

GCC AUTOMOTIVE REPORT · OCTOBER 2026

The Chinese Wave

How Chinese brands are reshaping the GCC car market: share, price, warranty and the question everyone asks, whether they hold their value. Built from 438,895 live listings across six countries.

29%

of used cars from model year 2025 for sale in the GCC are Chinese

49%

lower asking price, young Chinese SUV vs Japanese, UAE

1.28×

UAE searches for Chinese brands relative to Toyota

 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Six findings

29%**The wave is here**

Chinese brands are 29% of used cars from model year 2025 listed across the GCC, against 3% for 2020. In Saudi Arabia the figure is 46%; in the UAE 23%.

44%**Made in China, whatever the badge**

44% of model year 2026 vehicles looked up through AutoData's VIN service were built in China, but only 27% carry a Chinese brand. Ford, Kia, Chevrolet, Honda and Tesla all sell China-built cars in the region.

31%**They own the new-car shelf in Saudi Arabia**

31% of new-car stock listed online in Saudi Arabia is Chinese-branded. Online search interest tells the same story: in the UAE, searches for ten Chinese brands now run at 1.28 times searches for Toyota, up from 0.12 times in early 2021.

51%**Half the price**

A one- to three-year-old Chinese SUV lists at 51% of the price of a Japanese SUV of the same age in the UAE, and 43% in Saudi Arabia.

7 yrs**Twice the warranty**

Chinese distributors in the UAE offer six to seven years of whole-vehicle warranty. Toyota offers 3.

74%**No sign of a value cliff, yet**

At three years old, Chinese models keep 74% of their one-year value, against 67% for Japanese and 68% for European models. Young Chinese cars list at 90% of their new price, the highest of the three origins we can measure. Saudi Arabia is the exception, where Japanese models keep more. The fleet is young, so this covers the first three to four years only.

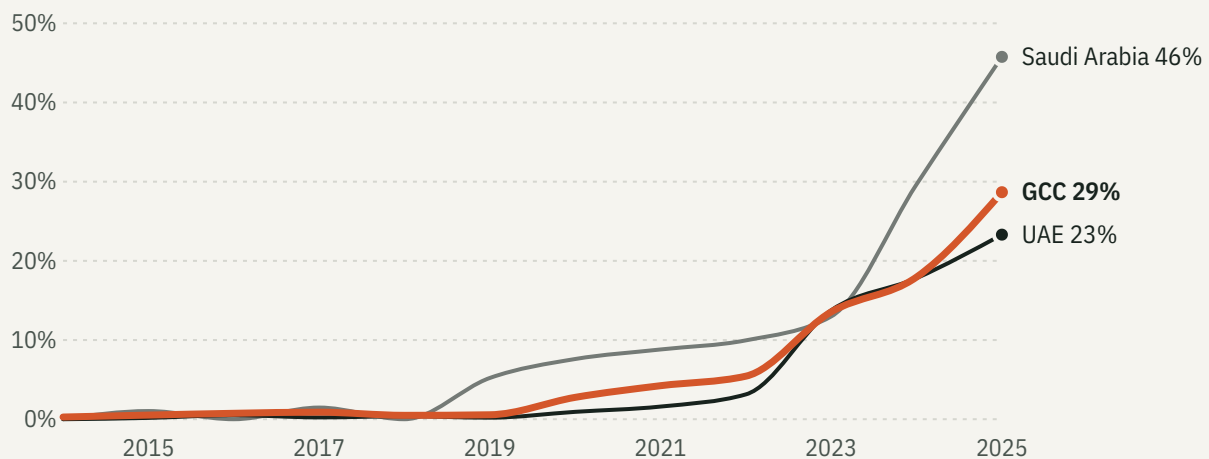
1 • THE WAVE

Chinese brands went from a rounding error to three in ten young used cars for sale in five model years

Every car listed for sale carries its model year, so sorting today's stock by model year shows when each brand's cars entered the market (arrival, not past sales). From the 2023 model year, Chinese brands arrive in force, and fastest in Saudi Arabia.

