

The famed Tata Safari is back!! The car was once the most aspired vehicle for many a middle-class buyer. Its good looks and large proportions won it a legion of fans - since its debut over two decades ago. We last saw a Safari on sale in a Tata Motors showroom back in 2019... And now it has returned with an all-new generation. The car that's ready for launch has had an interesting metamorphosis - especially with its name. The 'three-row Harrier' or H7X, started as the Buzzard at the Geneva Motor show in 2019, became the Gravitas when it debuted in India at the Delhi Auto Expo a year later. And now after almost another year, it's market-ready with another rechristening! Now I have to say, I'm not one of the people who buys the theory that this car was always supposed to be named the Safari! If you ask me, the Harrier should have been the Safari, and I have said that now for some time, so I won't drone on about it. What I will say though, is that visually the side profile is where you do pick up hints of the Safari on this newer car. And that is intentional.

Also Read: 2021 Tata Safari: All You Need To Know

The Tata Safari takes its design cues from the Harrier that are hard to miss but the overall presence is larger and more imposing.

## Design

But any similarity to the old Safari is way overshadowed by how much the car will remind you of the Harrier. The new Safari looks like the Harrier, but there are subtle differences. The front grill has Tata's 'tri-arrow' motif that design chief Pratap Bose has spoken of at length. The Harrier has a mesh or honeycomb-like pattern. I actually like the chrome detailing on the grille. There is more chrome around the headlamp housing, while on the harrier the fog lamp housing is surrounded by a similar chrome edging. 18-inch alloy wheels on the top end XZ variant only (all other variants get 16-inches, and yes on the Harrier it is also 16, and the top-end gets 17-inch wheels). The Tata Safari drives in with an identical wheelbase to the Harrier, so for those of you who may have thought this is a long wheelbase version - think again. But the car is longer overall by 63 mm to the Harrier. And that stretch comes on the rear overhang. The boot space is longer, and the bumper and tailgate have a different design and angle as compared to the Harrier.

Similarities with the older Safari are more evident on the profile

As a result, there is no sleek slimmed down C-pillar merging into the rear - like in the harrier but a distinct separation - with a big window added to give the third row more light and sense of space. There is a stepped roof that is a very Safari-esque and it's been intentionally done. The roof rails are different - and get a chrome detail with the Safari badge, as well as a roof rail side cap - another hark back to the older Safari. The new tailgate and fenders also give you new taillights that are very different to the Harrier's. The chrome door handles are a definite NO for me, but I can see why the top variant would need that given the competition set. Overall though the Safari is good looking, but let us not beat about the point that it definitely looks like a 'Harrier Plus'.

Like the Harrier, the new Tata Safari is also built on the Land Rover D8 platform derived Optimal Modular Efficient Global Advanced Architecture or OMEGARC. It is 4661 mms long and 1786 mm high, which is 80 mm more than the Harrier - largely owing to that stepped roof. The width of 1894 mm, and more importantly the wheelbase of 2741 mm remain exactly the same as the Harrier. There are just 3 colour options on the Tata Safari - Royale Blue, Daytona Grey and Orcus White.

The cabin is upmarket with the 'Oyster White' theme and spacious too, especially with that massive panoramic sunroof,

### Tech and Interior

The cabin's colour palette is nothing like the Harrier's. The 'oyster white' theme is rather plush looking. The dash in dual tone black and white looks appealing and the 8.8-inch floating island touchscreen system sits right in the centre. It is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, voice recognition and voice alerts. Tata's now famous iRA or Intelligent Real Time Assist connected car tech also finds a place in the Safari. It comprises location-based services, remote commands and live vehicle diagnostics among other features like voice commands. The mid variants get a 7" screen. But in an era where even smaller cars like the i20 or Sonet have a 10.25-inch screen - these may seem small.

Also Read: [Tata Safari Pre-Bookings To Open From February 4](#)

The feature list is extensive on the new Safari and on par with what you've come to expect with a Rs. 20 lakh worth vehicle like the electronic parking brake or iRA connected car tech

The feature list is pretty long and that you expect in a car that will cost around Rs. 20 lakh. Just like the touchscreen, the 9-speaker JBL system, 7-inch TFT display instrument cluster, electrically adjustable driver side seat, leatherette upholstery, and electronic parking brake only find their way in this top XZ variant of the SUV. The addition of the electronic parking brake, in particular, is a welcome addition, and it certainly gives the Safari an upper hand over its rivals. The option of a big panoramic sunroof which called the Majestic Skydome by Tata is available on the top 2 variants while captain seats on the second row are only available on this top trim. All other trims get a bench seat with a 60:40 split ratio. Using the 'boss mode' the front passenger seat can be pushed forward, a feature that helps create more legroom in row two. You can also slide the second-row seats and recline them.

