

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

EVERY JEEP CAN CONQUER THE BIG STUFF AND SLIP THROUGH THE TIGHT SPOTS. PERSONALITY MAY POINT YOU TOWARD YOUR PICK.

BY JOE SAGE

Size does matter, of course, which is why Jeep has subcompact, compact, midsize and full size SUV offerings—Renegade, Compass, Cherokee and Grand Cherokee. And then there's the world-of-its-own Wrangler, though as sales of the Wrangler 4-Door continue to climb, it does overlap the wider world of Jeeps by a number of key measures. No matter how you slice it, each offers the full capabilities and unmistakable brand identity of Jeep: the four sport utes all offer Trailhawk models (and Wrangler has the Rubicon)—clear proof all are engineered to meet Jeep's own strenuous standards for their nameplate.

Size may not end up being your main criterion when Jeep-shopping. Wrangler aside, since it has its own appeal and purpose, many will choose from among the four by comparing specific dimensions, tow capacity and other objective comparables. Our chart of a few basics gives some feel for this, providing some confirmations and some surprises. Lengths and wheelbases stairstep almost linearly, with a slight bit more gap from Compass to Cherokee. Width and front legroom are all close. Cargo volume drops in the Cherokee from the smaller

	LENGTH	WHEELBASE	WIDTH	FR LEGROOM	CARGO VOL	GRND CLRNCE	WEIGHT	TOWING	BASE PRICE
RENEGADE	166.6	101.2	74.2	41.2	18.5-50.8	6.7-8.7	3044-3573	0-2000	\$17,995
COMPASS	173.0	103.8	73.8	41.8	27.2-59.8	8-8.5	3184-3633	0-2000	\$20,995
CHEROKEE	182.0	107 ±	73-75 ±	41.1	25.8-54.9	8.7	3655-4108	2000-4500	\$23,995
GRAND CHEROKEE	189.8	114.8	76.5	40.3	36.3-68.3	8.6-11.3	4545-5374	6200-7400	\$30,595

Compass, but tow capacity is significantly more. Weights overlap considerably at the smaller end, and the price walk fights to avoid much overlap.

Engine and drivetrain options are a big part of the overlap in clearances, weight, towing and price. With that and the fact that size classifications themselves are increasingly blurring throughout the industry, we suspect a great many people will choose their favorite Jeep from among probably two or three out of the four that might most closely match their anticipated size needs, but ultimately by one model's individual style and personality.

The Jeep SUVs are anything but a cookie-cutter resized set of the same thing. Renegade, the smallest, belies its size with a beefy presence that reflects the Wrangler. The style and personality of the compact Compass, new last year (replacing both the prior Compass and Patriot) have led it to be called the baby Grand Cherokee by many, but they are well apart in size and price.

Between Compass and Grand Cherokee sits the nominally midsize Jeep Cherokee—closer to the Compass in wheelbase and cargo, closer to Grand Cherokee's length, cleanly between them in weight, and differentiated by a favorable price-to-towing ratio, as it were, against the smaller two.

Jeep Cherokee designer Brian Nielander sums it up: "The Jeep family has shared traits, but each is a bit different. There's the hard core side with Wrangler, there's the premium side with Grand Cherokee, and all the rest are in between."

Cherokee's streamlined, bold—and somewhat unexpected—styling set it apart when it was born (in 2013 as a 2014 model, replacing the Liberty in the lineup—and yes, Jeep has a great many really strong names in reserve)—with its bevel-slant-ed grille, unusual front headlight and DRL treatment and high-set taillights above a largely blank

