

Scion xB:



Not Your Mom's Minivan

TOYOTA'S GONE IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT RIDE FOR Generation Y and they're pretty sure they found it in the new, boxy 2004 Scion xB. To some, the xB looks like an old-fashioned milk truck. To others, it looks more like a milk crate. But the Scion isn't flashy by design. The idea is to give kids who grew up in the back of their parents minivans a vehicle that not even their soccer mom's could love.

■ What the heck is a Scion?

The Scion is pronounced "SY-en." It means "descendant" or "heir." The name was chosen to stand alone as a distinctive new line of products for Toyota.

■ It's got a strange design that I'm sorta drawn to. Am I a freak?

I can't answer that. But I can tell you that it's definitely a love-it or hate-it design.

■ I'm usually pretty tapped out by the end of the month. What's the price?

The Scion starts at \$13,680.

■ What other vehicles compare?

Toyota likes to think there aren't any. Its closest competitors are the Buick Rendezvous, the Mazda Tribute and the Toyota RAV4. The Honda Element is similarly boxy but larger in size and higher in price, starting at \$19,000.

■ What's it got under the hood?

A double overhead cam (DOHC) 16-valve VVT-i 4-cylinder engine with Variable Valve Timing with Intelligence (VVT-I), 108 hp at 6,000 rpm, 105 lb.-ft. of torque at 4,200 rpm and a five-speed manual overdrive transmission. The xB delivers 35 mpg on the highway and 31 mpg in the city.

■ You know us Generation Y-ers. We love our music.

We know. The xB features a six-speaker AM/FM/CD audio system with Scion Sound Processing, which allows drivers to choose between three settings – SSP Neutral, which keeps the music in the background; SSP Hear, which enhances the sounds with crisp highs and lows; and SSP Feel, which has a sound curve that lets passengers not only hear the music but feel it.

■ How many people can I cram into it?

The xB is a five-door, five-passenger sport-utility wagon. But you could cram more people in if you're determined.

■ What about my board and gear?

The xB packs in 43.4 cubic feet of cargo with the 60/40 split-folding and removable rear seats folded, and its dashboard is loaded with shelves and compartments – using nearly every inch of available space.

■ What colors does it come in? I need something cool to impress the babes.

You can choose from Polar White, Thunder Cloud Metallic, Black Sand Pearl, Camouflage, Black Cherry Pearl and Blue Onyx Pearl. And for a limited time in spring 2004, you can also get it in orange. But beware. It's really, really orange. Scion set out to make an orange car. But it wasn't orange enough, so they made it "oranger." But it still wasn't orange enough, so they added more orange.

■ I don't look good in orange, but I do want a car that's all my own.

No problem. Log on to www.scion.com and customize your own Scion. Choose from 40 different accessories, from appearance pieces – like clear taillights and body side graphics, including polka dots or a fingerprint – to under-hood items, like cold air intake or strut tower bases. And it's all covered under the standard Scion limited three year-/36,000-mile warranty. If you build it, it will run! 

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