

Crossing China: A journey on the legendary Route 318

23/09/2025 A total of 44 days and 5,476 kilometers – a unique road trip along the 30th parallel. Porsche took on this challenge with new Cayenne and Macan models tailored to the needs of Chinese customers.

Legendary roads? There's Route 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles, the Ring Road in Iceland, and the Great Ocean Road in Australia. And then there's China National Highway 318, one of the world's longest, continuously numbered routes, which covers 5,476 kilometers from Shanghai in the east to the Chinese-Nepalese border in the west.

Highway 318 winds its way along the northern 30th parallel like a gigantic slalom all the way across the country, from the tremendous Jangtse Plain in the east, past the cities of Wuhan and Chengdu, and up the Hengduan Mountains, towering over China. The route travels through cities with populations in the millions, through lonely desert and spectacular mountain passes, four of which reach elevations of more than 5,000 meters. Pastures, river valleys, steppes, rocky deserts, glaciers, mountain lakes, gorges, rainforests, and mountains – the landscape is constantly changing its face. Equally diverse are the

villages, fields, cuisine, and customs in the different regions, which line National Highway 318 like pearls on a necklace.

“Go everywhere fast“: Porsche expedition through China

Porsche embarked on an expedition like no other in spring 2025. In the lead-up to departure, the road trip was advertised with the motto and clear statement “Go everywhere, fast.” The idea was to share this unique experience with as many people as possible. The Porsche China organization team decided to go with a relay concept. A journey time of 44 days was estimated for the entire route, which would be broken down into 12 stages, with two days planned for the shorter stretches and five days for the longest legs in the mountains. This made it possible to offer both extensive and extraordinary driving experiences during the road trip.

The application process for the road trip was open to Porsche customers and members of Porsche Club China. There were also media representatives and influencers from the Chinese platforms Douyin and Weibo. There was a huge response to the call for applications. “The slogan ‘Go everywhere, fast’ won me over,” says Porsche driver Qiu Jie from Shanghai, who applied right after the ad appeared online and got lucky. “Now I’m here, driving these fantastic vehicles and experiencing a perfectly orchestrated journey,” she adds. “For me, speed doesn’t necessarily mean being fast. It’s more about precision, passion, perfection. It has to do with your outlook on life.”

Wan Fang, who works for a consulting company in Shanghai, was also immediately thrilled by the idea of navigating National Highway 318 – because you “have to drive it at least once in your life.” He chose the legs from Wuhan to Yichang and then on to Enshi. “Everything I knew about this region I learned in geography class. I got to experience all four seasons through the windshield in just a few hours as I made my way up the mountain. It was spectacular.” He spent the morning driving alongside fields of flowers and then reached an elevation of more than 1,000 meters in the early afternoon, with snow all the way up to the edge of the road. The vehicle Wan Fang chose was the all-electric Macan. “I was interested in the technology. And what really won me over was the handling on hairpin turns along the mountain passes. This electric SUV is also ideal for longer stretches. It's both extremely agile and very comfortable.”

Observing all the different aspects of the Porsche brand, experiencing the Cayenne and Macan SUVs with different engines, and remembering the encounters, conversations, and activities during the road trip as a once-in-a-lifetime adventure – that was the mission of this behemoth project. As well as to introduce four new special models for the Chinese market. The Active and Passive Editions of the Macan were officially launched at the start of the road trip.

Active Edition: tailor-made for China

And these new versions followed shortly after for the Cayenne – at the Auto Shanghai exhibition at the

end of April. The participants of the road trip were given an impressive taster of the new models, as they took to the road in the Active Editions of the two SUVs. The vehicles target a younger, more active customer base that's interested in outdoor experiences and adventure travel, which is why the trip was not designed to be an endless car drive, but instead would feature different stops along the way. That gave participants the opportunity to go on short hikes, put their climbing skills to the test, learn the art of tea picking from local famers, or rappel down vertical cliff walls.

The new Active Editions not only boast the exclusive paint color Oak Green Metallic Neo and the matching wheels in Vesuvius Grey, but also feature an off-road package including a stainless steel skid plate as well as aluminum roof rails for mounting roof tents and luggage racks. There's also the ventilated seats, a compass display in the cockpit, and a 360-degree camera system that's especially helpful the more demanding the route and the rougher the terrain. "The Active Edition extras make the driving experience in the Cayenne and Macan all the more intense – particularly on bumpy roads and off-road tracks," reports 40-year-old Dong Liang, who has been the Chief Instructor at Porsche China for three years.

