

## Toyota Tacoma in American Car Culture and Automobility

Toyota Tacoma is an iconic vehicle in the American Car Culture and automotive world due to its versatility, reliability, and its sense of freedom and power that it gives its drivers.

So starting off lets begin with the origin of where Toyota came from.

Toyota was founded on August 28, 1937 in Japan.

From that information you can tell that it was a long time before America was blessed by the Toyota brand. The company would undergo many challenges and changes including a split into two companies, one for sales and the other for the production of the vehicles.

Production of Toyota was originally for army trucks.

“After overcoming numerous difficulties, Toyota finally succeeded in exporting its vehicles to the U.S. in the 1970s” (Kawahara, 1998, pp. 29).

Although this happened, Toyota was still able to partner with America’s Graham Paige Co. to start creating a mass production system.

This paved the way for Toyota to thrive and was just the beginning of the company.

Now to flow solidly yet smoothly, next is the topic of the history of the Tacoma. There’s plenty to talk about here as there are many details supported about the long unique history of this specific vehicle.

“Over the years, the Toyota Tacoma has undergone significant design and capability enhancements, further solidifying its position as a capable and versatile midsize pickup truck. Notable changes have been made in terms of size, power, and off-road capability,

all to help the Tacoma to stay ever relevant and up to date with ever-changing technology and enhancements” (Bury, 2023, pp. 2).

Some key technological advances include some of the following; Multi-Terrain Select, Crawl Control, and other features that make the Tacoma a unique vehicle that brings together and promotes a community revolving around it because of its favor of toughness, exploration, creativity, and the ability to take it anywhere. These attributes didn't just come overnight. It has been many years of success and failure for the Toyota company to be where it is today. Everything has added up to shape many great years for the company and many to come.

Next on the list we'll talk about the best and worst years for the Tacoma thus far.

All models that apply span from 1995-2023. “The best years for the Toyota Tacoma are widely considered to be 2015, 2010, and 2005, praised for reliability and minimal issues” (Campbell, 2023, pp. 1).

On the flip side, the worst years tend to be known as the 2016 model known for its transmission problems and also the 2006 and 2007 model known for its frame rust issues. The “best model years” include 2023, 2022, 2019, 2017, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2011, 2000, and last but not least the 1997 model.

The “worst model years” include 2016, 2012, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002, and the 2001 model.

It's very important if you are going to be an owner of a Toyota that you pay attention to the best and worst years and that you do your research and talk to friends.

Each model comes with its strengths and weaknesses. One thing they all have in common though is the obvious welcoming to get back out there on the road or even off road.

With the quality of a vehicle being very important, people also have preferences on look and style that they want. To give a few examples of this, here are the notable design enhancements for the 2019, 2020, and 2021 model. The 2019 has a bold, muscular body style. The 2020 has been equipped with an updated grille design. Lastly, the 2021 has been advanced with a rugged and durable interior.

These are just some of the many factors of the best and worst years of the Tacoma.

Now let's talk about America's favorite mid-size pickup truck through the span of 1995-2024. "Originally classified as a compact, the long-running Tacoma is the nation's best-selling midsize" (Panait, 2023, pp. 1). It managed to beat Detroit's Big Three automakers and Japanese competitors such as the Nissan Frontier and unibody Honda Ridgeline. Toyota pickups were sold heavily even before the Toyota's ancestry of the Hilux was even on American soil. "Named after the Coast Salish Indian word for Washington-based Mount Rainier, the Tacoma is popular for its higher-than-average resale value as well. But most importantly, people buy Tacos for their segment-leading reliability" (Panait, 2023, pp. 1). The first-gen Tacoma was commended by American motoring publications from day one. While this is the case, the Toyota has changed a good bit and is still America's favorite mid-size pickup. Comparatively, the fourth generation Tacoma is one of only two pickup trucks with an available manual transmission for the 2024 model and beyond. These are just some key details on how the

Tacoma is changing over the years while still remaining America's favorite mid-size pickup truck on the market and in the world.

Now let's analyze the Toyota Motor Corporation by talking about some of the supporting details behind it. "Founded in 1937, Toyota Motor Corporation is a Japanese company that engages in the design, manufacture, assembly, and sale of passenger cars, minivans, commercial vehicles, and related parts and accessories primarily in Japan, North America, Europe, and Asia. Current brands include Toyota, Lexus, Daihatsu and Hino. Toyota Motor Corporation is the leading auto manufacturer and the eighth largest company in the world. As of March 31, 2013, Toyota Motor Corporation's annual revenue was \$213 billion and it employed 333,498 people" (Nkomo, pp. 1-16).

Yes you read that right. Toyota Motor Corporation is the eighth largest company in the world. This is just a small portion of the facts and details out there about the Toyota Motor Corporation that are available for someone's knowledge.

To piggyback off that topic and on to the next, J.D. Power has reviewed the 2024 Toyota Tacoma and it has many details worth exploring. "(though it still can't tow more than 6,500 pounds). Infused with more power, comfort, technology, utility, and capability, the new 2024 Toyota Tacoma is worthy of the model's best-seller status. That's my take after driving multiple versions of the 2024 Tacoma in Southern California" (Wardlaw, 2023) Obviously J.D. is a lover and advocate of this particular Toyota and possibly others. This article by him is just another example of the impact the Tacoma has on people and also the attributes that make it so appealing to the community. J.D. also says "During the evaluation, I used all ADAS features in various driving

situations. On a multi-lane freeway, the adaptive cruise control and lane-centering assistance worked well, though light traffic on the straight section of the highway posed no significant challenges. Otherwise, the ADAS proved discreet except for the regularly active Proactive Driving Assist system, which I ultimately turned off” (Wardlaw, 2023). This concludes an analysis of a small portion of J.D.’s thoughts on the new 2024 Toyota Tacoma.

Lastly this paper will be concluded by discussing the contradictions that drive Toyota’s success. “The company succeeds, we believe, because it creates contradictions and paradoxes in many aspects of organizational life” (Takeuchi, 2008).

The workers are constantly operating in a culture that has nonstop adversity and challenges which helps them be creative and come up with new ideas and that's why Toyota never stops getting better year after year.

“The hard and the soft innovations work in tandem. Like two wheels on a shaft that bear equal weight, together they move the company forward. Toyota’s culture of contradictions plays as important a role in its success as TPS does, but rivals and experts have so far overlooked it” (Takeuchi, 2008).

Just the company itself and its values as stated above say that Toyota stands for greatness, freedom, power, determination, versatility, reliability, and and warm welcome feeling to the open road.

All this being said, the Toyota Tacoma itself stands for something great. It shares a sense of freedom that the American car culture has stood for since the beginning. It allows one to hit the open road and never look back.

That just is the Tacoma...

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