

2015 Toyota Corolla Shows What It Takes to Be a World Leader

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A famous fast-food eatery boasts how many billions of burgers it has sold since 1955. If the Toyota Corolla carried such a sign, it would read, “40 million sold since 1966.” The current generation Corolla, introduced to the U.S. market for 2014, leads all nameplates worldwide, and the updated 2015 model amply demonstrates why.

The 11th generation Corolla is the roomiest and most fuel-efficient ever. In fact, two numbers starting with “4” convey those stories clearly. The Corolla offers the most rear legroom in its class at a truly impressive 41.4 inches. That’s a good 5-6 inches more than most competitors offer and is squarely in full-size sedan territory. A lower rear “hump” in the floor lets the middle passenger enjoy more comfort. And the interior design genuinely feels upscale.

The EPA-estimated fuel economy also starts with a 4: The Corolla LE Eco with CVT (continuously variable transmission) is rated 42 MPG and other models and trim lines with that transmission are rated 37-40 MPG. That’s all in a package that bears a solid link to design themes seen in the Toyota Camry and Avalon. With sharply sculpted surfaces, it’s the sleekest, most assertive rendition of the Corolla ever.

In its second year, the current-generation Corolla adds more value-packed standard equipment in the LE, S and LE Eco models with the addition of the Premium trim line. Corolla Premium models come standard with the power moonroof, Smart Key System and Entune™ Premium Audio and multimedia bundle, which includes navigation and the Toyota App Suite. In addition, those three models also gain a new rear seat armrest with two cupholders.

The base model Corolla L continues with a choice of a 6-speed manual or 4-speed automatic transmission.

Getting Over 40 MPG in Comfort

In the MPG race for a 40+ rating in a compact sedan, the Toyota Corolla LE Eco CVT shows how it’s done without giving up performance, comfort or amenities.

The Corolla LE Eco CVT uses a combination of powertrain tech and special aerodynamic touches to aid in its exemplary fuel economy. Its exclusive version of the 1.8-liter engine features Valvematic technology, which offers a broader range of continuously variable valve timing (lift and phasing) than even the Variable Valve Timing with intelligence (VVT-i) in the standard Corolla 1.8-liter engine. The Corolla LE Eco is also a bit more powerful than the other Corolla models, with 140 horsepower vs. 132.

Toyota programmed some special tricks into the Corolla LE Eco model. When you select the ECO driving mode, power to the air conditioner compressor is reduced, though the system runs in recirculation mode to compensate for the longer cool-down time. Also, the accelerator is programmed to control responses to choppy driving and to contain acceleration from a standing start in order to help reduce fuel consumption.

In effect, switching to ECO mode helps makes you a smoother driver. Don’t think that ECO mode holds the car back, though. Once past 50-percent throttle (such as for merging in traffic), the accelerator responds the same as it does in Normal mode.

The Corolla LE Eco cheats the wind with aerodynamic underbody covers and a color-keyed rear spoiler, which brings its coefficient of drag (Cd) down to an impressive 0.28 (0.29 and 0.30 in other Corolla models). The under-covers are located below the bumper fascia, engine, front and rear floor and fuel tank to help manage airflow for enhanced efficiency. (The Corolla S model gets these special panels, too).

This high-MPG rated Corolla LE Eco lowers friction with low rolling resistance 195/65R15 tires. Available 16-inch aerodynamic alloy wheels (which, as a bonus, happen to look like they came from a high-end sports car) use a 205/55R16 tire. The Corolla LE likewise features 16-inch alloys with that tire size.

What the Corolla LE Eco doesn't do is compromise on comfort. This model comes standard with a host of amenities, including:

- Automatic climate control
- Entune audio with multimedia bundle
- 6.1-inch display screen and six speakers
- Rear camera with projected path guide lines for parking ease
- Tilt/telescopic steering wheel with Bluetooth® hands-free phone controls

And that's all in the *standard* trim. The Plus and Premium trims add more amenities, the latter including, for example, SofTex®-trimmed heated front seats and an 8-way power-adjustable driver's seat.

The Smart CVT

The 2015 Corolla LE, S and LE Eco models owe a big part of their fuel efficiency to the available advanced CVTi-S — Continuously Variable Transmission, with the “S” added for “Shift.” The “S” is a key differentiator from other CVTs. People love the fuel economy and smoothness a CVT can offer. They don't much care for the “rubber band” feel of the drivetrain as it continuously adjusts the transmission ratio to driver input. Toyota found a way to keep the good while adapting to consumer preferences.

The CVTi-S incorporates discrete stepped shift points into the car's acceleration and deceleration curves, and it even mimics the familiar characteristics of hydraulic automatics creating a sense of positive shift engagement. On the Corolla S trim, up to seven shift-points can also be manually actuated from the shift gate or steering wheel paddle shifters.