KEEP RIGHT >>



SPECIFICATIONS

- LAYOUTTransverse front engine, 4x2/4x4
- CONSTRUCTIONSteel uniframe
- ASSEMBLY ..Belvidere Assembly Plant, Illinois
- ENGINE (2.4L PZEV)**2.4L 16v I-4 MultiAir w sequential multiport electronic returnless injection, chain-driven SOHC
- HP/TORQUE180 hp (6400 rpm)
-171 lb-ft (4600 rpm)
- COMPRESSION RATIO10.1
- FUEL87 octane regular unleaded
- OIL / COOLANT CAPACITY5.5 qt / 7.1 qt
- MPGtbd
- ENGINE BUILDDundee Engine Plant, Mich
- ENGINE (V6)**3.2L 24v Pentastar V6 chain-driven DOHC, engine stop/start (ESS), hydraulic roller finger followers
- HP/TORQUE271 hp (6400 rpm)
-239 lb-ft (4400 rpm)
- COMPRESSION RATIO10.7:1
- FUEL87 octane regular unleaded
- OIL / COOLANT CAPACITY6 qt / 9.7 qt
- MPGtbd
- ENGINE BUILDTrenton Engine Plant, Mich
- ENGINE (2.0L)**2.0L 16v VVT D1 I-4 turbo chain-driven DOHC, engine stop/start (ESS)
- HP/TORQUE270 hp (5250 rpm)
-295 lb-ft (3000-4500 rpm)
- COMPRESSION RATIO10.0:1
- FUEL87 reg unl ok / 91 prem unl recmd
- OIL / COOLANT CAPACITY5.0 qt / 3.4 qt
- MPGtbd
- ENGINE BUILDTrenton Engine Plant, Mich
- ALTERNATOR160 amp / 180 amp opt
- BATTERY700 amp AGM: H7
- TRANSMISSION9-speed automatic
- 4X4 SYSTEM: ACTIVE DRIVE I (OPT) LATITUDE, LATITUDE PLUS, LIMITED**
- Fully disconnecting 4x2 mode w auto 4x4 engagement, full-time 4x4 mode w active on-demand clutch
- 4X4 SYSTEM: ACTIVE DRIVE II (OPT) LATITUDE PLUS, LIMITED**
- Fully disconnecting 4x2 mode w auto 4x4 engagement, electronic 4x4 Low & Neutral range shift, active on-demand clutch, electronic hill descent control
- 4X4 SYSTEM: ACTIVE DRIVE LOCK (STANDARD) TRAILHAWK**
- Selec-Speed control, electronic 4x4 Low & Neutral range shift, full-time 4x4 mode, active on-demand clutch, mechanical locking differential, electronic hill descent control
- LOW RANGE2.92:1
- STEERINGelectric power rack & pinion
- TURNING CIRCLE ...4x2 37.6 ft / 4x4 37.7-38.1 ft
- SUSPENSION/FRONT: McPherson strut, long travel coils, one-piece steel subframe, alum lower control arms, stabilizer bar.
- SUSPENSION/REAR: Four-link w trailing arm, alum lateral links, isolated high-strength steel rear cradle, coils, stabilizer bar.
- BRAKES ...F: 13 vented, single-piston floating opt: 13 vented, twin-piston floating R: 10.95 (opt 12.6) solid, single-pstn floating
- WHEELS17-19" alum, vary by model
- TIRESvary by model, options avail
- ANGLES4x24x4 I4x4 II4x4 Lock
- APPROACH16.718.921.029.9°
- BRAKOVER17.719.521.722.9°
- DEPARTURE24.625.027.332.3°
- GRND CLEARANCE...4x4 Lock 8.7 min running

SPECIFICATIONS: CONT'D >>

and somewhat concave rear panel. Bold worked. Sales came on strong. But over time, "others have moved more upscale, and Cherokee risked being left behind; it was like the awkward teenager that still needed to grow up a bit," says Nielander.

Sheet metal from the A-pillar forward has been massaged, with the angle in the grille toned down, the lip of the hood raised—"prouder, stronger and more premium," says Nielander—and the unusual front light styling of the prior version replaced by a significantly more mainstream treatment. The reworked front body has the added bonus of better performance in small overlap crash testing. The rear has new taillights, and the license plate moves up to a recess in the liftgate, for a much more balanced appearance ("more mature," per Nielander). There are also five new wheel offerings, including the first 19-inchers on a Cherokee (with top Overland trim).

