



# Article Side

Top Five Things to Consider when Buying a Soft Top by [HertzAdam](#)

Article published on July 11th 2012 | [Travel](#)

As we all know, being a Jeep Wrangler owner has its perks. Of course your Jeep will never cross the finish line first, but rest assured it WILL cross the finish line no matter where they place it. My finish line is a campground in the middle of the Rubicon, and yours might be in the depths of a mud pit. The Jeep is designed for those with a thirst for adventure, but everyone's idea of adventure can be different. The radical difference in the aftermarket parts is proof of that, and soft tops are no exception.

Growing up, my dad was a Jeeper, and his favorite place to vacation was dead center in the middle of the local Sand Dunes. His jeep was equipped with sand paddles, coilovers, and a safari top. I once asked him why he liked the safari top over the hard top that he always kept in the garage, and he explained that while in the desert he needed a full view of everything around him, while keeping the sun out of his eyes. A hard top or even a factory soft top didn't make any sense to him for desert running.

My mother on the other hand preferred windows (We were a multiple Jeep family). Her jeep ALWAYS had a soft top on, rain or shine. She explained she liked the soft top because she could take it off quickly anytime she wanted, but we all knew she didn't want to very often, because she liked to keep her hair from getting messy.

I've decided to compile a top five list of things to consider when buying a soft top.

## Function

The story about my mom and dad illustrates a very important point. What is the primary function your soft top is going to serve? An average person (read: NON JEEPER) would say to protect your stuff, but we know better. If we wanted our stuff protected, we install lock boxes and security trunks.

I've found there to be a couple primary functions of a soft top: to keep out the elements or to look cool. For most, it's to have a top that is easy to take off in the sun, while easy to put back on in the rain and snow, while keeping mud and dirt from collecting in the crevices of the interior. When choosing a top for this reason, cheaper is not always better. Your top needs to have a history of sealing properly and becoming waterproof; otherwise there isn't much point, just keep the hard top on. Looks play a huge role too, and for that you don't need to break the bank. The Bestop is a good example for the JK Jeep Wrangler looks really awesome. Also, any type of safari top or mesh top looks really amazing, and is still functional.

## Price

This is a no brainer, but needs to be included. Most of the time, you get what you pay for. If you see a soft top that is more expensive than all the others, there is usually a reason. It's always best to do your homework, but more often than not, the pricier they are, the higher quality you can expect. This would stand to reason that the warranty would be better as well, but this may not be the case for all companies. Do your homework when it comes to quality. Read the reviews, and take them to heart.

## The Windows

If you are in the market for a soft top, you are in the market for easy access to that open-air experience. While having a Jeep soft top is a must for certain environments, you don't want to lose that feeling you get out on the open road, which makes window options one of the most important factors of the soft top. A broken zipper can wreak havoc on your windows, so look for options like self-correcting zippers, windows that can be fully removed while leaving the top on, and UV stable or protected vinyl.

## Ease of Use

While wheeling in Moab last year, my Jeep club decided on an impromptu topless, door-less excursion through Poison Spider Mesa. It was a beautiful day. Halfway through the trail, the clouds started getting ominous, and sure enough, the rain came hard, and without warning. A couple people left their tops back at camp, so they were hosed off nicely, but the rest of us scrambled to put on whatever soft tops we had brought. I personally keep a safari top hidden in the Jeep for just that reason, and mine is very easy to put on. The nice lady in front of me appeared to have the same type of top, and she had never used it before. I started helping her put hers on and noticed that although they appeared to be the same, they were different manufacturers, and getting her top on was like solving a Rubik's Cube blindfolded. It was awful. The inside of her Jeep ended up just as soaked as the people who didn't have tops. It was a good lesson for her though. Never bring untested equipment onto the trail, and always practice putting your top on. Make sure you practice a couple of times, and look for reviews that say your top is easy to put on and take off.

## Space Requirements

If you do a lot of camping or traveling, some tops are better than others. The Jeep Wrangler has limited space for gear in general. Although the new Wrangler Unlimited has more cargo room than ever before, it is still lacking compared to other SUVs. Some of the more popular tops effectively cut the available cubic ft by a third. If you are just out grocery shopping or have only two people total on your camping trip, the loss of space doesn't cause much of an issue. If you are planning on being outdoors for longer than a week, that extra space could mean a world of difference.

Before buying a soft top, do your homework, read reviews, and ask questions. You will be happy you did.

Article Source:

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Hertz Adam is an avid off road enthusiast who has successfully tackled the Rubicon Trail, Moab, and The Hammers. He passed his driver's test at age 16 in a Jeep Wrangler and hasn't looked back since having since owned 8 more Jeeps along the way. He currently resides in Lake Arrowhead, CA where he currently owns a 2007 JK Rubicon, a [Soft Tops](#), 1978 CJ7, and 1947 CJ2 Willys. He regularly wheels the John Bull Trail and Dishpan Springs. Ryan frequently writes for Extreme Terrain, an online retailer of Jeep Wrangler parts and accessories.

Article Keywords:

Soft Tops