29% of used cars from model year 2025 are Chinese, up from 3% for 2020

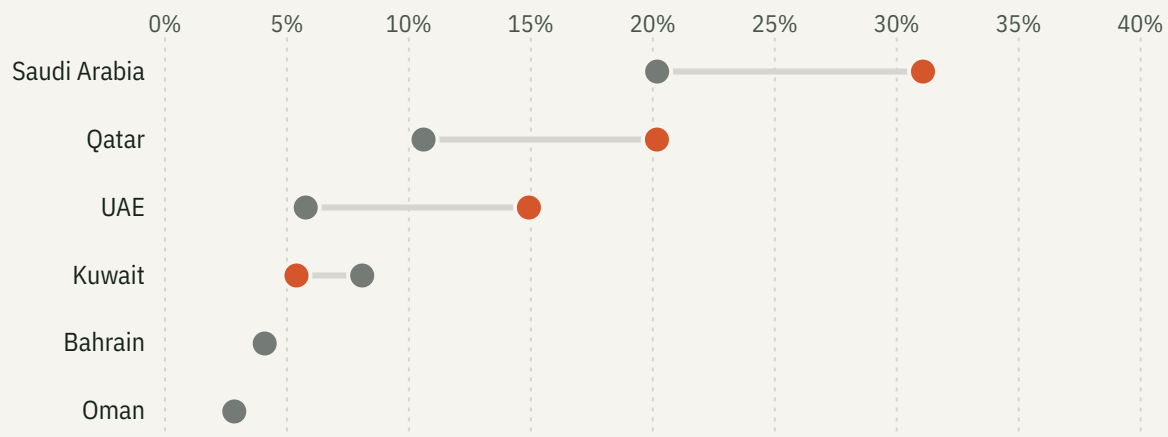
Share of used cars listed for sale that carry a Chinese brand, by model year



Source: AutoData listing data, systematic sample of 28,353 of 438,895 live listings in six GCC countries, 13 October 2026. Analysis: Skelmore.

In Saudi Arabia, 31% of new-car stock listed online is Chinese

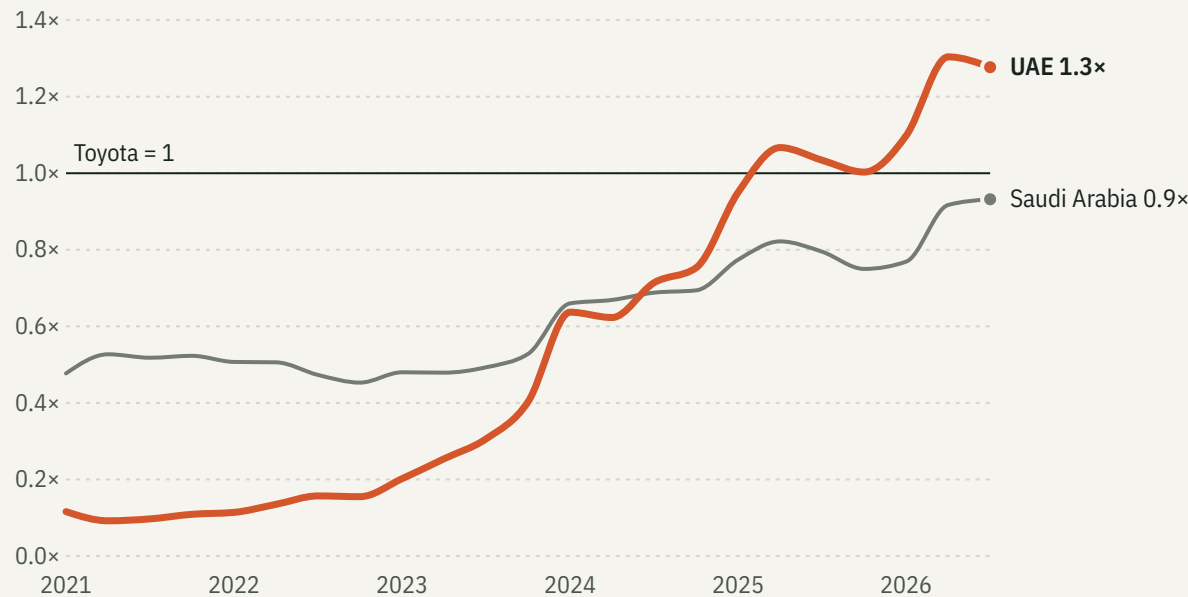
Chinese brands' share of listings: used cars (gray) and new-car stock (orange), by country



Source: as above.

