

Toyota Surf

4-Runner

A SUV for those on a tight budget as you can pick up these vehicles from around £800! It will also make a brilliant, cheap off-road toy back in South Africa for those looking to export more than one vehicle.

The Surf / 4-Runner (hereafter referred to as Surf only) is the forerunner of the Prado / Land Cruiser Colorado and the Surf is basically a Hilux station wagon. The fact that it is based on a Hilux 4X4 means that it is a vehicle that will probably last forever, even if it has to deal frequently with demanding off-road conditions. (The Surf is based on the Hilux which Jeremy Clarkson tried to "kill" -without success - on Top Gear)

Most of the Surf's available on the UK used market are "grey imports" from Japan and because they are so plentiful, market prices are very low second hand. Most Surf's are also well equipped with air-conditioning, electric windows, etc.



Prices start at around £800 for an early example that might require some attention, but for £1000 you should be able to pick up a Surf that has got lots of life left in it. Prices can go up as high as a silly £8000, but if you really want decent, face-lifted Surf with very low mileage £3000 should be sufficient. Shop around, there are plenty of Surf's on the UK used market. Here is an example of a bargain Surf found on Autotrader.co.uk

1993 TOYOTA SURF SSRG

Price: £1,195 ONO

Features:

- 76,000 miles
- Automatic
- Wine red
- Diesel Turbo
- 4x4
- 3000cc

Full Description:

Glossary of Terms

3.0 turbo diesel .cd player,air conditioning, electric windows, cruise control, side steps, nudge bar, tow bar, two tone paint. body in average condition for age. good reliable vehicle, owned vehicle for 7 years. £1,195 ONO.



Engines used in the Surf range from a gut-less 2.0TD, the legendary 2.4TD (most commonly found engine in Surfs and it is the same engine that powered the old South African Hilux. See notes), a non-turbo 2.8D and 2.8TD while the biggest diesel engine used was the brilliant 3.0TD KZTE. Petrol engines came in a 3.0 V6 and a 3.4 V6, which are thirsty but offer good performance.

Please note that the Surf is based on a Hilux generation that was never sold in South Africa. Most of the Surf's parts are however interchangeable with other Hilux's or Toyota cars in South Africa. Fortunately engines used are similar to South Africa's Hilux's and should the engine break at high mileage, don't bother to fix it as you can buy a complete, low mileage used engine (imported from Japan) for R5000 to R12 000 (depending on size) and other parts, e.g. body parts, are easily obtainable in South Africa's neighbouring countries like Botswana or Mozambique as most parts of Africa are littered with "grey imported" Surfs from Japan, thus making it an excellent "safari" vehicle.



An "accessorized" Surf 2.4TD

The basic layout of the Surf's 4WD system is identical to the part-time 2H / 4H / 4L setup used in the Hilux, unfortunately very few Surfs were fitted with diff-locks, and because of the independent front suspension it really need a diff-lock in the rear. Some had a limited slip-diff (LSD) in the rear, but apart from snow or sand a LSD is quite useless off-road. It is thus good advice to get a Lockright Locker fitted for around R5000, or to get hold of a diff-locked Hilux diff back in South Africa which should cost even less. When this modification has been performed, a Surf will impress heavily when given some serious 4X4 obstacles. The chassis of the Surf is courtesy of a shortened

Hilux chassis, so the Surf features a better ramp-over angle for difficult off-road work.



The very scarce, first generation Surf.

There are a few old Surfs around that is based on the old South African-spec Hilux (see picture), but they are VERY scarce and fetch quite high prices. Because it still features the solid front axle, it is very capable if the going gets tough. Most of these Surf's roof's are removable, making it basically a convertible. Perfect for game viewing!

Notes

-Some UK versions can lack air-conditioning, but R5000 should be enough to get an aircon system from a Hilux back in South Africa and have it fitted to your Surf. Alternatively you can buy a complete system from a Surf that is being stripped for parts on ebay.co.uk.

-Japanese imports would show its clock reading in kilometres, not miles. Some of them have been altered to show in miles though.

-The first thing to alter would be proper off-road tyres, as many of them are still equipped with stupid "highway" tyres, which is quite useless in mud or rocky terrain.

-If you can get an excellent deal on a 2.0TD / 2.4TD and should you want more

power, a 3.0TD (KZTE Hilux engine) can be fitted for about R35 000 in South Africa. If fuel consumption is not an issue, how about a Lexus 4.7 V8 conversion for about R50 000. These costing figures can be reduced drastically however if you can buy some of the parts in the UK prior to the vehicle's exportation. See, the reason why these conversions are so expensive is the gearbox and computer box (also known as the ECU) that need to be modified to "complete" the conversion. (the engine itself to be used in the conversion is a "Jap imported" engine which cost less than R10 000 in SA)

Should you however be in the position to buy the ECU (together with the keys and other relevant control modules) and gearbox from say, a Prado / Land Cruiser Colorado which shouldn't cost more than £500, you'll only pay another est. R16 000

for the engine and fitment in SA. Should you want that V8, well for £500 you should be able to buy a complete drivable Lexus LS400 4.7 V8, and imagine all the nice things you can strip out of the Lexus and fit into the Surf – like the electric seats, aircon, ABS brakes and premium sound system!)