

2017 LAND ROVER DISCOVERY

The iconic 4x4 has had a refresh – but it's still the same mud-loving off-roader, says Tim Barnes-Clay



The departing Land Rover Discovery is a bit of a hero. It has assisted adventurers, emergency services, and average Joes, like you and me, who like to get a little bit mucky now and then. Although ageing well, the Discovery needed modernising and Land Rover has done exactly that, bringing the mud-plugger bang up to date with fresh tech and a canny, attractive design.

In the main, this 4x4 machine is one of the most proficient off-road SUVs ever made, and the 2017 Discovery is no different. Thanks to Land Rover's clever terrain response system, the new model can get going on virtually any surface, including wading through 90cm of water. If you ever want to instigate an expedition, we can't think of many vehicles better than the incoming 'Disco' to do it in.

Back on the tarmac, the all-new Discovery feels very good. You can tell that Land Rover has got its SUV sophistication screwed down, and with the standard eight-speed automatic transmission changing cogs for you, it feels soothing to drive. The way it handles is no shocker, the 2017 Discovery weighs in at 2.1 tonnes, but in some cases, it weighs 480kg less than the former generation – a remarkable amount of weight reduction. Regardless of this, it's still a hefty car and is best driven at a slower velocity – anything rapid just feels roly-poly when you get to bends.

The engine line-up comprises a 2.0-litre, four-cylinder 240ps oil-burner; a 3.0-litre 258ps six-cylinder diesel unit, and an insane 340ps 3.0-litre supercharged six-cylinder petrol lump. Why is that petrol powerplant nuts? Well, we think you'd be blessed to get 20mpg out of it, and the low-down thrust that the diesels provide is far better suited to the SUV. Pick the 3.0-litre diesel, as driven here, and you could well achieve 39mpg.

The renewed Discovery has acquired the family face of the Land Rover line-up, which undoubtedly took inspiration from the Range Rover. From the side, it's difficult to tell the 2017 Discovery apart from smaller sibling, the Discovery Sport. But it's a handsome, contemporary design, and the off-centre number plate on the tailgate makes it rather individual, albeit a 'marmite' talking point. We can't say it's more attractive than key rival, the Volvo XC90, but it's far from ugly.





FAST FACTS (3.0 TD6 258HP HSE LUXURY)
Max speed: 130 mph
0-62 mph: 8.1 secs
Combined mpg: 39.2
Engine layout: 2993 cc six-cylinder turbo diesel
Max. power (PS): 258
CO2: 189 g/km
Price: £64,195



Inside the Disco there's a wealth of room, and the general quality is terrific – exactly what you'd expect of a modern-day Land Rover and its well-appointed demeanour. With all three rows of seats in use, you've got a decent amount of space for seven adult occupants. The second row is adaptable to help anybody too hemmed in within row three, and even with that third tier of chairs in use, there's still 258-litres of cargo capacity in the boot. Collapse the two seat rows into the floor and you've got 2,406-litres of load-lugging room.

There are no reservations to be had over the build quality of the 2017 Discovery. It feels as if it's been hewn from granite – albeit a lavishly finished piece of stone.

There's never any risk of a dearth of technology in the latest Discovery. Whichever trim-level you select – there's S, SE, HSE, HSE Luxury, and a rationed run of 'First Edition' cars – you're not going to be wanting for kit, although we'd steer away from the 'S' and start at 'SE'.

The 'SE' trim level gets you leather seats, navigation, parking sensors, LED headlights, a stereo upgrade and a touchscreen system. It's a wholesome trim level that, with the 2.0-litre oil-burner, keeps the price-tag below £50,000. From there you can plunge into the options catalogue for extras if you want to. The move to the next stage of trim is 'HSE', but you'll have to dole out £7,500 extra, and it's hard to rationalise that, though the 'HSE' variant offers a panoramic sunroof which adds loads of light into the cabin. Our Land Rover Discovery was in flagship HSE Luxury guise. This trim level adds a Meridian 14-speaker sound system, Windsor leather trim, 21-inch alloy wheels, air suspension, keyless entry and a whole host of other kit you'd expect of a car priced at nearly £65,000.

So, whichever trim level or engine you go for – and if you're an exploratory sort – then there's only one car – the 2017 Discovery. Very little can equal it when the black top ends; it's as talented off-road as nearly anything else devoid of tank tracks. Then again, who really goes die-hard off-roading that often?

GUY SALMON LAND ROVER KNUTSFORD

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www.guysalmon.knutsford.landover.co.uk
01565 632525
Manchester Road, Knutsford WA16 0ST