"With its extremes that, in principle, reflect the full life of the vehicle, the journey should show how well the Cayenne and Macan drive in any conditions. After all, most Cayenne and Macan owners in China drive on city streets and rarely ever make it out to more demanding routes or even off-road."

National Highway 318 offers the ideal terrain

These driving impressions were collected across the broadest spectrum possible during the road trip. "It also reveals that Porsche builds versatile SUVs that can adapt to different lifestyles," says Dong Liang. National Highway 318 was the ideal terrain – as there were often detours to racecourses and off-road tracks along the route.

An important element of the journey was the fact that participants were able to switch vehicles and thus collect different impressions. "There's no denying that Porsche has created a dream car," says an exuberant Cao Yang at the end of the day. The 43-year-old cofounder of a classic car dealership in Suzhou drove the Cayenne for the first section of the leg from Chongqing to Chengdu. "The engineers did an amazing job with the drive and steering, of course, but also with elements like the massage function. These seat massages can be very intensive in many Chinese vehicles. In the Cayenne, however, they're much gentler and therefore ideal for warding off fatigue without distracting you from driving."

Zhuang Chunchao, a 28-year-old e-commerce entrepreneur, was behind the wheel of a Macan – and was the only customer to participate in all 12 stages of the road trip. "To me, the car looks like a raised 911. The forward thrust of the all-electric model is explosive, while the steering works with surgical precision. I kept wondering if I was really driving an SUV." For Zhuang Chunchao, the Porsche brand is like an "engineering religion that always focuses on the driver."

For her part, Yang Liping, 57 years old, retired and living in Beijing, was surprised at just how “simply and smoothly” the Cayenne and Macan drive. “The cars remained perfectly composed even on very rough stretches of road.” And both the vehicles and the road trip represent a good example of the pursuit of perfection. “I really appreciate the philosophy of ‘no limit’ that Porsche communicates.”

Hosting experiences as only Porsche can

Alexander Pollich, who has been in charge of Porsche business in China since September, is delighted to hear that, of course. After all, the aim of the spectacular road trip along National Highway 318 was not only to introduce the new editions, but also – and more importantly – to host an extraordinary journey full of experiences as only Porsche can. “The core values of our brand are dreams, freedom, and speed. And the road trip from one end of China to the other provided our customers with the opportunity to experience these values in a real scenario,” says Pollich. “The new editions are loyal companions for any adventure you could experience behind the wheel.”

At the grand opening of the Auto Shanghai exhibition in late April – that’s where the Porsche caravan was during the second-to-last leg of the road trip – Porsche Chairman of the Executive Board Oliver Blume and Alexander Pollich introduced the two special models Cayenne Active Edition and Macan Active Edition. A live video of the road trip along Highway 318, with the Cayenne and Macan Active Editions together on route, was shown to applause. There are legendary roads and there are legendary cars – it’s a stroke of luck when the two come together.

Info

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Consumption data

Cayenne (WLTP)*: Consumo carburante ciclo misto (gamma modelli): 11.7 – 10.6 l/100 km; Emissioni CO_2 ciclo misto (gamma modelli): 265 – 242 g/km; Stato [StandHeute]

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Image Sublines

Path: Crossing China: A journey on the legendary Route 318/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: China National Highway 318, China, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Panorama: Tree-covered hills surround the area around Pingtian Lake to the east of Chizhou, which can be seen in the distance.

Path: Crossing China: A journey on the legendary Route 318/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Macan and Cayenne models, China National Highway 318, China, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Fine-tuning: The Macan and Cayenne Active Editions are designed specifically for the Chinese market.

Path: Crossing China: A journey on the legendary Route 318/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Macan and Cayenne models, China National Highway 318, China, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Driving pleasure: On the way from Chengdu to rural Kangding, the participants drove along many spectacular roads and bridges.

Path: Crossing China: A journey on the legendary Route 318/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Cayenne, China National Highway 318, China, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Outdoor expert: The Active Editions offer extra equipment as standard such as a roof rail, which is optimal for a trip with roof tent.

Path: Crossing China: A journey on the legendary Route 318/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Macan and Cayenne models, China National Highway 318, China, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: The Porsche models lined up at the end of the eighth leg from Chengdu to Kangding, which the participants had completed in four day

Link Collection

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