

# Jeep Cherokee review (2007 model)

It may be an American legend, but is Jeep's smart new Cherokee still the real McCoy? A resounding **YES ... !**

**Soft-roader:** The old Cherokee's sharp-edged boxiness was old-fashioned but it had almost become timeless. New car looks distinctive and refreshed.

'Jeep - There's Only One'. The corporate slogan was certainly true once upon a time in the 1940s, when the original military-based Jeep really was the only game in 4x4 off-road town. But in the 21st century the game is a bit more crowded and a lot more sophisticated, and Jeep knows it. It's one thing being a legend (which Jeep is); it's another thing keeping up with the market (which Jeep must). And the market has changed a lot since the original Cherokee was launched - amazingly eighteen years ago, into a different world.

**Smooth:** interior is light years ahead of its predecessor: plusher, better quality, better designed. It's also spacious and well-equipped.

Then, in Jeep's native America in particular (which was where the Cherokee was mainly aimed), ruggedness and off-road ability still weighed heavier on the scales than luxury and on-road comfort. So although the 'compact' Cherokee started life as a more up-market, multi-purpose offering than its more spartan siblings, it still made a major play of being able to cut it when the going got rough. Then when it came to Europe it started to mellow a bit more, and beyond the underlying ruggedness you could have leather and air-con, (dreadful, plastic) wood, and on-road driving characteristics that gave at least a first generation 'car-like' feel.

**Secure:** car-like unit-body construction offers advantages on road. Rugged suspension, underbody protection, short overhangs and other such serious off-roader design features, ensure off-road capability is almost beyond question.

But the new generation off-roaders, the 'soft-roaders', have gone way beyond the early rhetoric of a car-like ride, and the best of them now actually offer something like real comfort - but typically by trading off the hardcore rock-hopping side of the coin. The all-new Cherokee's positioning is to catch up with the new breed of comfy soft-roader, without compromising the Jeep heritage. As Chrysler's Executive Director of International Sales and Marketing, Thomas Hausch, says, 'Now Cherokee customers can have all the capability of a true Jeep combined with perfect on-road manners'. He sees it more than ever as fitting in the 'sweet spot' between the limited ability soft-roaders and the hardcore off-roaders.

**Tough:** the latest car from the people who invented off-road vehicles in the first place will waltz through almost anything you can throw at it.

Does it work? Mainly yes, on both fronts. First of all, its off-road ability is (a) beyond question, and (b) in some ways better than ever. We drove the new Cherokee, extensively, on genuinely hard going in the Spanish hills, and it convincingly waltzed through anything we could point it at. It's designed for this environment. Suspension parts that other people make from pressings or alloy are super-duty steel castings on the Cherokee. And if they weigh a bit more, well that's a price Jeep is willing to pay for a vehicle they know will survive the toughest of test cycles without breaking sweat. And a vehicle that will fight its way (as every new Jeep has to) through the moonscape torture of the super-tough Rubicon off-road trail between Nevada and California isn't going to have a lot of trouble with anything an everyday customer might throw at it, is it now?

**Comfortable:** no true off-road is really car-like, but Cherokee does a good job on the road, better than its predecessor and as good as any of its competitors.

It has the short overhangs, the big clearances, the hard-shell underbody protection, the suspension travel and the outright toughness of the real McCoy - even though its construction is car-like unit-body rather than the more traditional (if typically cruder) separate chassis layout. It has four-link independent front suspension, three-link solid-axle rear suspension, assisted rack and pinion steering, and front vented-disc/rear drum brakes with a clever ABS system which adapts to either on- or off-road conditions.

There's a choice at launch of two new engines, a 3.7-litre 12-valve V6 petrol and a 2.5-litre 16-valve four-cylinder common-rail turbodiesel, with 211bhp and 235lb ft, or 153bhp and 253lb ft of torque respectively. There are two four-wheel drive transmission options, Command-Trac transfer system (that's 2WD, 4WD part- or full-time, and low ratio 4WD) with four-speed automatic main gearbox in the V6 petrol, and Select-Trac (2WD, 4WD and low ratio 4WD) plus five-speed manual in the 2.5 turbodiesel - in each case with Trac-Lok differential locking on the rear axles only.

