

Road Beat: Lexus LX570, the ultimate SUV



The Lexus LX570 continues to impress with each model. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

With an MSRP \$685 shy of a hundred grand, one would expect a sublime ride and anechoic chamber quiet. LX570 delivers that and more including a Mark Levinson sound system headlined by a muted, but wonderfully smooth sounding 5.7L V-8 engine.

Coming off its best sales year since 2008 with more than 6,000 units sold in 2017, Lexus LX570 goes into 2018 with few changes. One being a new color, Eminent White Pearl, and 10 years of complimentary Enform Safety Connect and Enform Service Connect, otherwise it is the exact same vehicle as the 2017 model following the motto: "Don't fix what isn't broken."

And being a Lexus, it rarely breaks, if ever.

By today's standards LX570 is a big vehicle stretching out exactly 200 inches on a 112.2-inch wheelbase. It is beamy at 78 inches and stands a stout 75.6 inches tall. But it is narrow enough for the Panama Canal (by about 96 feet, 173 feet with the new locks). The design is a classic two box with a massive cargo hold of over 83 cubic feet. Up front is the now classic and familiar L'Finesse trademark Lexus grille. It is massive. Headlights are slick, sophisticated three box LEDs. Sweeping fender bulges add muscle and strength as the overall impression is one of beautiful mass. Speaking of mass, curb weight is 6,000 pounds.

To move such mass against the forces of Newton's First Law is a large, 5.7L, DOHC, 32 Valve V-8 that pumps out 383 hp at 5,600 rpm and 403 pounds of twist at a low 3,600 rpm. It sends this power longitudinally to an eight-speed auto cog swapper that drives all four wheels all the time (it has a two-speed transfer case for rock crawling) with a rear wheel bias. That is the big change from four years ago, two more tranny speeds which added about an mpg to fuel economy. Its air suspension system can raise or lower the vehicle and there are several throttle mapping controls for off road work. But I doubt that anyone who buys an LX will ever use any of the systems. Marring its beautiful finish would only bring heartache and tears.



Specifications

Price \$82,690 to about \$90,000

Engine

5.7L, DOHC, 32 valve V-8 383 hp @ 5,600 rpm

403 lbs.-ft. of torque @ 3,600 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed electronically controlled automatic

Configuration

Longitudinal front engine/all wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 112.2 inches

Length 200.0 inches

Width 78.0 inches

Height 75.6 inches

Ground clearance 8.9 inches

Track (f/r) 64.8/64.6 inches

Weight 6,000 pounds

GVWR 7,385 pounds

Weight Distribution (f/r)

51/49 percent

Towing capacity 7,000 pounds

Fuel capacity 24.6 gallons

Cargo capacity third row removed, second row folded

83.1 cubic feet

Turning circle 38.7 feet

Steering lock to lock 2.4 to 3.4 turns (at below 6mph)

Wheels 20X8.5-inch alloys

Tires 285/50 HR mud and snow

Coefficient of drag 0.35

Performance

0-60 mph 6.88 seconds

50-70 mph 3.61 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 5.45
seconds
Top Speed Electronically
limited to 137 mph
Fuel economy EPA rated at
13/18/15 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 16 mpg in rural
country driving and 19-20
mpg on the highway at legal
speeds.

Performance is outstanding, able to move the big Lexus from a standing start to 60 mph in 6.88 seconds. Passing times are commensurate with that number as 50-70 mph comes up in 3.61 seconds on level ground and in 5.45 seconds up a 6-7 percent grade. That is getting the lead out, quickly. Throttle response is strong although I found throttle travel to be a bit long. Interestingly, when this vehicle was tested four years ago, the performance times were virtually identical with the respective numbers coming in at 6.89, 3.59 and 5.28 seconds. How's that for production consistency and keeping nano tolerances.

As you would expect, a 6,000-pound vehicle that can accelerate from 0-60 mph in under seven seconds powered by a honking, huge V-8 engine, wouldn't exactly win any awards for frugal fuel economy. LX doesn't but compared to big vehicles 40 years ago with bigger engines, the LX is remarkably fuel-efficient averaging 18.1 mpg in a 200-mile round trip from Placerville to Carson City. That trip included about a dozen full throttle passes in the passing zones. On the highway at 70 mph the LX managed 18.8 mpg. EPA numbers are 13/18/15 mpg city/highway/combined. Overall, during my 400 plus miles, I averaged about 16.8 mpg. Don't expect much more than the EPA numbers, maybe an mpg or two. Fuel capacity is a monstrous

24.6 gallons, only high limit credit cards need apply.

Handling is good. Suspension is by state of the art double wishbones up front and a four-link controlled live axle in the rear with electro/hydraulic variable suspension. Track is wide at 65 inches at each end and steering is a variable gear ratio electric power rack with a tight turning circle (for a big vehicle) of 39 feet. However, steering is on the heavy side. As the ride is super compliant and on the softer side of life, body roll is present when pushing the big Lexus in the twisties. However, massive 285/50 series rubber riding on 20X8.5-inch alloys provide intense grip allowing the big SUV wide latitude in choosing your cornering speeds. This baby goes around corners at speed with control and confidence. I surprised many sporting sedans when the road started bending.

Ride quality is extremely smooth and compliant. For a hard core serious off-road vehicle with extreme capabilities, the ride is as soft as the vehicle is rugged.

Safety is a tour de force starting with its stout construction. It feels like you are surrounded in armor-plate. With Lexus Safety Sense plus, there is just about every acronym ever. Its triple beam LED headlights turn night into day and its four-wheel, huge ventilated discs provide immense stopping power.

Inside is a scrumptious reddish-brown leather interior. It is soft, comfortable and beautiful. Instrumentation is complete with a big speedo and tach flanking a centered trip computer/info center. But the mouse controller system makes the operation of the otherwise fabulous Mark Levinson Sound System difficult. HVAC was more conventional.

Its copious interior would be dangerous at Home Depot or Lowe's. There is about 83 cubic feet of cargo behind the front seats and second seat legroom is of limo proportions. Can't say the same for the sideways folding third row seats.

When I last tested the LX570 some four years ago, it stickered for about \$90 large with most options. Now the base price is \$20 shy of \$90,000 plus the \$1,195 luxu suite on the yacht from its Japanese assembly plant. Options on my tester like its dual screen DVD system added nearly 10 grand bringing the total sticker shock to \$99,315. For that kind of money, I'll take an LC500 and move to where there is little or no snow. Wait a minute, I already ready live there.

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.