

CONFIDENT BY JOE SAGE

The current Nissan Armada, just its second generation, is the result of two positive developments: the arrival of the Nissan Titan full-size pickup line (with which it now shares its up-front styling) and the implementation of new, highly flexible F-Alpha global platform architecture across such rugged models as the Nissan Armada and Infiniti QX80 three-row SUVs and the Nissan Titan and midsize Nissan Frontier pickups (with which it used to share its up-front styling).

In line with this beefy basis, the Armada bears comforting conventional controls for its drivetrain—quick-dial transfer case shift between auto-4H-4L0 (also with snow and tow modes), a solid PRND lever to control its six-speed automatic, even a pedal-operated cable parking brake. The almost-three-ton vehicle can carry eight people (with plenty of personal storage space at hand), or seven with second row captain's chairs as on our sample, and can tow 8500 pounds, beating the capacity of many. Best of all, we found its ample brakes—13-plus-inch vented discs at all four corners—an always-there confidence builder with all that potential vehicle, passenger and trailer weight behind it, and great even when solo.

There are four trim levels, any with your choice of rear-wheel or four-wheel drive. The lineup starts at \$47,100 for a rear-drive SV and runs up to \$62,690 for our top-of-the-line four-by-four. (All-wheel drive is a \$3000 item across the board.)

Nissan Armada is close kin to the Infiniti QX80. In the realm of apples-to-oranges (or perhaps McIntosh to Golden Delicious), this apple's next-to-top model, Platinum 4WD, comes in lower than QX80's base model at \$65,400. Platinum Reserve is presented as a trim level, but stickered as an optional package, adding \$3000, now just \$290 above the base QX80. Any are well below the top QX80 at \$90,100 base. Comparing one top vehicle with another marque's base vehicle is valid in the Nissan-Infiniti case, as Infiniti is born as a fully-fancied-up Nissan, and the Platinum Reserve is a fully-fancied-up Armada. There are differences beyond just the badges, but from the multi-tone premium leather-and-wood interior in this top trim, presumably down to the base model we haven't driven, the highly road-capable and moderately-off-road-capable Armada delivers in spades, while leaving some \$18 to 27 grand in your pocket.

Little wonder the 2019 Nissan Armada was just presented with the Kelley Blue Book 5-Year Cost to Own Award for the full-size SUV segment, at the recent Chicago Auto Show. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

CONSTRUCTION	body-on-frame
SEATING CAPACITY	seven (eight w/o captain's chairs)
ENGINE	5.6L VVT V8, alum block/heads
DRIVETRAIN	4WD (2WD avail)
HP/TORQUE	390 hp / 394 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION6-spd auto w OD, man mode, rev match
DRIVE SYSTEM	4WD high, 4WD low, crawl ratio (1/2/R) 38.5/24.9/31.8, limited slip, vehicle dynamic control, traction control, snow mode, hill start assist, tow mode
SUSPENSION	F/R: dbl-wishbone indep, twin-tube Hitachi shocks; F: 36mm stblzr bar; R: 26.5mm stblzr bar; automatic self-leveling
STEERING	engine-speed sensitive rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 13.8x1.2" vented / R: 13.8x0.8" vented, foot pedal parking brake
WHEELS / TIRES	20" dark chrome alum alloy 275/60R20 black sidewall all-season; full-size spare
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	208.9 / 121.1
APPROACH / BREAKOVER / DEPART	20.9 / 20.7 / 22.3°
TURNING CIRCLE	41.3 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	9.2 in
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	40.9 (39.8 snrf) / 40.0 / 36.4 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	41.9 / 41.0 / 28.4 in
CARGO CAPACITY	16.5 / 49.9 / 95.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION (F/R)	5972 lb / (52/48%)
TOW CAPACITY	trailer 8500 / tongue 850 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	regular / 26.0 gal
MPG	13/18/15 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$62,690
PLATINUM RESERVE PKG: 20" dark chrome wheels, dark chrome grille, door handles, mirrors, premium two-tone leather w stitching	3000
CAPTAIN'S CHAIRS PKG: Second row captain's chairs w console, padded armrest (revises from 8- to 7-psngr)	450
CARPETED FLOOR MATS	315
DESTINATION CHARGE	1395
TOTAL	\$67,850

