

## 2006 SUBARU B9 TRIBECA



Subaru hops aboard the SUV (sport utility vehicle) bandwagon with the B9 Tribeca, built from the six-cylinder Outback platform and mechanical components. The plusher Tribeca is available in base or Limited five- or seven-passenger versions.

### **Interior and trunk**

Getting into the front seats is easy, but comfort is average due to the narrow cushion, which means that people of average size and larger sit on the lateral supports rather than between them. The driver's seat has no memory. The driver's position leaves something to be desired, as there is no space for the left leg and the steering column is not telescopic.

The second-row bench is easy to get into and comfortable, but for two adults only. The leg and headroom is good. The entire 40/20/40 split second row slides fore and aft. The hard-to-access third row is good for children only. When the back of the second row is folded down, there is a wide enough gap between it and the front bucket seats for an animal to fall in.

Interior storage capacity is good when the third row is folded down. When it is up, however, there is no storage, so drivers must choose between passengers and cargo. The rear hatch opens wide, but the floor is a bit high. The cargo cover is optional in all versions—an unpleasant surprise given the price of this vehicle.

### **Convenience and safety**

Fit and finish are good but not flawless, and we detected creaking sounds in our test vehicle. The dashboard seems cheap, while materials elsewhere are better. The soundproofing could be improved for road and wind noises. There is abundant and generous storage space.

Photo: Subaru

The instruments and controls are well placed. Unfortunately, many controls are not lit at night. Remote unlocking is slow.

The air conditioner and heating system work well, but two air vents in the central part of the front of the dashboard cannot be closed. When the system uses them, air blows onto the driver's right hand or thigh, which is very unpleasant.

The Tribeca's safety features include six airbags, head restraints for all passengers, stability and traction control, true all-wheel drive, disc brakes with four-channel ABS, and very good headlights. The second-row head restraints do not rise high enough for very tall people. Visibility is very good, except to the rear and rear corners due to the wide C-pillars and narrow rear window. The wipers are slow, especially in second speed. In U.S. government frontal and side collision tests, the Tribeca received five stars for passenger protection.

### **Engine and transmission**

The 3.0 litre six-cylinder horizontally opposed engine puts out 250 hp and 212 lb-ft of torque. It delivers barely adequate acceleration and pickup. The lack of torque is the main handicap of this engine, which must move a vehicle weighing nearly 300 kg more than the Outback, which has the same engine. The accelerator pedal is not smooth, and its jumpiness tries to hide the engine's lack of torque. This engine meets the LEV2 (Low Emissions Vehicle) standard—a good thing because of its high premium grade fuel consumption.

The five-speed automatic transmission is generally very smooth but slow to downshift in regular mode. It's not so bad in sport mode. In regular mode it gears up quickly to promote fuel economy. The permanent four-wheel-drive system works flawlessly, as usual for Subaru. This system lacks a low range, which is essential for serious off-road driving.

### **On the road**

Despite its firmness, the Tribeca's independent suspension delivers a smooth ride with no stiffness. For an SUV, it handles very well, especially since a boxer engine, horizontally opposed cylinders, gives the vehicle a lower centre of gravity than with a conventional engine. The Tribeca's 21.3 cm of ground clearance allows for moderate off-road driving.

The power steering is very well balanced, stable, accurate, and decently fast. The turning radius is relatively tight, and the steering transfers some road feel. The four disc brakes are powerful and resist fading.

At a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre, we noted that the Tribeca has a sturdy and well-built underbody. However, the front sensor wires on the antilock braking system are exposed, and there are two large openings under the front bumper where objects could enter and break the air conditioning condenser and bottom of the radiator.

## **Conclusion**

With the Tribeca you get the feeling that Subaru watered things down too much. It is a vehicle with too little engine, incomplete features, and some rather skimpy materials. In addition, the driver's position is far from a good fit for everyone. Actually, the Outback may be a better value if you don't need a vehicle as spacious as the Tribeca.

**PROS:** Smooth ride, handling, well-calibrated steering, spacious interior, good headlights, solid construction

**CONS:** Driver's position, lack of engine torque, high fuel consumption, narrow front seat cushions, less-than-perfect soundproofing, transmission slow to downshift

## **2006 SUBARU TRIBECA**

**Engine:** 6 cyl., 3.0 litre, 24 valves

**Horsepower:** 250 hp at 6,600 rpm

**Torque:** 219 lb-ft at 4,200 rpm

**Transmission:** 5 speed automatic

**Suspension:** independent/independent

**Brakes:** disc/disc

**Length:** 482.2 cm

**Width:** 211.9 cm

**Height:** 168.6 cm

**Wheelbase:** 274.9 cm

**Weight:** 1,885 to 1,926 kg

**Tires:** 255/55 R18

**Maximum towing capacity:** 1,587 kg

**Airbags:** Standard plus two side and curtain airbags

### **Fuel consumption:**

According to Transport Canada:

City: 13.3 L/100 km (21 mpg)

Highway: 9.5 L/100 km (30 mpg)

Test: 14.5 L/100 km (19.5 mpg)

Temperature: 4°C to 25°C

**Fuel tank capacity:** 64 litres

**Fuel type:** premium unleaded gas

**Acceleration:**

0–100 km/h: 9.8 seconds

60–100 km/h: 7.1 seconds

**Competitors:** Buick Rendezvous, Ford Freestyle, Honda Pilot, Jeep Commander and Grand Cherokee, Mitsubishi Endeavor, Nissan Murano, Toyota Highlander, Volvo XC70

**Warranties:**

- Comprehensive: 3 years/60,000 km
- Major components: 5 years/100,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 3 years/60,000 km
- Anti-perforation: 5 years/unlimited km
- Emissions: 3 years/60,000 km on everything. 8 years/130,000 km on catalytic converter, electronic control module, and onboard diagnostic system

**Prices of original parts:**

- Rear bumper: \$825
- Front disc brakes: \$159
- Brake pads: \$159
- Muffler: \$566 (each)
- Front fender: \$360

**Average cost of insurance premium in Quebec City for a new vehicle for a man or woman 30 to 40 years of age with an excellent driving record:**  
\$1,183 to \$2,283

**Price of various versions:**

- Base 5 seat: \$41,995
- Limited 5 seat: \$45,195
- Base 7 seat: \$44,295
- Limited 7 seat: \$47,995
- Limited 7 seat DVD+NAV: \$52,495

**Main options:**

- Towing package: \$700
- Reverse distance detector: \$350
- Dog grill guard: \$372

**Price of vehicle tested:** \$52,495

**Transportation/preparation fees:** \$1,295

**Number of dealers:** Quebec: 28    Canada: 95