

Used Suzuki Jimny inspection checklist

What to check on a used Jimny or Jimny XL, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.



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COVERS **JB43** 1998–2018 **JB74** 2018 on **Jimny XL** 2024 on

☐ **Tick** it if it's fine. **Cross** it if it isn't, and note what you found so you can price it into your offer.

! **Safety critical:** affects how safely it drives or protects you in a crash. Best to have a mechanic check it before you buy.

\$ **Negotiate:** costs money to fix, from wear to major repairs. Get a quote and take it off the price.

0 Before you go

- ☐ **Get the VIN and rego** before you travel. A seller who won't share them is a red flag on its own.
- ☐ **Ask how it was used:** city runabout, beach driving, rock crawling or towed behind a motorhome? **Hard off-road use** wears a Jimny much faster than town kilometres.
- ☐ **Ask for a list of modifications** and their paperwork: lift kit, bigger tyres, bar, snorkel, roof rack, winch.
- ☐ **Ask for the engine to be cold**, and bring a torch, gloves and something to lie on.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Panels and paint.** Uneven gaps or paint on trim (crash repair), scrapes low on the body (off-roading), hail dimples on the roof and bonnet. **\$**
- ☐ **Side-opening rear door.** It shouldn't sag, and should close cleanly. The spare wheel's weight on the door wears the hinges, more so with a bigger tyre fitted. **\$**
- ☐ **Bullbar** (if fitted) is made to work with the airbags and is solidly mounted. **!**
- ☐ **Rust:** wheel arches, sills, door bottoms and around the windscreen and rear door. **\$**
- ☐ **Off-road wear.** Stone-chipped paint and windscreen, cracked lights, dust or sand in door seals and the engine bay. **\$**
- ☐ **VIN plate** (in a door frame or under the bonnet) is there, untouched, and matches the papers.

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil** between the dipstick marks, brown not black. **\$**
Old, dark oil means servicing has been skipped.

- ☐ **Coolant** at the mark and brightly coloured. Rusty or oily coolant, or regular top-ups, needs a mechanic. **\$**
- ☐ **Brake fluid** (small tank at the back of the engine bay) is clear to light amber, not dark. **\$**
- ☐ **Water crossings.** Silt or mud in the air filter box or around the engine. **\$**
- ☐ **Extra wiring** for lights, a fridge or UHF radio is neat and fused. Messy wiring causes faults and fires. **\$**
- ☐ **Leaks.** Wet oil on the engine is a leak. A freshly degreased engine on an older car can be hiding one. **\$**
- ☐ **Cold start.** Starts easily and settles to a smooth idle. A rattle for the first few seconds, or smoke, needs a mechanic. **\$**

3 Underbody and 4x4

- ☐ **Chassis** (the frame under the car). Kinks, cracks or fresh welds, especially near the towbar and suspension mounts. **!**
- ☐ **Beach use.** Sand or salt packed into the frame rusts it from the inside. Surface rust is normal; flaking or holes are not. **!**
- ☐ **Suspension.** Oily shock absorbers, sagging springs, cracked mounts. **Lifted Jimnys wear these faster.** **\$**
- ☐ **Front end.** Split rubber boots behind the wheels (grease sprayed around) and loose steering parts. Grab each front wheel and rock it. **\$**
- ☐ **Oil leaks** from the axles, transfer case and drive parts underneath. **\$**
- ☐ **Underbody dents.** Crushed guards, a dented fuel tank or bent tie rods show hard off-road use. **\$**
- ☐ **Tyres** match the sticker in the door frame (or are engineered), wear evenly and are under ~6 years old. Check the spare too. **\$**

! **Stay safe.** Never go under a car held up only by a jack, and never open the radiator or coolant cap on a hot engine. Keep hands, hair and loose clothing clear of fans and belts when the engine is running, and do checks under the bonnet with it switched off where you can. On the test drive, hold a current licence, confirm the car is registered and insured, obey road rules, and only brake hard when the road behind is clear. Meet in a safe, public-facing place, take someone with you, and don't carry large amounts of cash to a viewing.

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Key to "on": engine, ABS, airbag and 4WD lights come on, then go out once running. A light that stays on needs explaining.

!
- ☐ **Water and dust.** Damp carpet, a stained headlining or fine dust inside. Check holes drilled for racks, a snorkel or aerials.

\$
- ☐ **Rear seats** fold and lock; the cargo floor isn't worn through. Five-door XL: rear doors open, shut and lock cleanly.

\$
- ☐ **Seatbelts** pull out fully, retract and latch, with no fraying.

!
- ☐ **Wear matches the kilometres.** Seat bolster, steering wheel, carpet under mats; screw holes from removed radios.

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- ☐ **Air con** blows cold; heater gets hot. Screen, camera and windows work. Count the keys.

\$

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Manual.** In 4th at 50 km/h, floor it: if revs rise faster than speed, the clutch is slipping. Gears go in without crunching.

\$
- ☐ **Automatic.** Smooth changes with no slipping, flare or thump into Drive or Reverse.

\$

- ☐ **4WD.** On gravel or grass, select 4WD high, then low range: no clunks, and the 4WD lights stop flashing. A light that keeps flashing means it hasn't engaged.

\$
- ☐ **Steering and brakes.** No wandering or violent shaking through the wheel after bumps; firm pedal, stops straight.

!
- ☐ **Highway.** Holds 100 km/h without vibration through the wheel. Big tyres and lifts make this worse.

\$
- ☐ **Noises.** A hum that grows with speed (wheel bearing), or a whine as you accelerate or lift off (diffs).

\$
- ☐ **Afterwards,** check for new drips, a steady temperature gauge and no hot smells.

\$

6 Documentation

- ☐ **Seller's ID** matches the rego papers, and the VIN matches on the papers, VIN plate and chassis.
- ☐ **Modification paperwork:** certificates for any lift or bigger tyres your state requires, and the insurer told.
- ☐ **Service history.** Oil changes on time. Hard off-road use should mean extra diff and gearbox servicing.

\$
- ☐ **Flat towing.** If it's been towed behind a motorhome, ask how, and for how many kilometres.

\$
- ☐ **Warranty.** A newer Jimny may still be under Suzuki's new-car warranty. Check the start date and that servicing kept it valid.

What this guide can't tell you about the Jimny you're looking at

9+

recalls on Jimnys built since 2005*

14

common faults reported on Jimnys built since 2005*

Money owing, stolen or a write-off?

A tidy car can hide all three.

What's each fault worth?

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* Shufti analysis, October 2026, of official recall notices, complaints lodged by vehicle owners with vehicle safety regulators, and independent reviews and owner forums. Faults are counted when two or more independent sources report them.

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Page 2 of 2