



The Ford Ranger XLT is a bold, versatile pickup built to deliver power, comfort and reliability across both city roads and tough terrain. PHOTO/ROLAND D NASASIRA

Ford's new Ranger XLT is built for Ugandan roads

The 2025 Ford Ranger XLT stands out as a versatile pickup built for Uganda's varied road conditions, combining power, safety and fuel efficiency to handle city traffic, highways and rough suburban roads with confidence.

BY ROLAND D NASASIRA

The 2025 Ford Ranger XLT has officially arrived in Uganda, offering three key features that today's drivers increasingly prioritise: safety, fuel efficiency, and comfort.

Last week, I had the chance to take it for a real-world test drive, starting from the dealership at Kitgum House on Jinja Road. My route took me through the busy streets of Kampala, onto the Entebbe Expressway, and back. The goal was straightforward: to evaluate its high-speed stability, cabin comfort, and the effectiveness of its latest safety technologies.

I drove on Yusuf Lule Road through Mulago, then connected to the Northern Bypass before joining the Entebbe Expressway down to Imperial Mall in Entebbe. For the return trip, I chose the older, more textured Entebbe Road, passing through Kajjansi, Munyonyo, Buziga, Konge, and Nsambya before

looping back to the dealership.

Bold exterior styling

The Ranger XLT carries a bold, muscular presence that feels inspired by larger American-style pickups. Its wide front stance, prominent grille, and signature C-clamp LED headlights give it a commanding road presence that is hard to ignore.

At the centre of its honeycomb grille sits the familiar Ford badge, while the rear is fitted with halogen tail lamps and integrated parking sensors.

The pickup comes with four front and four rear parking sensors that emit audible warnings when the vehicle edges too close to obstacles. In tight urban parking spaces, the alerts can feel a bit persistent, but they play a clear role in improving safety.

Its elevated ride height is matched with long side steps beneath the doors, making entry and exit easier. Unlocking the vehicle also triggers the side mirrors to unfold automatically, a small but satisfying touch that enhances its premium feel.

The Ranger's tough steel body construction, integrated rear bumper steps, and a wide cargo bed, ready for a protective cover, make it well-suited for everything from city errands to rural haulage of farm produce.

Modern technology inside

Inside, the Ranger XLT blends practicality with modern digital conven-

ience. It features a 10-speed automatic transmission with manual override, giving drivers the option to take control when needed.

In "M" mode, gear changes can be selected manually, allowing the driver to adjust performance depending on terrain, useful when tackling sandy tracks, steep inclines or loaded conditions that demand more pulling power.

The pickup also offers selectable drive modes: 2H, 4H and 4L, allowing the vehicle to adapt seamlessly between highways, slippery roads and rough off-road terrain.

At the centre of the dashboard sits a 10.1-inch infotainment touchscreen supporting wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, alongside FM radio. The sound system delivers clear, well-balanced audio that requires little adjustment for everyday listening.

Strong highway performance

One of the standout strengths of the Ranger XLT is its 2.0-litre turbo diesel engine. Producing about 405Nm of torque, it responds with reassuring urgency the moment the accelerator is pressed, particularly when merging into fast-moving traffic.

On the Northern Bypass and stretches of the Entebbe Expressway, the Ranger built speed smoothly and con-

VERDICT

The 2025 Ford Ranger XLT strikes a well-balanced mix of toughness, safety and modern refinement. It feels composed on highways, capable on rough roads, and comfortable enough for daily urban use.

While its ride can feel firm over Kampala's harsher road sections, it compensates with strong engine performance, advanced safety systems, impressive fuel efficiency and a cabin that feels modern and well thought out. For motorists seeking a versatile pickup that can handle farm runs, long-distance travel and city driving with equal confidence, the Ranger XLT remains one of the strongest contenders in Uganda's growing double-cabin market.

Identifying, making overtaking feel controlled rather than forced, something not all pickups in its class manage with ease.

At higher speeds, stability remains impressive. The gas-pressurised front and rear shock absorbers help keep the vehicle composed, distributing weight evenly through corners and long straights alike.

The three-point seatbelts also tighten progressively as speed increases, adding an extra layer of occupant protection. A persistent warning system ensures no one forgets to buckle up.

Safety features that stand out

The Ranger XLT comes equipped with a suite of driver-assist technologies aimed at reducing risk and boosting confidence.

Blind-spot monitoring alerts the driver to vehicles approaching from hard-to-see angles, while lane-keeping assist gently warns when the vehicle begins to drift out of its lane.

A tyre pressure monitoring system continuously tracks tyre health, instantly alerting the driver via the digital cluster if pressure drops in any tyre.

Inside, the cabin is generously spaced, offering ample legroom for both front and rear passengers. Dual-zone climate control allows independent temperature settings, adding comfort on longer journeys.

Where the ride feels less refined

However, the Ranger is not without its compromises.

While its suspension shines on highways and during high-speed cornering, it feels noticeably firmer when dealing with sharp urban imperfections, especially the double and quadruple speed humps common in Kampala suburbs such as Buziga.

It handles corners with confidence, but passengers will still feel some of the harshness transmitted through uneven city roads.

This is largely expected, given that pickups are engineered with stronger rear suspension systems designed for load-carrying and durability rather than plush urban comfort.

Fuel economy

The 80-litre fuel tank makes the Ranger XLT a strong long-distance companion.

On steady highway cruising at around 80km/h, it delivers approximately 16 kilometres per litre, giving it a theoretical range of well over 1,000 kilometres on a full tank under ideal conditions.

In stop-and-go urban traffic, however, consumption drops to around 10 kilometres per litre due to idling and frequent acceleration.

Shs250m
THE COST OF
THE CAR