

Used Suzuki Vitara inspection checklist

What to check on a used Vitara, 2WD or AllGrip, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.



SHUFTI
shufti.com.au

COVERS **LY 2015–2018** **LY facelift 2019 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.
- ☐ **Know what you're looking at:** regular or turbo petrol; 2WD or AllGrip AWD; manual or auto. AWD and turbo checks below are marked.
- ☐ **Ask how it was used:** city, dirt roads, beach or towing?
- ☐ **Ask for the engine to be cold,** go in daylight, and bring a torch, paper towel and a friend.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Panels and paint.** Uneven gaps, mismatched colour or overspray on seals and trim mean crash repair. **\$**
- ☐ **Hail and dents.** Look along the roof, bonnet and tailgate at a low angle to the light. **\$**
- ☐ **Bumpers and wheels.** Parking scrapes and kerbed alloys. A badly kerbed wheel can be bent, causing vibration. **\$**
- ☐ **Dirt-road wear.** Stone-chipped lower doors, scraped bumpers and sills; red dust in the door seals. **\$**
- ☐ **Lights and glass.** All lights work, no condensation inside; windscreen free of chips in the driver's view. **\$**
- ☐ **Doors and tailgate** open, shut and lock cleanly, with the remote and the key. **\$**
- ☐ **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. Turbo engines don't forgive low or old oil. **\$**

- ☐ **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. **\$**
- ☐ **Belts, hoses and battery.** No cracked belts or swollen hoses; clean battery terminals and a date sticker. **\$**
- ☐ **Leaks.** Wet oil on the engine or turbo pipes is a leak. **\$**
- ☐ **Water crossings.** Silt or mud in the air filter box or around the engine. **\$**
- ☐ **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 wheels

- ☐ **Tyres** above the wear bars, worn evenly and under ~6 years old. AWD models need four matching tyres; mismatched ones strain the AWD system. **\$**
- ☐ **AWD:** no oil leaking from the rear axle or drive parts underneath. **\$**
- ☐ **Rust and crash repairs.** Rust on the floor or around the suspension; bent metal, fresh welds or new black coating in one spot. **!**
- ☐ **Beach use.** Sand or salt packed under the car rusts it from the inside. Surface rust is normal; flaking or holes are not. **!**
- ☐ **Scrapes and drips.** Dents underneath from dirt roads; drips where it's normally parked. **\$**
- ☐ **Suspension.** Push down on each corner: it should bounce back once and settle. Oily shock absorbers leak. **\$**
- ☐ **Brakes and exhaust.** Deep grooves or a raised edge on the discs; heavy rust or loose heat shields. **\$**

! 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": every dash light comes on, then goes out once running. An airbag, brake, engine or AWD warning that stays on needs explaining.

!
- ☐ **Water leaks.** Damp carpet, a wet boot floor or a stained headlining. On a sunroof car, a damp headlining can mean blocked drains.

\$
- ☐ **Wear matches the kilometres.** Steering wheel, gear knob, pedals and driver's seat bolster.

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

!
- ☐ **Air con** blows cold within a minute or two, without a musty smell; heater gets hot.

\$
- ☐ **Electrics.** Screen, Bluetooth/CarPlay, reversing camera, windows and sunroof. Count the keys.

\$

5 Test drive

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

\$
- ☐ **Manual.** In 4th at 50 km/h, floor it: if revs rise faster than speed, the clutch is slipping.

\$
- ☐ **Turbo: power.** Pulls strongly with no flat spots, sudden power loss or smoke.

\$

- ☐ **AWD.** Try each drive mode on the dial; in a car park, drive slowly on full lock both ways: no clunking or juddering.

\$
- ☐ **Brakes.** Firm pedal; stops straight with no pulling, pulsing or grinding.

!
- ☐ **Steering and suspension.** Drives straight; no knocks over bumps. A hum that grows with speed is often a wheel bearing.

\$
- ☐ **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 and VIN plate.
- ☐ **Service history.** Logbook stamped on time, with receipts. Ask when the AWD and gearbox fluids were last changed, if ever.

\$
- ☐ **Modifications in writing.** Lift kits, bigger tyres and tunes, with engineering sign-off where your state requires it.
- ☐ **Warranty.** A newer Vitara may still be under Suzuki's new-car warranty. Check the start date and that servicing kept it valid.
- ☐ **Rego and roadworthy.** Rego checked online; roadworthy supplied if your state requires one on sale.

\$

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

6+

recalls on Vitaras built since 2015*

6

common faults reported on Vitaras built since 2015*

Money owing, stolen or a write-off?

A tidy car can hide all three.

What's each fault worth?

Shufti's negotiation coach turns it into leverage.

A Shufti inspection covers all of that, plus:

✓

Guided checks for the exact car you're inspecting

✓

PPSR and government recall checks included

✓

Crosschecks 3M+ recalls and owner complaints

✓

Spots issues from your photos and audio

✓

Test drive routes with turn-by-turn navigation

✓

Negotiation coach with repair cost estimates

Get Shufti on your mobile now.

Not sure yet? Try the free sample vehicle in Shufti. No sign-up needed.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Disclaimer. Shufti is not affiliated with or endorsed by Suzuki; Suzuki and Vitara are trademarks of Suzuki Motor Corporation. Figures are counts from Shufti's analysis of official records and published reports, not a statement that any particular vehicle is affected. This checklist is general information only and is not professional, mechanical, legal or financial advice. It covers common checks, not every possible fault, and a car can pass every item here and still have problems. It is not a substitute for a pre-purchase inspection by a qualified mechanic, which is worth considering before you buy, especially if anything tagged Safety critical turns up. Repair costs vary widely; get your own quotes. Roadworthy, registration and transfer rules differ by state, so check with your state road authority. Private sales generally don't come with the consumer guarantees that apply when you buy from a dealer. You use this checklist at your own risk and, to the extent permitted by law, Shufti accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury arising from its use.

* 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.
© 2026 Shufti. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc. Google Play is a trademark of Google LLC.

Page 2 of 2