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In either case, the mechanical combination gives huge clambering, crawling, mud-splashing and descending abilities - now made even more impressive by clever management tweaks which alter both the idle-speed and ABS settings when low range is selected. Put either petrol or turbodiesel in low range and low gear and they will climb just about anything, feet off, just relying on the big torque and super-low gearing. As the angles get even steeper, a whiff of throttle will still keep you moving, while the diesel in particular feels as though it would climb a house - and even that without any great fuss. It's the same going down near vertical drops: feet off everything, the Cherokee just ambles down on the engine braking, but if you do have to touch the brakes, that specially programmed ABS is reassuring because it doesn't cut in early and start you sliding. It beats the pants off hill-descent control when you're hanging forward in the seat belts. The delicate throttle responses are another big off-road plus point, and in this rock-and-rivulet-strewn environment a Cherokee will simply have most of the opposition for breakfast. It's a real Jeep. And the off-road ride suppleness is simply amazing.

And on the road? Yes, it isn't bad there, either, and in real areas a giant leap from the older Cherokee. It maybe doesn't look quite so distinctive. The old car's sharp-edged boxiness was old-fashioned but it had almost become timeless, and you definitely wouldn't have mistaken it for anything else. The new Cherokee has a strong family look around the nose, with its now traditional seven-slot grille and some really neat shapes around the bonnet, headlights, bumpers and strongly jutting arches, but it's more anonymous at the rear. There the shapes are nice enough, but could be from just about anything, and especially (whisper it) anything Japanese. Above all, it looks smaller than the old Cherokee, and chunkier, where the older car had a certain delicacy in its slim pillars and acres of glass.

The downsized feeling is contradicted by the dimensions however, and even more so by the interior, which has usefully more kneeroom in the back, and a general feeling of plenty of space and well-padded comfort. The trim and equipment packaging is light years ahead of the old car, which tried hard in later years but never really lost its boxy, low-rent, hard-plastic early-American basics. The new one is terrific, even to 'sophisticated' European eyes: nice smooth shapes, nothing too flamboyant, good instrument and control look and layout, and impressively improved tactile qualities - especially in the softer, better textured plastics and both cloth and leather trims. It's comfortable to sit in, and generally pretty comfortable to ride in - but just like most of the other 'soft-roaders', the reality of a genuinely car-like ride is still at odds with high ground clearance, long suspension travel and big, heavy wheel, tyre and suspension components all trying to defy the laws of physics. Let's just say they do as good a job of it as anyone else does, and better than some.

Performance and refinement follow the same pattern. Remarkably good for a massively capable multi-terrain vehicle, nothing special for a no-conflicts luxury car. The V6 is smooth, sounds OK, and claims a maximum of 112mph, 0-62mph in 10.8 seconds and a combined 19.3mpg; the turbodiesel says 102mph, 15.3 seconds and 31.4mpg, and majors on mid-range flexibility. Again, there's a reasonably supple ride, very little harshness, limited roll, a noticeably shake and rattle free shell - and excellent steering whose ample weight and precision make the old Cherokee's steering feel like a speed boat's. In terms of driving feel that's arguably the biggest improvement of all, but it's one of many - and overall they add up to a very decent, well-equipped, and versatile package.

## Summary

### Pros:

far more Euro-friendly interior design and quality, huge off-road ability, much improved steering and overall comfort

### Cons:

on the road, a truly capable off-roader, however good, still can't deny physics

### Bottom line:

If priced, as threatened, to challenge the Freelander, it will bury the British product for sheer multi-terrain ability

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Technical specification **JEEP Cherokee 2.8 CRD 2007**