UAE searches for Chinese car brands now exceed searches for Toyota

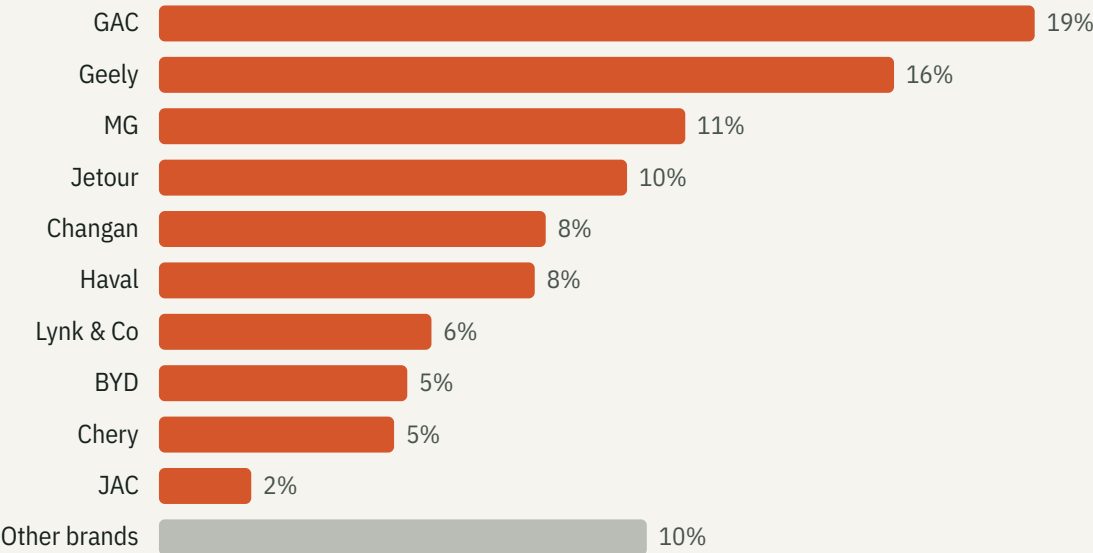
Combined Google search interest in ten Chinese car brands, relative to Toyota (Toyota = 1), quarterly



Source: Google Trends, January 2021 to September 2026; BYD, Jetour, Geely, GAC, Haval, Zeekr, Chery, Exeed, Changan and Omoda rescaled to a common Toyota anchor; MG and Tank excluded as ambiguous terms. Analysis: Skelmore.

GAC, Geely and MG lead the Chinese pack by listings

Share of all Chinese-brand listings in the AutoData sample, GCC, used and new



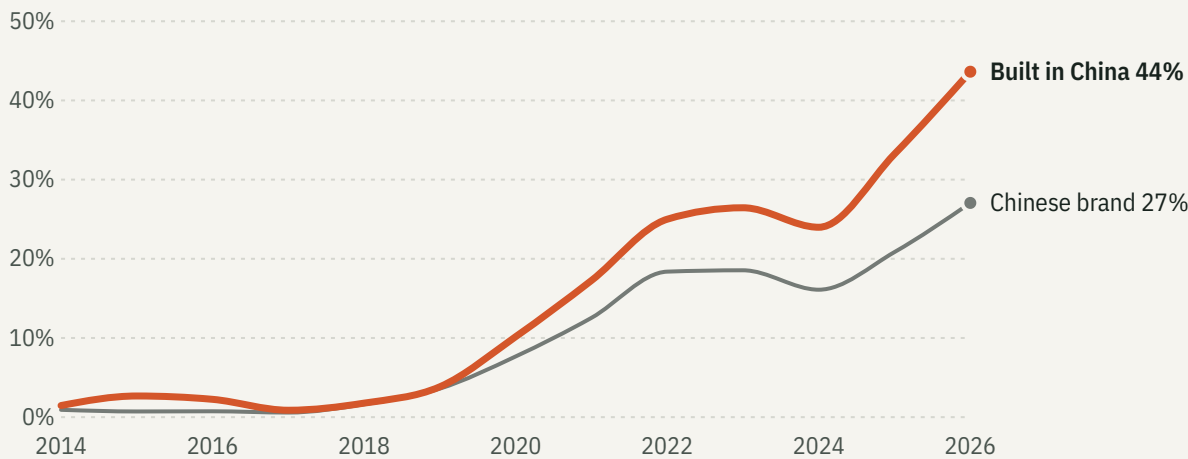
Source: AutoData listing data, systematic sample of 28,353 of 438,895 live listings in six GCC countries, 13 October 2026. Analysis: Skelmore.

