Everything we know about the new Ford F-150 truck—including the hybrid



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- When the new F-150 arrives this fall, it will be Ford’s most technologically advanced truck yet. But did you also know there are 11 different styles of front grille? These are just three of them.
- Ford says that over a thousand hours of customer research went into the improvements for the F-150, which will now be in its 14th generation. Most of the improvements are to help you work or play.
- There’s now a hybrid F-150, and it comes with 2.4kW onboard power as standard, or there’s an option for a 7.2kW system, shown here, which offers four 120V 20A

outlets and one NEMA L14-30R 240V 30A. The not-hybrid F-150 can be specced with a 2.0kW power supply.

- Every all-new F-150 comes standard with new cleats mounted to the sides of the tailgate to act as tie-down locations for extra-long items in the bed. And they also work as bottle openers, which will be convenient if you tailgate.
- The tailgate now has standard clamp pockets so you can hold materials down for precision work. If you order the optional Tailgate Work Surface you get integrated rulers, a mobile device holder, cupholder and pencil holder. (I think calling it the Trapper-Keeper tailgate probably infringed someone's IP.)
- Ford knows people work and eat in their trucks, so there's an optional center console that transforms into a flat work surface.
- It does that by having a fold-flat gearshift lever.
- An easily accessed flat load floor in the back of F-150 crew cabs allows customers to carry large items inside the cab.
- Available lockable, fold-flat, dividable storage extends the width of the interior under the rear seats and allows for safe storage of valuables. Great for long items like hunting gear, fishing rods or blueprints.
- An optional 12-inch center screen utilizes five high-resolution cameras to provide multiple views, including a 360-degree overhead view, to make maneuvering in tight spaces easy.
- Available Pro Trailer Backup Assist makes backing up a trailer as easy as turning a knob; the feature continues in the all-new F-150 and it is the only light-duty full-size pickup with this feature.
- You can get your F-150 with a fancy King Ranch trim package, which includes brown leather and a snake motif.
- This is a Ford F-150 XL, which has a more spartan interior. There's no flat work surface, and you can see the smaller 8-inch infotainment screen.

- Ford says the hybrid F-150 PowerBoost is aiming to have best-in-class horsepower and torque, a targeted EPA-estimated range of approximately over 700 miles on a single tank of gas, and at least 12,000 pounds of maximum available towing capacity.
- Christmas trees not included.

On Thursday evening, Ford livestreamed the launch of its newest F-150 pickup truck. It's hard to overstate how important the truck is for Ford; the F-Series has earned the company tens of billions of dollars, and it regularly tops the chart of best-selling light vehicles in the US market. So redesigning the truck for its 14th generation is not a task the company has undertaken lightly—according to the automaker, more than a thousand hours of customer research has informed this latest evolution of an American staple. When it goes on sale this fall, it will be Ford's most advanced light truck ever, with over-the-air updates enabling new features and, for the first time, a hybrid option and a battery EV version due in a year or two.

What's PowerBoost?

For model year 2021, Ford is providing a variety of options when it comes to powertrains. Most of these carry over from the 13th-generation F-150, including a naturally aspirated 3.3L V6, turbocharged 2.7L and 3.5L V6 EcoBoost engines, a naturally aspirated 5.0L V8, and a 3.0L turbodiesel. (Exact power and torque outputs are not being disclosed yet.) All these use the same 10-speed automatic transmission. As standard, the F-150 is rear-wheel drive, but it can also be configured with all-wheel drive, with an open or locking rear differential.

The new, exciting addition to these is called PowerBoost, which is Ford-speak for a parallel hybrid. It combines the 3.5L EcoBoost V6 with a 35kW (47hp) electric motor that's

integrated into the transmission and fed by a 1.5kWh lithium-ion battery pack. The pack is liquid-cooled and located between the frame rails, so there’s no negative effect on interior volume or the load bed. There’s no overall power or torque figure yet, but we are told it should tow up to 12,000lbs (5,443kg).

