Dedicated to enthusiasts and owners of the Ford Courier pickup sold in the North America between 1972 and 1982

The Courier was manufactured by Toyo Kogyo (also known as Mazda), and imported and sold by Ford as a response to the unforeseen popularity of the small Toyota and Nissan/Datsun pickups among young buyers in the west. Like the other mini-pickups of the time, it featured a sub-2 liter four cylinder engine, a four speed manual transmission, rear wheel drive, an impressive load capability considering its size, and a fairly large pricetag compared to full size pickups of the time. The Ford Courier sold for $3,000 when introduced -- close to the price of an F-100.

When it was introduced it came standard with a 1.8 liter overhead cam engine, which produced 74HP at 5000rpm, and 92ftlbs at 3500rpm. A 4 speed manual transmission was standard. The body styling, especially the front grill, was designed to reflect the styling of the F-series lineup of the time, so it obviously looked like a little Ford Truck.

The 1.8 liter (109.6 cu in) overhead cam engine produced 74 horsepower at 5,000rpm, and 92 ft-lbs of torque at 3,500rpm. It was a long stroke engine (3.07" bore x 3.7" stroke) with a chain driven cam shaft. It was coupled to a 4 speed manual transmission. For the first 5 years, this was all that was available.
The styling of the Courier’s grill was designed to reflect the design of the F-series pickups of the time. Note the similarities to the 1973 F-100 pictured to the right.

2nd gen courier -- In 1977 the Courier was redesigned, and a host of new options was available. They now had front disk brakes, a 2.3 liter engine option, automatic transmission option, a 5 speed manual transmission option. **In 1977 a 5 speed manual transmission became available as an option.** 1979 the engine was increased in size to 2.0 liters (120.1 cu in) with a xxxxx bore and stroke, producing xx horsepower at xxxx rpm and xxx ft-lbs or torque at xxxx rpm. In 1977 Ford also added one of their own engines to the lineup -- the 2.3 liter engine (140.3 cu in) that was shared with the Ford Pinto and Mustang II. The Ford 2.3 liter engine was one of the first all metric engines produced in the US. An automatic transmission was also an option beginning in 1977.

It was now available with an optional 2.3 liter Ford designed engine, the same one that the Ford Pinto used. Mazda also introduced a bigger version of their engine, now 2 liters, and rated at 77HP@4300rpm, and 109 ftlbs of torque@2400rpm. The Courier continued to be sold until 1982, but was also available as a Mazda B2000 now. In 1983 Ford introduced its own Ford Ranger to fill its compact truck segment, and the courier disappeared from North America.

**Before there was Courier…**

The Mazda B-series pickup was actually started in 1961 as the Mazda B1500/Mazda Proceed, with a 1.5 liter engine producing 59HP. In 1966 the body styling was changed, the engine was upgraded to 73HP, and in 1971 a 1.6 liter was introduced. In 1972, the body style was changed again, and it was imported to the US for the first time, under license from Ford, as the first Ford Courier. The Ford Courier was much the same as the new B1600, but with a larger 1.8 liter engine, and a different grill. Interestingly, the B1600 was rated for 1,000kg load (2,250lbs) -- more than 800 lbs more than the Ford Courier which was only rated for 1,400 lbs.
The Mazda Rotary Pickup

From 1974 to 1977 the Mazda version was also available with a 1.3 liter rotary engine producing 146 horsepower (check this) – this version had flared fenders, disc brakes, and another different grill (www.mazdarepu.com) has more information on this truck.

Four wheel drive Ford Couriers

The Ford Courier was never available as an OEM 4 wheel drive version in the US (the Mazda B-series didn’t get 4 wheel drive until 1986). However, there were several companies doing 4x4 conversions of the Ford Courier by adding a transfer case and solid front axle beginning in 1975. From 1975 to 1979 Northwest ATV in Kelso Washington converted about 1500 Couriers to 4WD, which where sold as the Ford Courier Sasquatch, in the WA, OR, CA, and ID markets only. (link to Ford Sasquatch brochure). Other conversions of early 80's Couriers were done by other companies as well.

These were popular, however when the manufacturers began offering OEM 4x4 versions of their small trucks, the higher cost of a conversion could not compete. Toyota introduced a 4x4 truck in 1978, Isuzu in 1979, Datsun in 1980, and Mitsubishi in 1982.

Note: Toyota did have a 4x4 pickup truck starting in the late 60’s, based on the FJ landcruiser, with a 6 cylinder engine, but it was never imported to the US.

Diesel Ford Couriers

The Ford Courier was never available with a diesel engine in the US. However, the 1980 Mazda B2200 was available with a Perkins manufactured 2.2 liter diesel engine (xxxxx code), producing 66 horsepower at 2,100 rpm, and xxx ft-lbs of torque at xxx rpm. This same diesel engine was available in the 1983 and 1984 Ford Ranger, but was supplanted by the mitsubishi 4D55T 2.3 liter turbodiesel for the 1985 to 1988 Ford Rangers. Overseas, Mazda continued to develop their diesel engines, and the 2007 Ford Courier comes standard with a 2.5 liter turbodiesel engine, producing 110 horsepower at 3,500 rpm, and 200 ft-lbs of torque at 2,000 rpm.
Electric Ford Couriers
Between 1979 and 1982 a number of electric Ford Couriers were produced -- Jet Industries purchased "gliders" without engines, and put in a series DC motor and lead acid batteries, to produce the Jet Industries ElectraVan 750. These were sold mainly for service trucks to electric utilities and the like. They had a top speed around 70mph, and would go 50 to 60 miles on a full charge. A number of these are still around, usually with upgraded motor control systems and higher voltage battery packs.

