog guard for canine passengers.

The RAV4 features a Thatcham-approved alarm with a transponder operated immobiliser. The stereo radio/cassette system has a detachable front panel for additional security.

The RAV4 Soft-top in more detail

- Soft-top adds freedom and fun
- Stiffer body to maintain rigidity
- Latest interior trim and colours
- Well proven, twin cam engine
- £15,765 On-The-Road
- On sale end February 1998

The launch of a Toyota RAV4 Soft-top adds an exciting new element to the trend-setting range which helped create the leisure off-roader market. Now RAV4 customers can not only enjoy rugged looks, sporty performance and off-road capability; they can also enjoy open cabin motoring and an extra sense of freedom on the open road.

The RAV4 Soft-top is based around the new look, 1998 model year three door. It uses the well proven and sporty 1998cc, double overhead cam engine which has been fitted to the car since launch to give sparkling acceleration, comfortable cruising and good fuel economy.

With permanent four-wheel drive, the RAV4 has maximum traction under all road conditions. Independent suspension all round, power steering and front ventilated disc brakes are standard equipment - ensuring the RAV4 drives and handles like a performance saloon rather than a more conventional off-roader.

Built for the purpose

The RAV4 Soft-top shares the more sporty and aggressive styling of the 1998 model year car with wrap around bumper and grille plus multi-reflector front lamps and neatly integrated rear lamps. It also enjoys all the interior trim and styling improvements that were introduced with that model.

But the RAV4 Soft-top is more than just a three door model with the back cut off. The Soft-top has some styling detail and body designs of its own which make it stand out from the crowd and add to the enjoyment of fun motoring.

The RAV4 Soft-top is unique in having a removable sunroof as standard equipment to create a truly 'open-top' feel above the driver's head. When removed the sunroof can be stowed neatly and easily on the special brackets inside the rear door. This type of removable sunroof was originally fitted to selected RAV4 fixed head models but is now only a feature of the Soft-top model.

For safety and styling, the high mounted rear stop lamp is integrated into the spare wheel carrier where it is clearly visible to following traffic yet blends with the integrated rear look of the car.

In order to maintain body rigidity for the Soft-top and ensure that it provides the same enjoyable driving experience and safety as other models in the RAV4 range, high strength steel sheet has been added around the open rear passenger area. There is also extra sheeting at the base of the door opening, inside the rear pillar and across the roof between the B-pillars. An aluminium bracing bar has been added to the top of the rear door opening in order to preserve the rigidity around that area.

High tensile sheet steel is used throughout all major structural areas of the body to create strength and safety without a weight penalty. Careful attention to soundproofing and engine tuning has resulted in reduced interior noise and high speed boom, even in the Soft-top model.

An interior to enjoy

The RAV4 Soft-top remains a true four seater so that friends and family can also enjoy that open-top feeling. Once again, the interior has been adapted to take account of the different styling.

The rear grab handle has been moved from the roof lining to the door pillar and rear seat belt mountings have also been moved but the inertia reel belts still stow neatly and safely away. The split rear seats fold and tilt to improve luggage space which, at 173 litres (rear seats up), is better than many rivals in the three door leisure off-road class.

.../more

Interior trim quality has been improved for the 1998 model year with titanium-colour panels around the power window switches and around the instrument panel. The instrumentation itself has been upgraded with digital odometer and trip meter and carbon grey dial plates.

Safety features include an airbag as standard for both driver and front seat passenger while the front seat belts now employ both pre-tensioners and force limiters. These act in harmony to cut stresses on the upper body during an accident and further reduce the chances of injury to chest and ribs.

Close fitting Soft-top

The fabric for the Soft-top is designed to be quick and easy to use, yet close fitting to create a warm and comfortable environment under all weather conditions. It folds down neatly to sit across the rear door panel without affecting passenger space in the rear seats.

The two side windows and the rear window are removable and a single hoop braces the fabric roof to keep it taut when raised. All three windows are made of a tough, clear plastic material which ensures ease of storage and good all round vision at all times.

The Soft-top is available in a choice of four colours. Magna Red with red top; Astral Black with red top; Lucerne Silver with black top and Cool Water with black top.

The RAV4 Soft-top is as fun to drive as it looks. It is available with a slick five-speed manual gearbox. Wheels are 16-inch diameter in standard steel or optional alloys.

