**Luxury Off Roader: Infiniti QX80**

Like [Lexus](https://www.lexus.com/) and [Acura](https://www.acura.com/), [Infiniti](https://www.infinitiusa.com/) has been around for quite a while now and they are no longer new players in the game. What does thirty years of experience building luxury vehicles stack up in the new Infiniti QX80?

To celebrate 30 years of Infiniti for 2020 Infiniti is offering the Edition 30 Package throughout it’s lineup. In the case of the QX80 Luxe we received for review the package includes 22-inch forged dark aluminum alloy wheels, black mesh grill, dark chrome exterior trim, black mirror caps, additional badges, graphite headliner, and 1st row illuminated EDITION 30 kick plates. When paired with the Moonstone White paint the package made for a beautiful vehicle.

Infiniti brought the current generation QX80 to the U.S. for the 2011 model year as the QX56. Since then there have been some body and interior updates but for the most part the QX80 has remained the same. Since it’s release the only engine available has been the 5.6 liter V8 which puts out 400 hp and 413 ft-lbs of torque. It has also been paired with a 7-speed automatic transmission from the beginning. Both perform very well despite their age.

**Outside**

From the front the large black mesh grill and lower facia both with a dark chrome surround looks has a luxurious look. All exterior lights are LED with the daytime running lights forming brackets around the headlights. Low in the front bumper are the foglights with three LEDs each. The foglights are just extra driving lights as they can’t be on without the headlights being on.

From the side it’s clear just how big the QX80 is. On the front quarter panels there are vents that open up into the fenders. As far as we can tell they don’t actually cool anything, but the fact that they are actually open to the inside indicates that there may actually be some function to them. The 22-inch dark aluminum wheels are gorgeous and work because the stock tires are nearly 33-inches tall. If the tires were any smaller there wouldn’t be enough sidewall for a decent ride. The running boards and door handles have additional lighting under them to make it easy to see around the vehicle at night.

On the rear the tail lights are on the quarter panels and the liftgate. Like the Armada the liftgate is one piece and the glass cannot be opened separately. There are additional lights and reflectors in the lower bumper on the rear to make the QX80 more visible at night. The rear bumper sticks out quite a ways and looks a little out of place. It does have a nice spot to stand when accessing the roof though.

**Interior**

Inside the QX80 is nicely appointed and feels more modern for 2020 than it has in the previous years. Our test model was equipped with the new two screen layout. Both screens are clear and the system works well. The main screen on top is almost exclusively used for navigation and cameras. The surround view camera system is clear and works well. One nice feature is that the camera display automatically turns on when the proximity sensors detect that an object is getting close. It also flashes yellow or red on the screen with an overlay of where the sensor is picking up the object.

The lower screen is used for the vehicle settings, climate, and auto system. It is just as clear as the top screen but is better protected from glare due to its location. The new media system now includes Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Despite having two screens there are still plenty of physical buttons to control the climate and media features.

There is an optional fridge in the front center console that can be accessed from both the front and middle row seats. There is a small button on the back that opens the console lid forward making it easy for the middle row seats to get cooled items. One problem we had with the console is that it sits a little low and makes it difficult to comfortably rest an arm on while driving.

Moving into the second row there is plenty of room for adults to sit comfortably. The captains’ chairs are as comfortable as they are spacious. The center console in the second row is large and very deep with two cup holders, but feels almost like an afterthought. In the Luxe trim the middle seats don’t have standard seat heaters but that is optional.

Accessing the third row is easy when the second row seats are open. The second row seats fold forward to get out of the way for rear seat access. The problem with this system is that the second row can’t fold or otherwise move out of the way if there is a car seat or other item on the seat. Many competitors have second row seats that tilt and slide or can even just slide forward making entry into the third row possible even when the second row seats are occupied. The other way to do this is to not have a center console in the middle row, so that passengers can walk between the seats to get to the third row.

In the third row there is enough space for two adults to sit comfortably. The biggest issue with adults in the third row is the same as mentioned above; the second row seats don’t slide forward. This can make the foot and knee room a little tight.

**Driving**

The first thing that caught our attention when driving the QX80 was how quiet it is. When compared to the Armada the QX80 has significantly more sound dampening. The Luxe package doesn’t include Nissan/Infiniti’s HBMC (hydraulic body motion control), which has better wheel articulation when offroad and less body lean on road. The system is similar to Toyota’s KDSS (kinetic dynamic suspension system), both use hydraulics connected to stiff anti-sway bars and adjust the hydraulic pressure as needed.

Nissan used the 5.6 liter v8 in FIA GT1 racing and it shows. When going full throttle the engine produces a glorious symphony. In the QX80 it’s 400 hp and 413 ft-lbs of torque is easily enough to get up to speed or pass when needed. Due to the high torque, the transmission doesn’t have to downshift when making speed adjustments. It is always nice to be able to add a little throttle to gain speed without downshifting.

**Offroad**

In many other parts of the world the Nissan Armada is sold as the Nissan Patrol. It is an off road capable SUV and is even offered with a locking rear differential and rock mode. That is the same for the QX80, but here in the United States we don’t get those options.

Despite not having the rear locker or more aggressive rock mode for the traction control system, the US version of the QX80 is still a very capable offroader. There are three options for the 4wd system; Auto, 4wd High, and 4wd Low. In Auto mode the 4wd system will engage once wheel slip is detected, and in our testing we found that it works very well. Both 4wd High and 4wd Low lock the center differential to split power 50:50 front to rear. To transfer power side to side the QX80 applies brake pressure on the spinning wheel(s).

In our testing of the system sometimes it took quite a while to apply the brake to the spinning wheel(s) but it made every climb we attempted. WIth the rock mode programming available in other countries the system would have likely responded faster and in a more controlled manner. The biggest limiting factor we ran into though was clearance issues. The running boards and bumpers all hang down fairly low limiting approach, departure, and breakover angles.

**Pricing**

The Luxe version is the base model for the QX80. With 4wd it has a starting price of $69,850. The Edition 30 Package adds $3,500 and includes the dark 22” rims along with other dark accents, a few badges here and there and the graphite headliner. Our tester came in Moonstone White which is an additional $595. It also included all season floor mats and cargo area protector for $355 and the radiant exterior welcome lighting for $455. Add in the $1,395 destination charges and the total is $76,150. The Lexus [LX 570](https://www.lexus.com/models/LX) has a base price of $86k, the [Cadillac Escalade](https://www.cadillac.com/suvs/escalade) starts at $75k and the [Lincoln Navigator](https://www.lincoln.com/luxury-suvs/navigator/) starts at $76k. This places the QX80 in the realm of its peers as far as pricing goes. The Escalade and Navigator have better on road dynamics and the LX 570 has better off road ability. This places the QX80 in the middle of the class.

**Conclusion**

Overall the QX80 is a great vehicle with few real competitors in the luxury market. The only other luxury vehicles with a low range transfer case are the [Lexus LX570](https://www.car-revs-daily.com/2016/08/07/lx570/) and [Range Rover](https://www.landroverusa.com/vehicles/range-rover/index.html). It doesn’t drive and handle as well on road as the Navigator and Escalade, but it outperforms those vehicles offroad. Is it worth the price? That’s for you to decide.