

Test Location: Pune

Photography: Gaurav S Thombre

# Mahindra Thar Daybreak

A Thar, on steroids



THAR DAYBREAK

**I**’LL LET YOU IN on a trade secret. If you want more engagement on social media; more likes, shares and retweets (and who doesn’t?) get yourself a Thar or an RE Himalayan and post the hell out of it. I’m not sure what the deal is, but anything you post on these two off-roaders, even an inane good morning, gets you a fresh mountain of followers. The cynical will think it’s their social media teams exploiting some loophole, but I’d like to think it’s an indication of genuine excitement around off-roaders these days. More

of us want to get out – out of our offices, out of our homes, out of the bloody malls – and discover the outdoors, even if it is only to post pictures that’ll get us more likes on Facebook. And if you want to break the Internet, you need a Thar Daybreak. Not that you’ll guess it from the followers I have on Twitter but my daily driver is a Thar. And despite being as stock as they come, it gets a lot of attention. Motorists keep their distance so driving in town is easy. Today, it’s even easier as I am sitting much, much higher up and the road is clearing out like Moses parting the

Red Sea. I suppose seeing a winch eating up your rear view mirrors is reason to take cover. Those of a muddy bent will recall the Daybreak from the Auto Expo, a concept we recommended be christened the Chack-O after our very own #OffRoadChacko (for services to off-roading including living – daily! – with a rally-prepped, non-airconditioned SuperThar and drowning Mahindra’s limited-edition Legend, among others). It also is in step with Mahindra’s naming convention of everything ending with an O but our suggestion was politely turned down. Anyway the

## If you want to break the Internet you need a Thar Daybreak

Chack-O, sorry Daybreak, has now broken cover and it’s available for you to buy. I’m not kidding, you can call up Mahindra Customisation, send them your new (or old) Thar and in two months you’ll have a Daybreak raising your social media standing. So what is the Daybreak? The first thing that catches your eye are the tyres, an insane 37 (that’s no typo – it’s 37 inches!). These Maxxis Trepadors are the same size as those seen on the RFC-spec Force Gurkha and it works off-road, no question about that. To accommodate the (excavator-sized) tyres, the

suspension has been suitably and appropriately beefed and raised (by an inch and a half) so you still have the same turning circle without the tyres rubbing against any body parts as would have happened if this were some half-assed custom job. On the mechanical front though, the Thar’s 2.5-litre CRDe motor is carried over and makes 105bhp and 242Nm of torque. This is done for two reasons: firstly, to ensure it is approved by the RTO as a road legal vehicle and the second is to make sure it is covered by the insurance policy, an added bonus for customers. On the outside, absolutely

everything has been re-engineered and redesigned. The bonnet is around two inches wider to incorporate a massive scoop and the A-pillar had been modified so that the windscreen can flip down, just like in the original Willys. The front gets a wider grille in gloss black finish to contrast the matte grey paintjob of the rest of the SUV. The headlights are an interesting projector headlamp setup with DRLs that, in somebody’s rear-view mirror, looks like the death star. And there is an off-road oriented bumper mounted with a winch and fog lamps. At the back there are

chromed twin exhaust pipes that exit much higher to genuinely aid the off-road and wading abilities (along with the *de-rigueur* snorkel), a new bumper and LED tail lamps. It also sports a cute set of half-cut doors, wing mirrors mounted as one would see on a truck and auxiliary lights on top of the windscreen. The rear opening has been welded shut (and obviously strengthened) to mount the large spare wheel centrally instead of the slight offset on the stock Thar. Step inside and you will be surprised at what the cabin has to offer. There is a touchscreen

infotainment system which doubles up as a rear parking display, four marine speakers that can handle splashes when you go off-roading (see, somebody has been giving it serious thought), Sparco rally seats with four-point harnesses, a high-lift jack, and a dual-tone leather finished dashboard.

While the Daybreak is bulky and big, it does not drive the way you think it would. It is not slow, sluggish or cumbersome. Once you get used to its dimensions, it is in fact pretty smooth and easy to drive when ambling about. It is also the only Thar in the world where you can't hear the engine. The tyres create such a ruckus it drowns out everything, and also make the steering wheel shudder as if it has its fingers in a live electrical socket. And the bumpy ride is even more bumpy on tarmac.

But, if you recall, the Thar hates tar. Slotted in four-low and throttle gently feathered, the Daybreak will crawl over rocks and claw through the slush with ease, kicking up chunks of mud the size of small

homes. The massive wheels and increased clearance gets the Daybreak over anything, including small homes; and the improved approach and departure angles and grip on slush make it utterly mental. But we will have more on its off-roading prowess in our OFF ROAD magazine next month, so stay tuned.

The important bit – how much does it cost? Mahindra's in-house customisation arm will relieve you of ₹9.6 lakh, plus tax, plus a donor Thar. If you want a hard top, it's an additional ₹1.5 lakh. And the makeover will take two months. If the Daybreak is too in your face (What? You don't want to be popular on Instagram?) Mahindra Customisation also offers more subtle options among the five kits for the Thar, four for the Scorpio and six for the Bolero.

And now that I've revealed the best social media trick in the book, I leave you to multiply your followers on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Snapchat. You can thank me later. ✉

**Ryan Lee** (@ryanlee814)

## The massive wheels get the Daybreak over anything, including small homes



**1:** The front gets an off-road bumper with a heavy-duty winch.

**2:** The LED tail lamps look pretty cool. **3:** The Daybreak gets Sparco rally seats with a four-point harness

### Specification

Engine	Transmission	Power	Torque	Weight	0-100kmph	Top speed	Price (estimated)
In-line 4-cyl, 2498cc, turbo diesel	5-speed manual	105bhp @ 3800rpm	247Nm @ 1800-2000rpm	NA	NA	NA	Donor car + ₹9.6 lakh + tax

➕ Massive road presence, excellent fit and finish for the customisation kit ➖ Large dimensions need getting used to, poor rear visibility

**evo rating** ★★★★★

