

Audi Q7 3.0 TDI (4M)

2015-present · 3.0 V6 TDI EA897 (218-286 hp) diesel, quattro with ZF 8-speed Tiptronic

Est. annual maintenance cost: €1,100-1,900

Date _____ Mileage _____ Price _____ Seller _____

What matters most: The V6 engine is fundamentally solid, but leaks from the engine valley are near-universal at higher mileage. On 2020+ facelifts, also check the 48V starter generator recall status.

BEFORE THE VIEWING

Recall and campaign status

Call an Audi dealer with the VIN before visiting. There are five known recalls and service campaigns, including a BSG extended warranty on 2020+ facelifts and a mandatory emissions software update on all 3.0 TDI Euro 6 models.

Service history and oil changes

The 3.0 TDI uses around 7 litres of 5W-30 longlife oil. Confirm oil changes every 15,000 km or annually, not the 30,000 km longlife interval. Longlife intervals are linked to faster timing chain tensioner wear.

Transmission oil service

Audi markets the ZF 8-speed gearbox as lifetime-filled, but ZF recommends oil changes every 100,000 km. Ask the seller if the transmission oil has been changed. No record at high mileage is a concern.

AT THE CAR

Tyres and exterior condition

Standard tyre size is 255/55 R19 or 285/45 R20. The Q7 is known for premature front tyre outer edge wear from its weight and steering geometry. Check the date codes on all four tyres and look for uneven wear patterns.

Engine valley leaks

Open the bonnet and look deep between the cylinder banks with a torch. White crystalline deposits or wet patches point to the coolant regulating valve or oil cooler gasket leaking. This is the primary failure zone on the 3.0 TDI.

Cold start and chain rattle

The engine must be fully cold when you arrive. Listen carefully during the first 10-30 seconds for a metallic rattling sound from the rear of the engine. This can point to a worn timing chain tensioner, which is expensive to repair.

Air suspension or ride height

If the car has air suspension, check whether it sits level after standing overnight. Walk around and compare corner heights. Ask the seller to cycle through ride height modes while you listen for hissing or loud compressor noise.

DURING THE DRIVE

Gearbox shifts and smoothness

The ZF 8-speed should shift smoothly and quickly. During the test drive, pay attention to any hesitation, jerking, or delayed downshifts, especially between 2nd and 3rd gear. Rough shifts can point to worn valve body or old fluid.

Dashboard warnings and AdBlue

Drive until the engine is fully warm and watch for any AdBlue, check engine, or electrical system warnings. An AdBlue countdown warning means a NOx sensor or injector fault that must be fixed before a set number of engine starts.

Engine response and idle quality

At idle, the V6 should run smoothly without hunting or vibration. Rough idle can point to worn swirl flap linkages, which trigger fault codes P2015 or P2011. On the road, check for full boost response without hesitation or smoke.

NOTES

THIS CAR AT A GLANCE

Large diesel SUV, built 2015 to present. The V6 TDI is fundamentally robust, but the engine valley layout makes coolant and oil leaks both common and costly to fix.

KNOWN WEAK POINTS

Engine valley leaks

Coolant valve and oil cooler gaskets
€600-1,800

Swirl flap linkage wear

Plastic ball joints fail, 80-130k km
€200-1,500

48V starter generator

2020+ facelift only, power board
€800-2,500

AdBlue / NOx sensor

Sensor degrades, start prevention
€500-1,500

Air suspension strut

Bladder cracks, corner sags overnight
€1,200-3,000