The restyling is welcome, but the magic is in the continuity—the new look is immediately recognizable as Jeep Cherokee, projecting the same character and model identity as the prior version. It's somehow both dramatically and subtly different at the same time, a nice piece of evolution.

The interior has also had a complete rework, from outer vents to center stack, with more space created in the center console. As with other recent Jeep interiors, there's a range of color and material offerings evocative of various exotic destinations around the globe, from Iceland to Marrakesh.

The new Cherokee is lighter (helped by an aluminum hood, new power steering unit, composite rear liftgate, even a capless fuel filler) and has more cargo capacity (helped by that rear restyling) than the model it replaces.

There are five trim levels, four of which are

available as front-drivers or 4x4s (Trailhawk is 4x4 only). Four-wheel drive runs \$1500 on any trim, and we'd think any Jeep should have it. In reality, about one-third of Cherokees are bought with two-wheel drive, but that's still a 4x4 take rate some 15 points higher than for competitive vehicles.

The Cherokee family offers three engines (see sidebars). A 180-hp 2.4L four, PZEV rated, is standard from base model up to mid-trim 4x2 Limited. From 4x4 Limited on up, a V6 is standard. And on all but the base Latitude, a 2.0L turbo will be available, one point shy of the V6's horsepower but with considerably more torque. Fuel mileage ratings were not yet released for any.

Multiple four-wheel-drive systems are standard or available, depending upon model—see specifications sidebar for their basic variables. As is the norm, not every engine, transfer case, tow capacity or even wheel size is available on every trim.

We drove the new Cherokee in Southern California—on two-lane coastal highways, climbing and curving mountain roads, and of course off-road, including through challenging, wheel-flying articulation tests and fairly extreme rock crawling. The vehicle is just the right size to handle it all—spacious and comfortable on the road, big enough to handle the biggest bumps, small enough to squeeze through the tightest spots. Then again, they all are—even Grand Cherokee is engineered to handle the narrowest spots of the Rubicon Trail.

You may pick your Jeep by very specific criteria that lead you to extremes. But within the range of typical needs from daily driver to Trailhawk weekends, it's just as likely you will find one that rings your bell with its styling and best suits your budget. It's a strong family and a tough choice, but only because there are no bad options. ■

SPECIFICATIONS: CONT'D

LENGTH / WHEELBASE	...182 in / 106.48-107.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....25.8 / 54.9 cu.ft
FUEL CAPACITY	....10.5 (bolt undr)/10 (brsh gd)
WEIGHT: 4X2	.....3655-3779 lb
4X4	.....3953-4046 lb
4X4 LOCK	.....4028-4108 lb
DISTRIB F/R (4X4)	.....57/43%
TOW CAPACITY	...all incl Class II hitch: 2000 lb
2.4L PZEV w Class III hitch	...2000 lb
2.0L w Class III hitch	.....4000 lb
3.6L V6 w Class III hitch	.....4500 lb

MODELS:

2.4L PZEV	...Latitude, Latitude Plus, Limited 4x2
3.2L V6	...opt Latitude, Latitude Plus, Limited 4x2
.....standard:	Limited 4x4, Overland, Trailhawk
2.0L TURBO	.....opt all but Latitude

BASE PRICES:

LATITUDE 4X2 (2.4L PZEV)	.....\$23,995
LATITUDE 4X4 (2.4L PZEV)	.....+1500
LATITUDE PLUS 4X2 (2.4L PZEV)	.....26,495
LATITUDE PLUS 4X4 (2.4L PZEV)	.....+1500
LIMITED 4X2 (2.4L PZEV)	.....30,375
LIMITED 4X4 (3.2L V6)	.....+1500
OVERLAND 4X2 (3.2L V6)	.....36,275
OVERLAND 4X4 (3.2L V6)	.....+1500
TRAILHAWK 4X4 ONLY (3.2L V6)	.....33,320

