

PRICE RS 69.53 LAKH (EX-SHOWROOM, INDIA) ON SALE NOW

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE CONVERTIBLE

The Baby Rangie's already immense style quotient is only amplified when the top is lopped off, and it's still surprisingly practical.



FIRST VERDICT

A unique mix of style, go-anywhere ability and top-down motoring.



SO GOOD

- Exterior styling
- Practicality

NO GOOD

- Gearbox

Yes, of course, SUVs can be convertibles – just ask the Jeep Wrangler, Mahindra Thar and several other hardcore 4x4s. But can a *luxury* SUV – the kind that people buy for their style, prestige and sumptuous interiors – be a convertible as well?

Range Rover now has a convertible version of the Evoque that seems to be a great candidate to prove that it can.

It looks good. The front is the same, sexy Evoque face as before, and our test car in white makes perfect use of the available 'Black Design Pack' accessories. It is kind of unusual to see the rear deck of a convertible so high off the ground, but take a step back, and you'll likely agree, the Evoque's proportions, with its wheels pushed out to the corners, lend themselves quite well to a convertible body style. It looks considerably better with the roof folded, though.

Inside, there's soft Windsor leather everywhere, and even tasteful contrast-stitching in places. There's lots of brushed aluminium too, with only a few instances of hard plastic – notably



Though it looks better roof down, it still turns heads with it up.



Boot will easily take two weekend bags; plus there's a spare.



It's surprisingly roomy in the back seat, headroom aside.



Touchscreen well featured, but starting to feel a bit dated.



Folded roof doesn't fit flush with body; mechanism exposed.

in the back seat – to speak of.

Yes, there's a back seat, and it's a surprisingly good one, considering how small this car is. It's great for two kids, and not bad for two medium-size adults either. What's more, they've managed to give this car a 251-litre boot, which is good for two weekend bags, despite also housing the folding roof, the mechanicals of an AWD system and a space-saver spare tyre.

Equipment? There's quite a bit of it, like auto LED headlamps, auto wipers, a 660W, 12-speaker

Meridian hi-fi system, parking assist, a heads-up display and powered front seats with memory. However, though the InControl Pro touchscreen works well, this system is starting to feel dated now. There's also no Android Auto or Apple CarPlay.

The convertible Range Rover Evoque is powered exclusively by the new 2.0-litre Ingenium petrol engine that we first saw in the Velar. However, in this car, it makes a bit less power and torque at 240hp and 340Nm. It's a good engine, with a strong hit of power and an immense mid-range. In its other applications across the Land Rover range, however, the fly in the ointment is the nine-speed automatic gearbox. It's just not quick enough to react, and in a hurry, you will find yourself tugging at the paddles. If left to its own devices, progress is often accompanied by hesitation and hiccups, and that doesn't do the superb new engine justice.

Removing a car's roof sacrifices rigidity, and there's evidence of that in the Evoque. You do get a

bit more jiggle and wobble, and, of course, the outside world is a bit more audible. This was never the sportiest SUV to begin with; sure, the AWD system lets it grip in corners well, but it's not one for quick direction changes. Still, that strong engine and good body control do at least mean you can have a little fun with this car in short bursts.

At low speeds, the ride can be a little lumpy, but the moment you pick the pace up, it just smothers the road (or the muddy track) into submission. And speaking of the muddy track, taking the roof off doesn't seem to have diminished the Evoque's off-road ability. While some of the chassis rigidity will have been lost, it still has inherently superb approach and departure angles and the brand's tremendous Terrain Response and All Surface Progress Control electronic systems that let it traverse any surface with ease.

The Evoque convertible is a unique car in all the right ways. An SUV and a convertible and with a Range Rover badge on the nose? That alone is a strong proposition, and then you factor in how good it looks, how well it's appointed on the inside, and that great new engine. Yes, the infotainment system has aged a bit and 4x4 enthusiasts might not find it as capable as a 'proper' Range Rover, but this is not a car for them. This

is a car for cruising down the high street and turning up at fancy parties. It's a bit of a show off and it does that really, really well. But a lot of luxury convertibles do that. What makes the Evoque convertible truly unique is the practicality it offers, not just in terms of space, but also the ground clearance and go-anywhere ability it affords. At its price of Rs 69.53 lakh, or any price point for that matter, there's really nothing quite like it.

GAVIN D'SOUZA

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE CONVERTIBLE

Price	Rs 69.53 lakh*		
L/W/H	4370/2120/1609mm		
Engine	1997cc, 4 cyls, petrol		
Power	240hp at 5500-6000rpm		
Torque	340Nm at 1500-4000rpm		
Gearbox	9-speed automatic		
Fuel tank	68.5 litres		
Acceleration (from rest)			
Kph	sec	Kph	sec
20	0.97	100	8.88
40	2.33	120	12.42
60	3.96	140	17.34
80	6.25	160	23.26

In-gear acceleration (in kickdown)			
20-80kph	5.56sec		
40-100kph	6.60sec		
Noise level (dB)			
Idle	46.4		
Idle with AC at half	54.4		
Full rev	59.0		
50kph in auto	61.1		
80kph in auto	67.2		

*EX-SHOWROOM, INDIA

“ You buy an Evoque to stand out, and you will, even more with the roof down. ”