

2011 Porsche Cayenne

Porsche followers know the company rarely makes major styling changes to existing cars and the 2011 Cayenne SUV is no exception. Slightly longer, wider and lower it gets many of the styling cues (LED lighting, wraparound taillights, contoured hood) of the Porsche Panamera and looks better planted on the road, more sleek wagon than boxy crossover.

The Cayenne cabin has received more substantive revision, again borrowing from the Panamera. Instruments now mirror other Porsches with five overlapping gauges dominated by a central tachometer, with a new graphic display in an adjacent ring for information. The center console climbs from the armrest to meet the dash like a luxury sport sedan, the touch-screen for navigation and so on closer to line of sight and a multifunction gauge in the Sport-Chrono space top center. White-on-black switchgear covers central real estate, while most cabin trim, including massive vertical vents, appears heavy aluminum. The key, shaped as an aero-car with red indicator as the windshield goes left of the wheel in Porsche fashion.

Grab handles on the center console are now mirrored as door pulls, and interior fabrics run the gamut to glove-soft leather and suede headliners. The split rear seat slides six inches, reclines slightly, and although it accommodates three it is contoured in favor of two passengers. Seating resembles that in the Panamera, and folding the rear makes for 62 cubic feet of cargo space. On some models a spare tire may be in the cargo area, cutting space.

That's because of a new Cayenne hybrid model that places the battery pack where a spare would normally fit. Dr. Ferdinand Porsche built a gasoline-electric hybrid 107 years ago but this is Porsche's first production hybrid. Developed with VW, which uses the same system on their Touareg, the Cayenne Hybrid S matches a supercharged 3-liter Audi-sourced V6 with electric motor for system output of 380 hp, 428 lb-ft of torque from idle, performance just behind a V8 Cayenne and we estimate EPA ratings of 25/21 mpg.

The 2011 Porsche Cayenne comes standard with a six-speed manual and 300-hp V6; an eight-speed automatic is optional. The 2011 Cayenne S gets a 400-hp V8, and the 2011 Cayenne Turbo a 510-hp twin-turbo V8, all of them matched with big brakes and all-wheel drive. Both coil and air suspension are offered, as well as adaptive dampers, active roll bars and an active rear differential. Other upgrades will include active cruise control, a 1,000-watt sound system, and multiple choices in wheels, paints and leathers.

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