Made in China, whatever the badge

Every VIN records where the car was built. Of 599,646 vehicles looked up through AutoData's VIN service in one week, 9% were built in China. Of the 99% we could match to a brand, 6% carry a Chinese one, and 31% of the matched China-built cars wear a Japanese, Korean, American or European badge.

44% of model year 2026 cars checked were built in China; 27% carry a Chinese brand

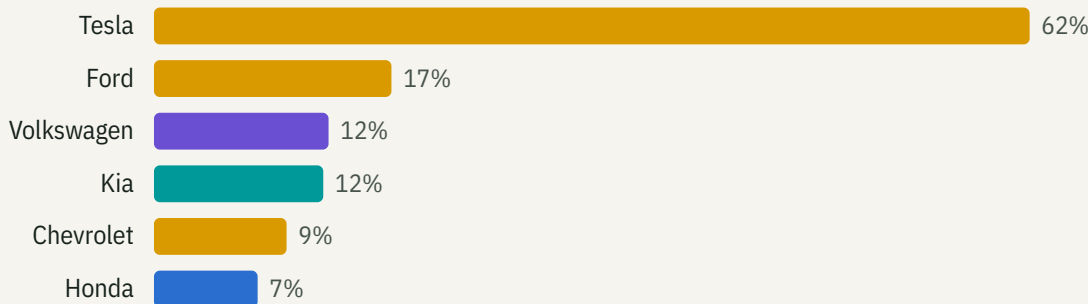
Share of vehicles looked up that were built in China, and share with a Chinese brand, by model year



Source: AutoData VIN decoding service, 599,646 distinct vehicles looked up 5 to 11 October 2026, pooled across all client accounts. Build country from the VIN's first character, model year from its tenth. Analysis: Skelmore.

62% of Tesla and 17% of Ford vehicles checked were built in China

Share of each brand's vehicles looked up in one week that were built in China



Source: as above.

2 · THE PRICE OF ENTRY

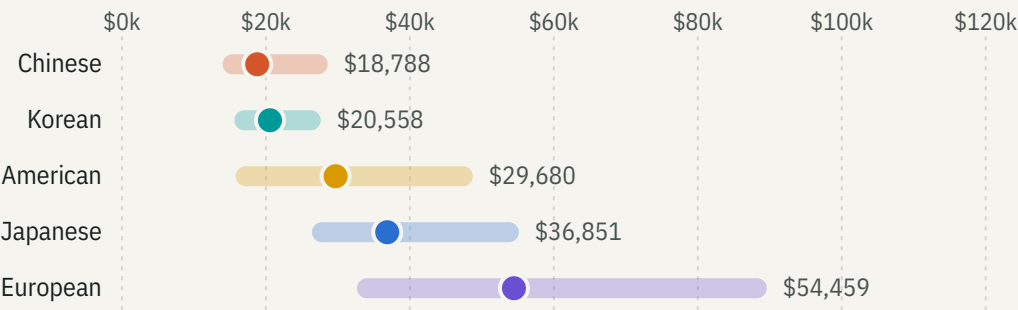
Half the price, twice the warranty

Chinese brands compete on two levers at once: a young Chinese SUV is listed at around half the price of a Japanese SUV of the same age, and their distributors offer warranties twice as long as the market leader's.