<b>Make:</b>	JEEP
<b>Model:</b>	Cherokee 2.8 CRD
<b>Year:</b>	2007
<b>Car category:</b>	SUV
<b>Car engine position:</b>	Front
<b>Car engine:</b>	2766 ccm (167,94 cubic inches)
<b>Car engine type:</b>	in-line, 4-cyl
<b>Car valves per cylinder:</b>	4
<b>Car max power:</b>	177.00 PS (129,35 kW or 174,13 HP) at 3800 Rev. per min.
<b>Car max torque:</b>	460.00 Nm (46,67 kgf-m or 337,60 ft.lbs) at 2000 Rev. per min.
<b>Car bore stroke:</b>	94.0 x 100.0 mm (3,68 x 3.9 inches)
<b>Car compression:</b>	17.5:1
<b>Car fuel:</b>	Diesel
<b>Car transmission:</b>	6-speed auto or 5-speed manual
<b>Car power per weight:</b>	0.0861 PS/kg
<b>Car drive:</b>	4WD
<b>Car seats:</b>	5
<b>Car passenger space:</b>	2945 litres (774,11 gallons)
<b>Car doors:</b>	5
<b>Car front tire:</b>	235/70-R16
<b>Car rear tire:</b>	235/70-R16
<b>Car weight:</b>	2055 kg (4507,85 pounds)
<b>Car towing weight:</b>	2800 kg (6142,04 pounds)

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Car total length:	4500 mm (176,31 inches)
Car total width:	1850 mm (72,44 inches)
Car total height:	1800 mm (70,55 inches)
Car max weight with load:	2520 kg (5527,82 pounds)
Car wheelbase:	2700 mm (105,77 inches)
Car cooling:	Liquid
Car cargo space:	419 litres (110,45 gallons)
Car fuel with mixed drive:	8.6 litres/100 km (27,21 miles per gallon)
Car fuel tank capacity:	70.0 litres (18,40 gallons)

Body style	<b>4x4</b>
Engine size	<b>2776 cc</b>
Fuel type	<b>Diesel</b>
Number of doors	<b>5</b>
Number of seats	<b>5</b>
Gearbox type	<b>AUTO</b>
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	<b>262 g/km</b>
Insurance group	<b>13</b>
Vehicle tax band	<b>M</b>
Standard manufacturers warranty (miles)	<b>60000 miles</b>
Standard manufacturers warranty (years)	<b>3 years</b>
Standard corrosion guarantee	<b>7 years</b>
Standard paintwork guarantee	<b>2 years</b>
Fuel consumption (urban)	<b>22.2 mpg</b>
Fuel consumption (extra urban)	<b>34.4 mpg</b>
Fuel consumption (combined)	<b>28.5 mpg</b>
0 - 62 mph	<b>12.2 seconds</b>
Top speed	<b>108 mph</b>

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Cylinders	4
Valves	16 v
Engine power	174 bhp @ 3800 rpm
Engine torque	338 lbs-ft / 457 Nm @ 2000 rpm
Height	1818 mm
Height inclusive roof rails	No details available
Length	4496 mm
Wheelbase	2649 mm
Width	1819 mm
Width including mirrors	No details available
Fuel tank capacity	77.6 litres
Gross vehicle weight	2520 kg
Luggage capacity (seats down)	1954 litres
Luggage capacity (seats up)	878 litres
Max loading weight	380 kg
Max roof load	No details available
Max towing weight (braked)	3360 kg
Max towing weight (unbraked)	750 kg
Minimum kerb weight	2140 kg
Turning circle (kerb to kerb)	10.94 metres

**2007 JEEP CHEROKEE 2.8 CRD LIMITED StationWagon\_BK07 SVZ**

**VIN.No. 1J8GME8516W278050**

**4cyl / 16V, 174BHP@3800 rpm / 457Nm@2000rpm - 338lbf-ft. 0-60mph at 11.8 secs**

**6 Speed Automatic / 4x4 / SUV / 4WD**

No. owners:	1 Prev Owner
Reg No.	<b>BK07 SVZ</b>
First registered date:	23/03/2007
Vin No.	<b>1J8GME8516W278050</b>
Mileage:	50000 (Warranted)
Colour:	Black - METALLIC
Interior:	Full LEATHER grey/Black