

# Toyota Land Cruiser Amazon 100 series

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When the Land Cruiser 100 series was launched in 1997 it became the new "dream car" for 4X4 fanatics across the globe. As it replaced the Land Cruiser 80 series, the 100 series was given more power, a higher specification level and better on-road handling.

The 100 series became so upmarket that many African dictators swapped their Mercedes S-class's for Land Cruiser VX's! And at used UK prices that start at around £7000 a Land Cruiser Amazon can be exceptional value for money, especially if you take in account that prices for a VX TD with very high miles start at around R250 000 in South Africa!

One of the changes on the 100 was the change of the front axle setup. The 80's had a tough solid axle while the 100 series received a more "car-like" independent setup which resulted in better handling and ride quality on-road. Many Land Cruiser purists mourn the change however, but it must be said that only in the most extreme off-road conditions the disadvantage of independent suspension will be noticeable. The 100 series is still a serious off-roader which would still do 300 000 miles in tough conditions without any problems.

Two specification levels were offered in the UK, both with seven seats. The GX and the VX. The GX came well equipped with everything that a big SUV should have, but if you want to be cocooned with luxury items such as electric leather seats, have a look at the VX. A very popular optional extra fitted to many VX's is "Active Suspension" which means not only the stiffness of the shock absorbers is adjustable (e.g. soft or sport) but also the ride height of the vehicle is adjustable

for demanding terrain. Please note: the UK Land Cruiser GX has a much higher spec level than the South African base-spec GX.

In the UK two engines were offered. The 4.2TD should be the only engine you should really consider as the 4.7 V8 petrol guzzles fuel at an alarming rate. The 4.2TD 6 cylinder is more than powerful enough anyway, offering 202HP / 151kW and 430Nm. Should you wish for more power, SAC in SA can squeeze out quite a few extra horses for about R3500. Note: even the UK Land Cruiser GX had the brilliant turbo diesel, opposed to South Africa's GX which had an asthmatic, turbo-less 4.2 diesel. Only the VX in SA came with the 4.2 TDi engine.

The V8 petrol was sold in automatic only, while the 4.2 TD was sold in manual and automatic. However, manuals are very scarce on the used market.



The Land Cruiser received a face-lift in late 2002 with new wheels and some extra toys. Another option extra was stability control, (standard on V8, optional on diesel) for which you had to sacrifice the rear diff-lock. Not many customers ordered theirs with the stability control.

Some "grey imported" Land Cruisers found their way into the UK, with names such as Cygnus and Lexus LX470 which were usually higher specked than their UK siblings. The one's to be wary about is low specification versions, usually imported from central Africa and the Middle East. Unless dirt-cheap, avoid ex-UN vehicles! Also note that many Australian GXL versions lacked axle diff-locks.

Land Cruiser face-lift. Note the different grille and wheels

*Here's an example of a very good deal found on Autotrader.co.uk. A similar year model in SA would sell for roughly R330 000 / £25 000!*

## 2002 TOYOTA LANDCRUISER Amazon 4.2 TD VX 5dr Auto

**Price: £11,995**

### Features:

- 39,000 miles
- Automatic
- Blue
- Diesel
- Estate
- 4164 cc

### Full Description:

Glossary of Terms

39,000 miles, 5 Door Estate, Blue, Diesel, Automatic extremely well cared for. Mainly Motorway Miles. Genuine Millage 36000 miles on March MOT cert. Upgrades which gives much better fuel Economy. Call for more details. 2 Newish Front Tyre and Brand New Fullsize Reserve Tyre. Selling due to an upgrade to the LC200 Model. Just Been Serviced. £11,995 ONO.



## Some notes:

-The big Land Cruisers are called the Amazon in the UK, while the smaller Colorado is actually a Prado.

-Because these vehicles do not show wear and tear easily, some people turn back the mileage on the clock. (spinning the kilo's on the clock) The only way one can verify the true mileage is with FSH (Full Service History). It is anyway a good thing to see whether it had all its services.

-These Land Cruisers are VERY popular with dodgy gypsies / pickeys who use them to transport their stolen goods and to tow their huge caravans, so beware from who you buy!

-The advantage on Japanese "grey imports" is that they indicate in kilometres on the clock. These 'Cruisers usually have a little mirror on the left front fender.

-Although rust isn't a problem on these Land Cruisers, it can't hurt to check under the wheel arches and under-body for rust. If rust is visible it means it was in an accident and then badly repaired. Unless

very cheap, walk away. Prepare for +-R13 000-R18 000 to fix a rust problem. (treat and cut out rust and full re-spray of car)

-Does every function work (eg. Aircon or all electric stuff, like the windows.

-How is the steering play, and does it pull to one side?

-How's the gearbox? Should be whine-free and easy to shift gears. Also check the transfer box if it shifts easily into 4L.

-If fitted with adjustable "Active Suspension", does it work well and inspect for any leaks. (Unlike the Range Rovers, the Land Cruiser's suspension is quite reliable)

-If it says LPG, the 4.7 V8 petrol-only Land Cruiser can be driven on petrol OR Liquefied Petroleum Gas. (has two tanks) Unless you're going to use it for a long time in the UK, do not pay extra for this feature if you really want a 4.7 V8 petrol version. (gas is very cheap in the UK, but expensive in SA)

-To bring out the best from this Land Cruiser's, it need all-terrain or mud-

terrain tyres and a slight suspension lift (if not fitted with the height adjustable "Active Suspension").

-If you want to know if the Land Cruiser you are interested in is fitted with a rear diff-lock, look for the rotary switch on the left of the steering column.

-Most Land Cruiser owners equip their vehicles according to their "safari" needs, e.g. roof racks, winches, dual battery systems, etc. Do not fit something you are not going to use.



A Lexus LX470