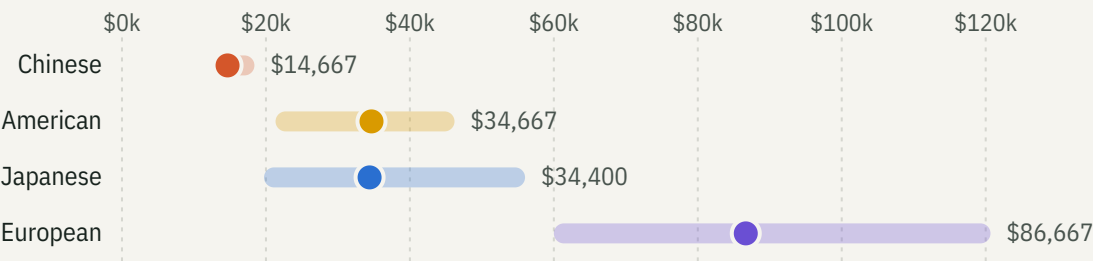
A young Chinese SUV lists at 51% of the Japanese price in the UAE and 43% in Saudi Arabia

Used SUVs aged one to three years, US\$; dot is the median, bar the middle half

UAE



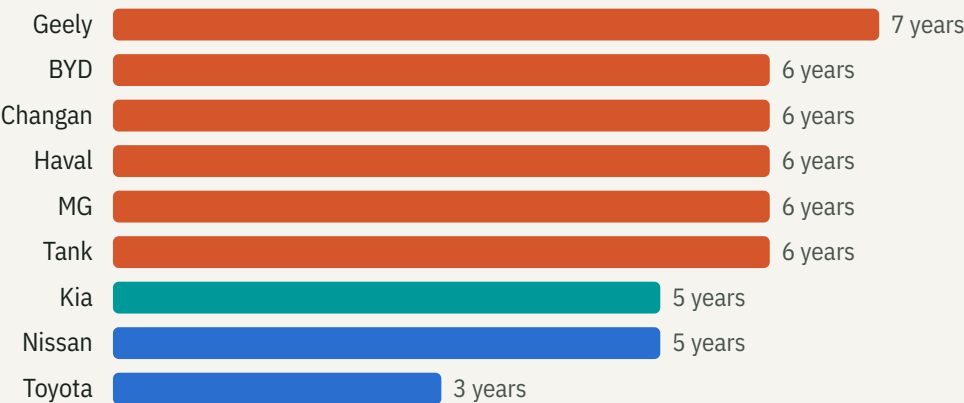
SAUDI ARABIA



Source: AutoData listing data, systematic sample of 28,353 of 438,895 live listings in six GCC countries, 13 October 2026. Converted at official pegs. Analysis: Skelmore.

Chinese brands offer six to seven years of warranty in the UAE; Toyota offers 3

Whole-vehicle warranty from the official UAE distributor, years



Source: official UAE distributor websites, captured 13 October 2026. Battery and powertrain warranties are longer and not shown. Analysis: Skelmore.

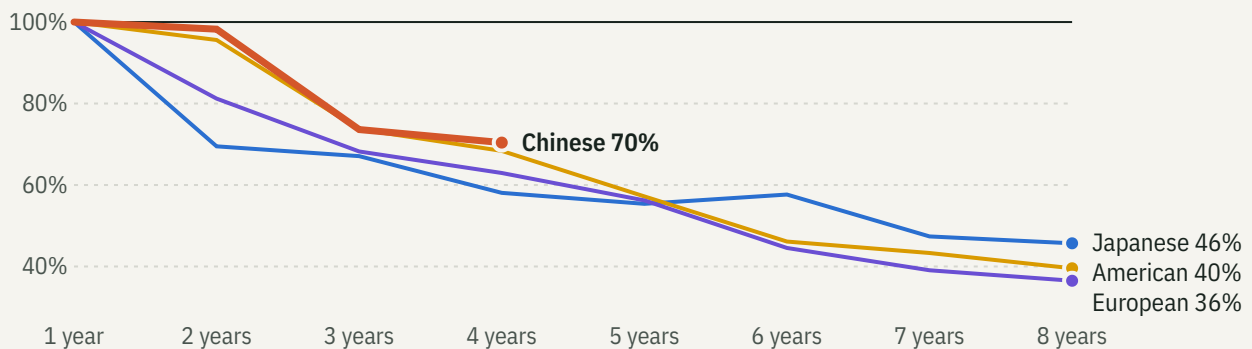
3 · DO THEY HOLD THEIR VALUE?

