

Advanta-STAR Consumer Research on the Suzuki XL-7

2005

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Suzuki XL-7 compared with the Buick Rendezvous

Safety

To maximize occupant safety, the front seat shoulder belts of the Suzuki XL-7 have pretensioners to eliminate dangerous slack in the event of a collision. The Buick Rendezvous doesn't offer pretensioners.

Both the XL-7 and the Rendezvous have standard driver and passenger frontal airbags, height adjustable front shoulder belts, available four wheel antilock brakes and four wheel drive.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety does 40 MPH front offset crash tests on new cars. In this test, results indicate that the Suzuki XL-7 is safer than the Rendezvous:

	XL-7	Rendezvous
Overall Evaluation	GOOD	ACCEPTABLE
Structure	GOOD	ACCEPTABLE
Front Headrests	ACCEPTABLE	MARGINAL
Tibia index	.41/.38	.41/.78

(This test is not comparable to the NHTSA NCAP 35 MPH front crash test.)

Warranty

Suzuki's powertrain warranty covers the XL-7 4 years and 64000 miles longer than Buick covers the Rendezvous. Any repair needed on the engine, transmission, axles, joints or driveshafts is fully covered for 7 years and 100,000 miles. Coverage on the Rendezvous ends after only 3 years or 36,000 miles.

The XL-7's corrosion warranty is unlimited miles longer than the Rendezvous' (unlimited vs. 100,000 miles).

Reliability

For smoother operation, better efficiency and fewer moving parts, the XL-7 has an overhead cam design, rather than the old pushrod design of the 3.4 V6 in the Rendezvous.

Engine

As tested in *Motor Trend* the Suzuki XL-7 is faster than the Buick Rendezvous 3.4 V6 (automatics tested):

	XL-7	Rendezvous
Zero to 60 MPH	9.4 sec	11 sec
Quarter Mile	17 sec	18 sec
Speed in 1/4 Mile	80.6 MPH	77.5 MPH

Fuel Economy and Range

To lower fuel costs and make buying fuel easier, the Suzuki XL-7 uses regular unleaded gasoline. The Rendezvous with the 3.6 DOHC V6 engine requires premium for maximum efficiency, which can cost 25 to 50 cents more per gallon.

Environmental Friendliness

In its *Green Vehicle Guide*, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rates the Suzuki XL-7 higher (8 out of 10) than the Buick Rendezvous (6). This means the XL-7 produces up to 6.6 pounds less smog-producing pollutants than the Rendezvous every 15,000 miles.

Transmission

The XL-7 offers a 5 speed manual transmission for better acceleration, control and fuel economy. The Rendezvous doesn't offer a manual transmission.

A five-speed automatic is optional on the Suzuki XL-7, for better acceleration and lower engine speed on the highway. Only a four-speed automatic is available for the Rendezvous.

Brakes and Stopping

For better stopping power the XL-7's front brake rotors are larger than those on the Rendezvous:

	XL-7	Rendezvous	Rendezvous 4x4
Front Rotors	12.2 inches	10.8 inches	11.8 inches

The XL-7 with optional antilock brakes stops shorter than the Rendezvous with antilock brakes:

	XL-7	Rendezvous	
70 to 0 MPH	189 feet	197 feet	<i>Car and Driver</i>

Tires and Wheels

For better traction, the XL-7 has larger tires than the Rendezvous (235/60R16 vs. 215/70R16). The XL-7's tires are larger than the largest tires available on the Rendezvous (235/60R16 vs. 225/60R17).

The XL-7's tires provide better handling because they have a lower 60 series profile (height to width ratio) which provides a stiffer sidewall than the Rendezvous' standard 70 series tires.

The XL-7 has a standard full size spare tire so your trip isn't interrupted by a flat. A full size spare isn't available on the Rendezvous, it requires you to depend on a temporary spare, which limits mileage and speed before replacement.

Suspension and Handling

The XL-7 has standard front and rear gas-charged shocks for better control over choppy roads. The Rendezvous' suspension doesn't offer front gas-charged shocks.

The XL-7 LX 4x4 handles at .70 G's, while the Rendezvous CXL 4x4 pulls only .66 G's of cornering force in a *Car and Driver* skidpad test.