The California Stepside conversion
A few Couriers were sold without a bed, to allow a chevy stepside bed to be added (picture)

V8 Couriers
Yes, a 302 (5.0 liter) Ford smallblock V8 fits in the engine compartment. (picture) A number of Couriers have been hotrodded with V8 engines and new drivelines. (picture of engine compartment)

Design Details -- Gen 1 Couriers
Though the basic bodystyle was the same from 1972 to 1976, there are a number of small differences that can often tell them apart.
In 1972, the tailgate said Ford Courier
In 1973 is was changed to say Courier
In 1974 it was changed to say Ford in large letters, with a small Courier badge in the upper right side

Trim levels....

In 1975 the cab was lengthened by 3 inches (so, if you want a 1st gen courier, but are over 6 foot tall, consider a 75 or 76 over a 72-74)

Hmnmnmnmnmnm

How does it compare to the current Ford Courier......


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1972 Courier</th>
<th>2007 Ranger</th>
<th>2007 Courier (New Zealand)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curb weight</td>
<td>2,515 lbs</td>
<td>3,028 lbs</td>
<td>2,860 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine size</td>
<td>1.8 liter 4 cylinder OHC</td>
<td>2.3 liter 4 cylinder 16 valve OHC</td>
<td>2.5 liter 4 cylinder turbodiesel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>74 @ 5000rpm</td>
<td>143 @ 5,250rpm</td>
<td>110 @ 3,500rpm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torque (ft lbs)</td>
<td>92 @ 3500rpm</td>
<td>154 @ 3,750rpm</td>
<td>200 @ 2,000rpm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look at the rated payload on the New Zealand Courier. Yikes. It sure must ride like a truck with springs that can hold that much. The new Ranger has gotten squishy springs – less capacity than the old Courier ;) It’s interesting that one of the specs given for the NZ version is the wading depth – of 29.4” The website also gave all the gear ratios for all the different transmissions and a lot of really technical stuff that’s hardly mentioned the US Ford website any more. Man, I want that turbodiesel engine, only 40 ftlbs less than the 4.0 liter V6, and at 1000rpm less.

Other Ford Couriers

There are actually four unrelated Ford vehicle lines which have used the Courier name.

The U.S. built Ford Courier from 1952 to 1958 was marketed as a "sedan delivery" designated body code 78A, and was based on the contemporary sedan and station wagon designs. During the 1957 and 1958 model year, a windowed variant of the Courier was marketed for fleet orders and a number were produced primarily for government services such as the U.S. Forest Service and Post Office. While from the outside these models looked like the series "59" tudor Ranch wagon, they retained their model code 78A. From 1952 to 1956 access to the rear storage area was through a unique door hinged on the side. For 1957 and 1958, the rear access door was a combination of the lift gate and tailgate being connected with two connecting struts. This design meant that the rear door backglass had to be divided into three sections, two outer curved portions and a center piece. In 1959 all Couriers took on the windowed body style very similar to the tudor Ranch Wagons and their model code was re-designated as 59E. The last year for the passenger car based Courier would be 1960 where it would remain a commercial wagon. During this same period in Canada, this passenger car based van was marketed simply as the Sedan Delivery in both the Ford and Meteor lines from 1952 to 1958. For 1959 and 1960, they were sold as commercial wagons with the Meteor continuing the model up to the 1961 model year. (from wikipedia)
The European Ford Courier is a small "high-cube" van based on the Ford Fiesta and produced between 1991 and 2002.

The Brazilian Ford Courier is a small pickup truck, also based on the Ford Fiesta. It was also sold in South Africa as a Ford Bantam.

The Ford Courier pickup today

The Ford Courier pickup, being a rebadged Mazda pickup, was still sold as a Ford Courier in Australia and New Zealand till 2007, when it was renamed the Ford Ranger. This Ford Ranger is not the same as the Ford Ranger sold in the US. Similarly, the Ford Rangers sold in every other market outside of North America for the last 25 years are actually Mazda B-series pickups, not US Ford Rangers. And to further confuse matters, the B-series pickups now sold by Mazda in the US, are actually North American Ford Rangers, and bear little relation to Mazda pickups anywhere else. They do share some engines (the 4.0 liter V6 that is available in the Mazda trucks is the Ford engine), though the diesel engines from Mazda have never been available in the US Rangers after 1984. One way to tell them apart is 6-lug vs 5 lug wheels – the Ford designed ones are all 5 lug, whereas the Mazda designed ones remain 6-lug to this day.
If you have any questions, or information to add to this, please email me at zyewdall at gmail dotcom.