

Passenger/Cargo Vans

When Toyota introduced its first van in 1983, Toyota's engineers designed the Van to ride like a car. Toyota's first van came in both passenger and cargo van versions.

- The Toyota Van was introduced in 1983 for the 1984 model year. The cargo version of the Van went on sale in March 1984. The Passenger Van went on sale in October 1984.**
- Beginning in 1987, 4WD was offered on both the Passenger and Cargo Van.**
- The Toyota Van was replaced in 1991 with the Previa, a mini-van with a much more rounded body and a car-like feel.**
- In 1998, the Sienna replaced the Previa. It was built on an extended Camry chassis to give it a Camry-like feel.**

Introduced in 1983, Toyota Cargo Van went on sale in March 1984 while sales of the Passenger Van started in October 1984. The Van was marketed to those who wanted the versatility of a station wagon, the roominess of a van, and the drivability, ride and fuel economy of a passenger car. In fact, the first year Van was called a "Van Wagon."

4 wheel-drive versions of the Passenger and Cargo Van were introduced in 1987.

The Passenger Van seated 7 but was re-configurable to allow it to carry cargo and passengers. The second and third seats could be removed to provide almost 1500 cubic feet of space with a maximum payload of 1500 lb. The engine for the Van was placed behind the front axle to provide it better balance and improve traction when loaded.

Features included a 2.0 liter 4-cylinder engine (2.2 liter in 1986) and a 5-speed manual transmission with optional 4-speed automatic. Available in Deluxe and LE grades, some options included power steering, air-conditioning, a cooler/ice maker, power windows and doors and 2-tone paint.

The Cargo Van had essentially the same features and looked similar to the Passenger Van but was designed for carrying cargo. It came with no second or third row seats providing almost 150 cubic feet (187 cubic feet in later models). The Cargo Van was available in a windowed version and a panel version with no side windows.



Previa

The Previa was introduced in 1991. At a time when mini-vans were becoming more popular because of a need to transport American families, the Previa was offered to compete against the best selling models like the Dodge Caravan and Ford Aerostar. The Previa offered more interior room than either the Caravan or the Aerostar.

Like its predecessor, the Toyota Van, the Previa engine was mounted behind the front axle in a mid-vehicle configuration to improve the balance and traction of the vehicle. Like the Van, the Previa included many of the features found in a sedan, air-conditioning, moonroof, an optional AWD system and either 5-speed manual or 4-speed automatic transmission.

Unlike the Toyota Van, the Previa had a much rounder shape giving it improved aerodynamics (a .34 drag coefficient) and as a result, better gas mileage. Other changes included optional third row seats, a slightly larger 2.4 liter 4-cylinder engine and 4 different audio options.

The Previa was marketed towards families. Standard seating allowed 5 passengers. With the optional third row of seats, the Previa could seat 7. This allowed the Previa to transport large families with kids to school and back and to their activities.

The Previa featured many safety features. Reinforced steel pillars supported the roof. Side-door impact beams were designed to help absorb the impact of side collisions. The available Anti-lock Brake System (ABS) helped keep the brakes from locking in less than optimal driving conditions. The driver's side and front passenger side air bags and Supplemental Restraint System (SRS) helped keep the driver and passenger safe during accidents.



Sienna

The family-oriented characteristics of the Previa were enhanced with the introduction of the Sienna in 1998. In order to further improve the car-like feel of this van the first generation Sienna was built on a stretched and modified Camry chassis. It had the same 3.0 liter V6 engine with 4 speed automatic transmission.

To get the kids into the Sienna as quickly as possible it featured 4 doors with two sliding side doors. The Sienna was also slightly longer and wider than the Previa.

The second generation Sienna introduced for the 2004 model year introduced a larger 3.3 liter engine and a 5 speed automatic transmission. Just like the first generation, this Sienna is slightly longer and wider than its predecessor.

As with all Toyota Vans, the Sienna has many standard safety features. These include, driver and front passenger airbags, driver, front passenger and three-row side curtain airbags, ABS brakes, Vehicle Stability Control and Traction Control.

Options for the Sienna include daytime running lights, power sliding side doors and heated driver and front passenger seats. To keep the kids entertained, a rear-seat DVD entertainment center is offered as well as many audio options and wireless headphones to keep it quiet inside the cabin. To help parents navigate, a DVD navigation system with backup camera is offered.

