

Overlandys' checklist on how to buy a used car

Vehicle Data

Brand _____
Model _____
Vehicle identification number on the vehicle: _____
Registration certificate part I: _____
Registration certificate part II: _____
Mileage _____
Date of first registration _____
Due date next main inspection _____
Vendor is owner _____
Previous owner _____

Vehicle documents (in Germany)

- Registration certificate part I (Fahrzeugschein)
- Registration certificate part II (Fahrzeugbrief)
- Inspection report of the last main inspection (e.g. TÜV or Dekra)
- Inspection check book / service schedule
- Logbook / manual
- General operation license and technical component report (for car tuning only)
- Other _____

- Compare the vehicle registration number on the registration certificate part I and II with the number on the vehicle (engine block and frame) → if the numbers are not the same it is a “different” vehicle or something about the vehicle has been changed
- Compare the due date of the next main inspection on the report with the stamp in the registration certificate part I and the sticker on the rear license plate (in case the vehicle is registered)
- Check the service schedule if regular maintenance has been done
- Other _____

Outside of the vehicle

- Was the vehicle ever involved in any accident? Ask the salesman and check with the following points
- Check the paint; look at the paint at a sharp angle against the light
 - Color difference → when a part has a different color, it has been repainted
 - Orange skin → this means that the vehicle has been repainted badly
 - Dents or bumps → damages may have been fixed with body filler; you can check with a magnet, if it does not stick, a damage was filled
 - Especially in the upper part of the door and under the windows may be damages from other vehicle's doors that were slammed into the neighboring vehicle's door
 - There should not be too many stone-fall damages on the hood
- Check the gap sizes of the hood and the doors → if these are uneven, a repair was not well done or the vehicle was involved in an accident
- Check if the door hinges are rusty or kicked; slightly lift the door and move it back and forth → if the hinges are moving they should be adjusted
- Check the sealing of the doors
 - Is it porous, torn or dissolving? → if yes, water could enter the vehicle
 - Is it green or mossy? → if yes, this indicates that the vehicle was just standing for a long time and was not cared for regularly
- Check the closing wedge of the door and the tailgate; lift the door handle "open" and close the door slowly → there should not be any resistance or the closing wedge has to be adjusted
- Check the windows, there should not be any stone-fall damages or cracks in the windshield in the driver's sight → damages of the windshield are not allowed to be repaired, they are a main inspection deficit
- Check the DOT-number of the windshield and see if it matches the DOT-number on the tires and the build year → if the numbers are not the same, it is ok because it just means that for example the windshield has been exchanged
- Check all edges for rust, especially where parts have been welded together, e.g. door edge, fuel tank cap, water drainage strip and wheel arches, all areas where water could collect → potential danger of rust
- Other _____

Tires and brakes

- Check the tires for dents and bumps → these could be damages from driving up curbs
- The tires should have at least 2mm profile depth (1,6mm is our legal minimum) the profile should be worn down evenly
- The wheel rim should still look good
- The brake disks should shimmer silvery and should have no streaks, brake lining should be present
- Spare wheel has to be a present
- Other _____

Lights and headlights

- Check the headlights for cracks → if yes, water could enter
- Check if all headlights are working and ensure that no light is cloudy and there is no water collecting on the inside → this could be a main inspection deficit
- If a light is flickering it is defect and has to be changed
- Other _____

Vehicle accessories and tuning parts

- If the vehicle has any "extra parts", e.g. racing exhaust pipe or chassis, there might be a special report required, the special features have to be recorded in the registration certificate part I (Fahrzeugschein)
- Other _____

Interior

- Check if the seats are in good condition
 - Look for chafe marks at the edges, they come from entering and exiting the vehicle over a long period of time
 - The seat should not wiggle around
 - Check if the seat rail is working by moving the seat back and forth
 - Check if the seatbelt and locks are in good condition, the seatbelt should retract automatically
- Check if it is a smoke-free vehicle; take a look at the ashtray if it is “originally” clean or has been cleaned
- Check if the ceiling is clean and without any stains
- Check the ventilation → if it smells musty the air conditioning has not been maintained well
- Steering wheel, gearshift and control elements as well as the pedals should be in good condition compared to the mileage and age of the vehicle
- Interior lights, background lighting and control elements should function well
- Try the multimedia system; push all of the buttons, everything should go on and off
- Check the seat heating
- Open everything, e.g. glove box and handles
- Check the window regulators; open and close the car windows with the regulators or the window crank
- Don't forget the trunk! Check for water, rust or lime, none of them are a good sign (in our case, we don't have a trunk but the cargo area)
- If anything in the interior is bent, there might be an undiscovered accidental damage
- Other _____

Engine compartment

- A dirty engine compartment is not necessarily a bad sign, if an engine compartment is all clean, leakages are harder to find
- Check for any leakages, e.g. oil or cooling water
- Check the level of the cooling water
- Check the oil level and the little oil note, the date of the last oil change is noted here → if the oil is clotted, it needs to be changed
- Check the level of the brake fluid
- Hoses should not be porous → if they are, they should be exchanged
- If you can reach it, check the van belt → porosity is not a good sign
- Other _____

Underbody

- Check if the engine is tight
- Check if any fluids are leaking
- Check the brake hose, porosity or bumps are not good
- Check all cuffs, they should be tight
- Check if the exhaust pipe and all elastics are tight → black stains at the exhaust pipe might be a sign for a defect
- Check the fuel pipes, they should be tight as well, all ropes should be tight and not loosely hanging around
- Check if the brake lines are tight and not porous or broken
- Check the vehicles damper; oil should not be leaking and the springs should not be broken
- Other _____

Test drive

- Start the ignition and make sure all control lights do light up, as soon as you start the car all control lights should go off
- Check the shift and all gears (except the reverse gear); all gears should be accessible from any gear while driving
- Check the engine's gas intake
- Check the steering wheel position, the vehicle should drive straight ahead while the steering wheel is straight → if not, something is wrong with the chassis setting or there is another damage
- Check how the vehicle is reacting to using the brakes and weight pressure changes, the vehicle should always slow down straight ahead
- If you hear any weird noises, e.g. at high speed or while driving over cobblestone → not a good sign
- When you accelerate, look into the rear view mirror and check for black smoke → if there is smoke, something is wrong with the engine
- At the end of the test drive, take another look at the engine compartment and check for any leakages that might appear due to the usage
- Other _____

Sales contract

- Correct “personal” data of the vendor → if you buy a vehicle from a car dealership you get a 6 months warranty, if you buy from a private vendor the vehicle is “sold as seen” except in case of fraudulent misrepresentation but this is difficult to prove
 - Company or dealership, e.g. tax number or entry to commercial register
 - Private vendor, e.g. identification card or passport
- Vehicle specific data
 - License plate
 - Mileage
 - Vehicle identification number
 - Number of previous owners
 - Accidental damages (if there are)
 - Number of issued keys
 - Original engine or replacement engine
 - Changes or accessories of the vehicle
- Other _____

Handover

- Vehicle
 - Keys
 - Vehicle documents
 - Other _____

- Save travels! 😊

**No liability provided for all information! We take no responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of this checklist. This checklist is the result of our individual research and the knowledge we acquired, for further questions contact your trusted mechanic.*