The XL-7 EX 4x4 goes through *Motor Trend's* slalom 5 MPH faster than the Rendezvous CXL 4x4 (62.4 vs. 57.4 MPH).

For greater off-road capability the XL-7 has a greater minimum ground clearance than the Rendezvous (7.6 vs. 7 inches), allowing the XL-7 to travel over rougher terrain without being stopped or damaged.

Chassis

The Suzuki XL-7 may be more efficient, handle and accelerate better because it weighs about 450 pounds less than the Buick Rendezvous.

To almost totally eliminate engine vibration in the passenger area, the XL-7 has liquid-filled engine mounts. The liquid helps further dampen engine harshness. The Rendezvous uses conventional solid rubber engine mounts.

Passenger Space

The XL-7 offers optional seating for 7 passengers; the Rendezvous can only carry up to 6.

The XL-7 has .9 inches more front legroom, 1.4 inches more third row headroom and 1.1 inches more third row shoulder room than the Rendezvous.

Towing

The XL-7's standard towing capacity is much higher than the Rendezvous' (3000 vs. 2000 pounds).

Servicing Ease

The engine in the XL-7 is mounted longitudinally (North-South), instead of sideways, as in the Rendezvous. This makes it easier to service and maintain, because there are no rear spark plugs and the accessory belts are in front.

The battery on the Rendezvous has side-mounted terminals, which make giving or receiving a jump-start very difficult. The XL-7 has top mount battery posts.

Ergonomics

The XL-7's standard automatic temperature control maintains the temperature you set, automatically controlling fan speed, vents and temperature to maintain a consistent, comfortable environment. The Rendezvous CX doesn't offer automatic air conditioning.

The XL-7's standard steering wheel mounted cruise control is close at hand. The Rendezvous' standard cruise control is on an over-crowded turn signal stalk.

Economic Advantages

Insurance will cost less for the XL-7 owner. *The Car Book* rates the XL-7 with a number 5 insurance rate while the Rendezvous is rated higher at a number 10 rate.

The XL-7 will cost the buyer less in the long run because of its superior resale value. *Kiplinger's* estimates that the XL-7 will retain a greater percentage of its original price after two and four years than the Rendezvous.

	XL-7	Rendezvous
Four Year	33%	32%
Two Year	47%	45%

The XL-7 is less expensive to operate than the Rendezvous because of its higher resale value and lower insurance rate. Typical repairs cost less on the XL-7 than the Rendezvous, including \$36 less for front brake pads and \$48 less for front struts.

Suzuki XL-7 compared with the Buick Rainier

Safety

For enhanced safety, the front and middle seat shoulder belts of the Suzuki XL-7 are height adjustable to accommodate a wide variety of driver and passenger heights. A better fit can prevent injuries and the increased comfort also encourages passengers to buckle up. The Buick Rainier doesn't offer height adjustable seat belts.

Both the XL-7 and the Rainier have standard driver and passenger frontal airbags, front seatbelt pretensioners, available four wheel antilock brakes and four wheel drive.

Warranty

Suzuki's powertrain warranty covers the XL-7 4 years and 64000 miles longer than Buick covers the Rainier. Any repair needed on the engine, transmission, axles, joints or driveshafts is fully covered for 7 years and 100,000 miles. Coverage on the Rainier ends after only 3 years or 36,000 miles.

The XL-7's corrosion warranty is unlimited miles longer than the Rainier's (unlimited vs. 100,000 miles).

Reliability

For smoother operation, better efficiency and fewer moving parts, the XL-7 has an overhead cam design, rather than the old pushrod design of the 5.3 V8 in the Rainier.

Fuel Economy and Range

The Suzuki XL-7 gets better fuel mileage than the Rainier:

		XL-7	Rainier
4x2	V6/Auto	18 city/22 hwy	16 city/21 hwy
4x4	V6/Auto	17 city/22 hwy	15 city/20 hwy

Environmental Friendliness

In its *Green Vehicle Guide*, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rates the Suzuki XL-7 higher (8 out of 10) than the Buick Rainier (3 to 8). This means the XL-7 produces up to 30 pounds less smog-producing pollutants than the Rainier every 15,000 miles.