The two-litre, twin-cam engine develops 126bhp at 5,400rpm and this free-revving engine ensures a lively performance. Top speed is 105mph and the RAV4 Soft-top will accelerate to 60mph in 11.6 seconds.

.../more

RAV4 RANGE TECHNICAL DETAILS

DIMENSIONS		RAV4 3-door	RAV4 5-door	RAV4 Soft-top
Overall length		3705mm	4115mm	3715mm
Overall width		1695mm	1695mm	1695mm
Overall height		1660mm	1660mm	1660mm
Tyre size		215/70 SR16		
Kerb weight		1175kg (1205kg auto)	1240kg (1270kg auto)	1210kg
Boot capacity	Seats up	173ℓ (6.1cuft) VDA	409ℓ (14.4 cuft) VDA	173ℓ (6.1cuft) VDA
	Folded seats	520ℓ (18.4 cuft) VDA	645ℓ (22.8 cuft) VDA	520ℓ (18.4 cuft) VDA
Turning circle	(tyre)	10.0m	10.8m	10.0m

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION		RAV4 Manual	RAV4 Automatic
Engine	Type	DOHC, 16 valve	
	Capacity	1998 cc	
	Bore and stroke	86 x 86 mm	
	Compression ratio	9.8:1	
	Max. horsepower	126hp @ 5400rpm	
	Maximum torque	131 lbft @ 4400rpm	
	Fuel system	Fuel injection multi-point with 3 way catalyst	
Gearbox	Transmission	5-speed	4-speed
	Full time 4WD	Mechanical centre diff lock	Hydraulic centre diff clutch
Brakes		Dual circuit ventilated discs - front/drum - rear	
Towing capacity		Trailer with brake: Maximum 1500 kg	

.../more

PERFORMANCE & ECONOMY <i>Calculated using 93/116/EEC</i>		Manual	Electronically controlled automatic transmission	Soft-top
Acceleration	(0-60mph)	11.6 sec	12.3 sec	11.6 sec
Maximum speed	mph (km/h)	105 (170)	105 (170)	105 (170)
Urban conditions	mpg (l/100km)	22.6 (12.5)	22.4 (12.6)	22.6 (12.5)
Extra-urban	mpg (l/100km)	36.7 (7.7)	34.9 (8.1)	36.7 (7.7)
Combined	mpg (l/100km)	30.1 (9.4)	28.8 (9.8)	30.1 (9.4)

EQUIPMENT LEVELS	EX	ST	GX	VX
Driver and passenger airbags (electronically controlled)	●	●	●	●
Electronic controlled ABS	-	-	●	●
Electronic sensing front seatbelt pretensioners with force limiters	●	●	●	●
Height adjustable front seat belts (on 5-dr)	-	-	●	●
Head restraints front and rear	●	●	●	●
High mounted rear stop lamp	●	●	●	●
Side impact door beams	●	●	●	●
Centre diff lock	●	●	●	●
Power Assisted Steering	●	●	●	●
Electric windows (driver's with one touch up and down)	●	●	●	●
Central locking with remote control	●	●	●	●
Electric exterior mirrors	●	●	●	●
Electric heated exterior mirrors	-	-	●	●
Remote fuel flap release	●	●	●	●
Air-conditioning	○	○	●	●
Tilt adjustable 3 spoke steering wheel	●	●	●	●
Electric tilt-slide sunroof with shade (removable manual)	-	(●)	●	●
6 disc CD autochanger	○	○	○	●
4 speaker radio cassette with removable security panel	●	●	●	●
RDS EON with traffic announcement	●	●	●	●
Remote alarm immobiliser	●	●	●	●
Locking wheel nuts	●	●	●	●
Window etched code numbers	●	●	●	●
Full Connolly leather upholstery	-	-	-	●
Rear roof spoiler	○	-	○	●
Body side moulding	●	●	●	●
5 spoke steel wheels	●	●	●	-
Alloy wheels	○	○	○	●

● Standard feature

○ Dealer accessory

ST = Soft-top

For further press information, contact:

Scott Brownlee, Manager, Public Affairs, on 01737 785266

James Thomas, Manager, Press Relations on 01737 785272

Erica Batchelor, Manager, Press Relations on 01737 785308

Ref: 980128R