Similarly, Ford will release fuel-economy figures closer to when the truck appears in showrooms, but it says to expect 700 miles (1,126km) on a full tank of gas. Since the gas tank on a PowerBoost F-150 is 30.6 gallons, that works out to 22.8mpg (10.32l/100km). For context, a MY2020 3.5L EcoBoost F-150 gets a combined 19mpg (12.4l/100km).

As well as helping fuel efficiency, the hybrid F-150 aims to be helpful on a worksite or tailgate event. As standard, it can supply up to 2.4kW of power via both 120V, 20A and 240V, 30A outlets mounted in the side of the cargo bed. Or, you can option an uprated 7.2kW system if you need to use a *lot* of power tools,or want to drive some really big speakers and a TV while camping. (The conventionally powered F-150s can option a 2.0kW onboard power system.)

The center console becomes a desk, the front seats become beds

Many of the other new additions to the F-150 also involve making the truck work better with people’s lifestyles. One option allows the gearshift lever to fold down into the center console so you can have a completely flat work surface—whether for your laptop or your lunch—between the front seats. The floor to the cabin is completely flat, and you can have a lockable stowage locker underneath the rear seats for hiding valuables. And there are optional reclining front seats that fold to nearly 180-degrees, a bit like a business class airplane seat. So after lunch (or a laptop session), you can have a power nap before picking up the power tools again.

Ford says 80 percent of full-size truck owners use their trucks for hauling stuff, so it’s made getting things in and out of the load bed easier. You can deploy power running boards using the key fob, via a kickswitch, or even with the Ford connected car app. The tailgate includes tie-down locations for extra-long loads that also double as bottle openers. It also has pockets built in so you can fix C-clamps to it to hold down things you’re working on. And there’s an option to spec the tailgate with a work surface that includes rulers, pencil holders, a cupholder, and a place to keep your mobile device.

New displays, a new infotainment system, and hands-free driving?

A connectivity upgrade is another big change for the 14th-generation F-150. You can spec the main instrument display in front of the driver as an 8-inch digital display, rather than two analog dials with a 4-inch display between them. As standard, the F-150 will come with a new 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system running Sync 4, the latest version of Ford’s QNX-based infotainment platform. Or you can choose a 12-inch touchscreen system with an expanded UI. If you have both of the fancy screens fitted, they’ll each run on their own processors, although Ford wouldn’t tell us much about the hardware right now, other than the fact that the vehicle uses Ethernet for its electronic nervous system.

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto will work wirelessly, and Sync 4 will also include third-party apps like Waze and Alexa. Although the underlying software is similar, the F-150’s Sync 4 UI is radically different to the Sync 4A system we saw in the Mustang Mach-E electric crossover. I was hoping to share some images of the main instrument display and infotainment in this article, but unfortunately they weren’t included in the images Ford shared with us. But the company has gone for a

stylish but legible-looking theme on the main instrument panel, which features a live animation of the truck that changes depending upon the drive mode you're using.

Among the various advanced driver assists on the new F-150, the one people might be most interested in is called Active Drive Assist. It's Ford's answer to General Motors' Super Cruise or Tesla's Autopilot, and it allows for hands-free cruising on divided-lane highways. Like Super Cruise (but not Autopilot), Active Drive Assist uses a proper driver-monitoring system to ensure the driver's eyes are on the road ahead. If you order this feature, Ford will ship your F-150 with the hardware installed, but it won't actually be activated until sometime in 2021 when the software is ready. That will be done by an over-the-air update or dealer visit, and it will require an activation fee at that time.

We spoke with Ford in the lead-up to today's launch, and the company told us that it's planning a regular tempo of OTA updates. As with the Mustang Mach-E, small updates will be performed in the background, and if larger updates require the truck to be parked and out of action while they take place, you'll be able to schedule those so they don't happen when you need the truck to be able to drive.

If you want to watch the F-150 reveal, it's being livestreamed on YouTube:

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