

Road Beat: '18 Honda Odyssey moving right to the top



The Honda Odyssey has been redesigned for 2018. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Honda for 2018 brings an almost entirely new Odyssey. Always ranked by most journalists at or near the top of this competitive class, this new Odyssey has to be second to none. About the only thing that didn't change is the wheelbase which remains 118.1 inches. Everything else has changed, although curb weight is also listed at 4,593 pounds, which is down by 20 pounds from the prior generation.

One of the detractions of the prior generation was that the window line made it look perfect for a funeral home. Unless you are ghostbusting ala Bill Murray and Dan Ackroyd (they

used an old Cadillac Hearst), the styling always bugged me. But Honda has fixed that window line by giving it a smoother, edgier look. It does have an attractive look now and the new excellent front headlights give it a sporty, aggressive look

Overall footprint for the Odyssey remains virtually the same with a length of 203 inches and a width near 79 inches. Odyssey stands almost 70 inches tall. Although the size remains the same, interior volumes are slightly down, which may be the result of new measuring requirements. But the fuel tank is down from about 21 gallons to 19.5 gallons, but not to fret, fuel economy is up.

While the engine is dimensionally the same, Honda has gone from port fuel injection to a more expensive direct injection, meaning higher compression, more power and improved fuel efficiency. Horsepower jumps from 248 at 5,700 rpm to now a full 280 hp at 6,000 rpm and torque jumped by 12 pounds of twist to 262 at a lower 4,700 rpm. Also new is either a super slick nine speed or in their top of the line Odysseys a 10-speeder. My top of the line Elite got the 10 speed. The Touring gets the same cog-swapper.

Performance is greatly enhanced as with that many tranny ratios, the engine is almost always at peak efficiency and it shows with a 0-60 mph time of just 7.07 seconds. My advice is not to choose off a new Odyssey at the traffic light Grand Prix. You will be in for a comeuppance. Hit it hard and you can smoke the tires a bit. This almost quickest of minivan times is backed up by excellent passing performance with a 50-70 mph run on a level highway taking just 3.48 seconds and the same run up a steep grade only slowing that time by just over a second to 4.76 seconds. While the nine speed Pacifica is a couple of tenths quicker to 60 mph, the Odyssey smokes the Pacifica in passing times by a half to a full second.



Specifications

Price \$30,930 to \$47,610

Engine

3.5L SOHC, 24 Valve V-6 280
hp @ 6,000 rpm

262 lb.-ft. of torque @
4,700 rpm

Transmission

Nine-speed torque converter
automatic

10-speed torque converter
automatic Touring and Elite

Configuration

Transverse mounted front
engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 118.1 inches

Length 203.2 inches

Width 78.5 inches

Height 69.6 inches

Track (f/r) 67.3/67.2 inches

Weight 4,593 pounds

Weight distribution (f/r)
55/45 percent

Wheels 19 inch alloys

Tires 235/55X19 inches

Steering lock to lock 2.97
turns

Turning circle 39.64 feet

Fuel capacity 19.5 gallons
Passenger volume 160.1 cu ft
Cargo volume behind third
row 38.6 cu ft
Tow capacity 3,500 pounds

Performance

0-60 mph 7.07 seconds
50-70 mph 3.48 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 4.76
seconds

Top speed Tires are rated
for 130 mph continuous and I
am sure it could do it.

Fuel Economy EPA rated
19/28/22 mpg
city/highway/combined.

Expect 23-25 mpg in rural
country driving and 31-32
mpg on the highway at legal
speeds.

Fuel economy as rated by the EPA comes in at 19/28/22 mpg city/highway/combined. On a level highway at 70 mph the Odyssey averaged 32 mpg and over the Sierra to Carson City it averaged 28 mpg. In overall driving of about 500 miles it averaged about 25 mpg. Pretty amazing fuel economy considering its size and performance.

Handling is another area of Odyssey improvement. Steering is much quicker at just 2.97 turns lock to lock, wheels are now 19 inches on the Elite and they are shod with lower profile 235/55 series rubber. While MacPherson struts still reside up front, a new improved compact trailing are set up now resides in the rear. Odysseys have also had decent handling, sharper than other minis, but this new version will downright surprise you right up to its limit. Turn in is crisp and its attitude remains reasonable flat for a mini and its cushy ride. It gets

it done when the road bends and its 67-inch-wide track certainly helps.

Ride quality is super absorbent, and quiet, very quiet and Hondas aren't known for their quiet until lately where they have done a great job on quelling road noise. It rivals some near luxo models in quiet. There is no bobbing, weaving and certainly little if any float. Well done, Honda.

Brakes appear to be the same big ventilated discs in front and bigger solid discs in the rear. All the acronyms are present with ABS and a plethora of others. Lane departure warning, collision mitigation (which should help prevent future litigation), lane keep assist, adaptive cruise and the kitchen sink are all here, standard in this Elite edition. LED headlights are terrific.

Inside is a luxo leather interior with doors and dash done with top quality materials. Storage and cubbies abound. The Elite comes with the cabin watch system which puts on a screen what's happening in the second and third row. Seats are comfortable if not a bit firm, so long haul comfort should be good and with that nearly 20-gallon fuel tank, maybe a private lav might be a good option with a near 600-mile range. Second and third row seating is comfortable and copious. Rear seats fold flat and the middle row is a snap to remove.

With a bit over 140 cubes behind the front row, going to Home Depot or Lowe's could get costly.

My Elite tester stickers for \$46,670 plus \$940 for the train ride from the Odyssey's Lincoln, Ala., assembly plant. Everything is standard and it doesn't get any better than this model. A still well-equipped LX model sticker for \$29,990 plus the obligatory \$940 train ride and there are four models and prices in between each with increasing levels of features, but the base model will surprise you with its standard equipment list and the powertrain is identical, but even the base gets a

great nine-speed cog-swapper.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.