A super wide ratio range of 2.480 (low) to 0.396 (high), coupled with a 4.761 final drive ratio, endows Corolla models equipped with the CVTi-S a superbly rounded resume of performance, efficiency and quietness. Just to make sure things always start out smoothly — even when the car is cold — a warmer helps get the transmission fluid to optimal temperature quickly.

The Strong, Silent Type

The Corolla makes the most of its roomy cabin by filling it with ... *quiet*. Making extensive use of high tensile-strength steel, the Corolla's unibody provides a rigid platform that forms a foundation for tight handling and ride smoothness. The tight body structure allows for suspension tuning that yields an engaging, more dynamic driving experience. The Corolla keeps outside noises out thanks to such measures as an acoustic glass windshield, improved floor carpet insulation, an instrument panel seal between the cowl and the windshield, fender insulators and an inner dash silencer pad.

A more rigid steering structure enhances the direct feeling coming through the electric power-assist steering system. Eliminating an accessory driven hydraulic-assist for the steering reduces weight and parasitic loss, and therefore helps boost fuel efficiency. There's also no messy steering fluid to change or top off.

The high-strength construction also helps offer exemplary collision performance. Yet, with all its strength, the 2015 Corolla weighs less than 2,900 pounds in all grades.

The benefits of a high-strength structure continue into the suspension, including a more rigid control arm design in the MacPherson strut front layout. In the rear, the higher strength body allows diagonal attachment for the torsion beam's bushings instead of the straight attachment orientation of the previous-generation model. The new arrangement helps enhance handling, grip and control. Spring rates on Corolla are optimized for ride comfort, although the Corolla S gets its own suspension tuning.

Sporty Corolla S

The added structural strength makes an ideal platform for Corolla S, which spices up the driving experience with sport suspension tuning, and 16-inch wheels with 205/55R16 tires. Springs, dampers and bushings all are unique to this model. Performance is further enhanced with available 17-inch alloy wheels with 215/45R17 tires and four wheel disc brakes.

Driving purists can even get a 6-speed manual transmission, while the available CVTi-S adds a Sport driving mode and features steering wheel paddle shifters to let the driver make fast, sequential shifts through the transmission's seven predefined steps. Or, use the console shifter to upshift or downshift in the M position. Exclusive to the Corolla S, a 3.5-inch TFT multi-Information display within the instrument cluster displays M mode activity, including the "gear" position, and other vehicle information.

In either case, the CVTi-S will upshift or downshift on its own if the engine revs too high or too low. Even when not shifting manually, the Corolla S offers a more responsive feel when in Sport mode, which alters shift points and also provides a livelier feel through the electric power steering programming.

The Corolla S also looks the sporty part with its exclusive piano-black grille, integrated rear spoiler, fog lights and chrome-tipped tailpipe. The Corolla S is available exclusively in Blue Crush Metallic color. Inside, bolstered sport seats and a leather-wrapped steering wheel give the Corolla S the proper feel for a sport sedan.

True Toyota Value

Shopping for a Corolla is easier than ever. The base L model offers legendary Toyota reliability in an affordable package. The standard air conditioning system includes a dust and pollen filter, and this "base" grade hardly seems so with:

- Standard USB and iPod® connectivity
- Bluetooth® for hands-free phone control, phone book access and audio streaming
- A 60/40 split fold-down rear seat
- Tilt and telescoping steering wheels
- Power windows and door locks
- Overhead console with map light

Just choose between the 6-speed manual or 4-speed automatic transmission and pick a color.

The most popular Corolla, the LE, steps up the amenities with:

- Auto climate control with dust and pollen filter
- Cruise control
- Upgraded interior trim and 3-spoke steering wheel
- Multi-function in-key remote
- Integrated backup camera with projected path guidelines
- Color-keyed heated power outside mirrors
- Entune audio with multimedia bundle which includes a 6.1-inch display screen and six speakers.

A Plus trim line adds fog lights and 16-inch alloy wheels. The LE Premium, like the LE Eco Premium, adds SofTex®-trimmed heated front seats with an 8-way power-adjustable driver's seat.

Safety Star

Safety is always a top priority with all Toyota models and Corolla is no exception, as witnessed by it earning a NHTSA 5-star safety rating in 2014.

Like all Toyota models, the 2015 Corolla is equipped with the Star Safety System™ which includes Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRAC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD) and Brake Assist. It also features the standard Smart Stop Technology brake-override system and an electronic tire pressure monitoring system.

Warranty Protection and Toyota Care

Toyota's 36-month/36,000 mile basic new-vehicle warranty applies to all components other than normal wear and maintenance items. Additional 60-month warranties cover the powertrain for 60,000 miles and against corrosion with no mileage limitation.

The 2015 Corolla comes standard with Toyota Care, a complimentary plan covering normal factory-scheduled maintenance and 24-hour roadside assistance for two years or 25,000 miles, whichever comes first.