Access to the third row is cumbersome but all-around space isn't all that bad. Adults will fit in but definitely not where you want to be for long distances

Access to the third row is a bit cumbersome though, as a result of the wheelbase not being increased. In its presentation to us, Tata Motors said the third row is very comfortable, very generous, and very well designed - even for long distances. Every carmaker who makes a car with three rows will tell you the same about their car! But the truth is - the only vehicles which have comfortable third rows are large inter cities buses (they also have great fourth and fifth rows)! Now that said, yes, I have to appreciate the sense of space in the Safari's third row - pretty remarkable given that the length of the vehicle has only increased by 63 mm. You get 889 mm of headroom and 832 mm of legroom back here. Under-thigh support is kind of non-existent. But you do get a sense of reasonable comfort, at least for short distances - even for someone with my height; and that's because the seat back angle is well proportioned and well designed. So, definitely great for kids, and not so bad for adults - but not for very long distances. What's also nice is that you also get your own AC vents here with your own blower control, 2 USB ports, cupholders, and a little bit of space for storing a few things.

The cargo space fully expands to a humongous 1658 litres on the new Tata Safari with the second and third-row folded

So how much is then left for you to carry your luggage if the third row is in play? Like most 3-row cars, not too much, because what's left is just 73 litres. You can fold down the third row and the 3-seater second-row bench. Third row down gets you 750 litres, which is more than the Harrier. Second row folded gives you a cavernous 1658 litres.

The 2021 Tata Safari will be offered with a manual and automatic transmission right from the launch. There is just the 2.0-litre twin-turbo diesel for now

## Dynamics

Now we know this engine from before. The 2-litre 4-cylinder turbo-diesel does duty on the Harrier as well, and nothing changes when it comes to figures. At your disposal is maximum power of 168 bhp and peak torque of 350 Nm which kicks in at 1750 rpm and stays on till 2500 rpm. The good thing is that unlike a few of its recent cars, including the Harrier, Tata is offering an automatic and manual from word go. I began driving the 6-Speed manual first. The car handles well, there is a reasonable sense of cornering, good amount of control, and you don't get a sense of the big bulk of the car - at first. But get to higher speeds and you certainly do. And that's where some body roll creeps in, which is a little bit annoying. Outside of that, I think the stellar achievement of Tata engineering is just how great the ride quality is!

The automatic is particularly nice on the new Tata Safari and does the job well. A lot of buyers in this space will particularly appreciate its availability

The suspension is really well-tuned for our roads. And so, on the whole, the Fiat-derived drivetrain does well. But the gearshift can still get a bit smoother, and its throws too could be shorter. That just adds to the feeling of bulk. But what is evident is that there isn't too much lag. Another thing that I noticed is that the turning radius is pretty sharp for a car of this size, so manoeuvring in city traffic and parking should not be a big hassle.

There is a notable difference between how the new Tata Safari drives between Eco and Sport mode. There isn't 4x4 though as Tata says the market for the same is too small

The automatic gearbox is something a lot of carandbike readers and viewers have been asking about. The Harrier got it last year and yes, the Safari gets the same one. This Hyundai sourced torque converter gearbox is very easy to use, and from the performance perspective - you won't be disappointed. Is it electric and really quick? Of course not, but then we are also a little spoiled by the DCTs that so many cars have these days. It is smart that Tata finally understood that an auto is a must - especially because I do believe in this segment in particular, a lot of people will want an automatic. The automatic Safari certainly feels like a more refined car to drive, and given a choice I would go for it over the manual. And since the Land Rover DNA is at play, Tata says the car is equipped enough to take on challenging terrains, even without all-wheel drive. Plus, the signature tri-arrow patterns is used on the automatic Safari's gear-shifter as well.

The 2021 Tata Safari comes with three different driving modes - City, Eco and Sport and it gets a terrain response system

Like many Tata models the Safari also gets drive modes so you have City, Eco and Sport and yes there is perceptible difference between City and Sport for sure. But there is also a terrain response system a la Land Rover. Rough Road mode, Wet mode and then back to the default City drive mode. And that is where the big question comes in about the Safari brand name. To a lot of people, the Safari name is synonymous with 4 Wheel Drive. Tata insists that it's too small a market in terms of actual percentage of buyers who'd opt for 4X4 version, for the company to actually make one. But the platform supports it, and so adding one in later will not be tough. But not having a 4X4 (from a brand perspective) could hurt the Safari, but from the sales perspective, okay I agree - it probably will not.

The top variants get 6 airbags, hill descent control, ISOFIX child seat mounts on the new Safari

## Safety

The list of safety features is long here. Dual airbags, ABS or antilock brakes with ESP or electronic stability programme, disc brakes on all wheels, hill hold control and traction control - all come as standard. 6 airbags, hill descent control and ISOFIX child seat mounts can be found only on this top trim. You also get a tyre pressure monitoring system, cruise control and a reverse parking camera.

Tata Motors could keep things aggressive and undercut the competition with a sub Rs. 14 lakh pricing

#### Expected Pricing

Bookings for the Tata Safari will begin on the 4th of February at a cost of Rs. 30,000, though of course we still await a price announcement. The car will likely be offered in 4 trims. Tata would do well to keep the prices close to the Harrier, which starts at Rs. 13.99 lakh and goes up to Rs. 19.05 lakhs (ex-showroom). For reference, the diesel MG Hector Plus is priced between Rs. 14.66 and 19.13 lakh, while the diesel Toyota Innova Crysta ranges from Rs. 16.64 lakh to Rs. 24.33 lakh. Tata would do well to undercut them both, as also keep an eye on the upcoming second-generation Mahindra XUV 500.