So far, Chinese cars lose value no faster than their rivals, except in Saudi Arabia

What a Chinese car will be worth in three years is the question every buyer, dealer, lender and insurer asks. For the first three to four years, which is as far as a young fleet lets us look, the data does not show the steep losses the market fears.

At three years old, Chinese models keep 74% of their one-year value; Japanese models keep 67%

Value by age relative to the same model at one year old; within-model comparison, five countries (Oman prices under review)



Source: AutoData listing data, systematic sample of 28,353 of 438,895 live listings in six GCC countries, 13 October 2026. Analysis: Skelmore. Korean brands omitted: one-year-old listings price below older ones within the same model, a mix problem we have not resolved. Oman excluded while its prices are under review.

Young Chinese cars list at 90% of the new price, the highest of the three origins we can measure

Asking price of one- to two-year-old used cars as a share of the same model's new-car stock price, median across models



Source: AutoData listing data, systematic sample of 28,353 of 438,895 live listings in six GCC countries, 13 October 2026. Analysis: Skelmore. Models need 10 listings on each side; an origin needs 30 on each side and three models.

Read with care. Asking prices, not transactions; falling new-car prices for Chinese models narrow the gap. The full edition tests this on 28 months of listing history.

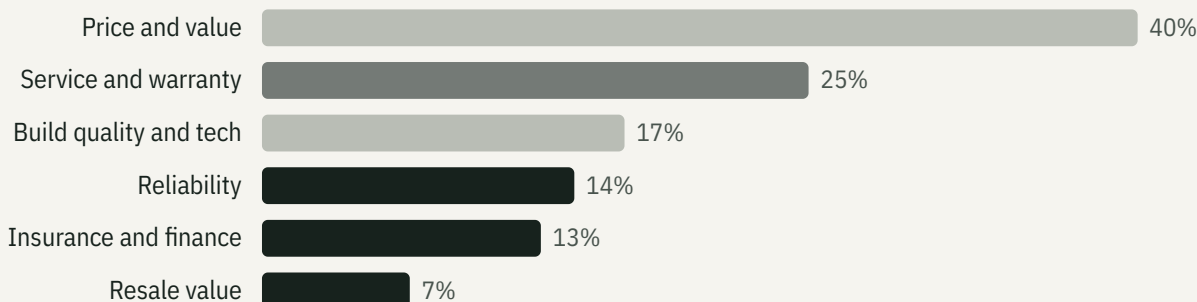
4 · WHAT BUYERS SAY

Price dominates the talk about Chinese cars; resale comes up least

We read 784 public Reddit posts and comments and YouTube comments about Chinese cars, from 2023 to October 2026. Most come from the UAE (90% carry a UAE tag), so read this as a UAE picture. Price comes up most (40% of items), usually as the reason to consider one. Service and warranty follow (25%), with long warranties praised and parts and garages a worry. Reliability (14%) and the cost of insurance (13%) come up mostly as concerns. Resale comes up least (7%), but almost always as a fear of fast depreciation. These are topic counts from public comments, not a survey of buyers. Our listing data does not show fast depreciation so far: across the GCC, Chinese models keep 74% of their one-year value at three years old, against 67% for Japanese models.

Price is the first thing people raise about Chinese cars: 40% of items mention it

Share of 784 public posts and comments about Chinese cars that raise each topic; an item can raise several, and 37% raise none. Darkest bars: mostly negative; mid: mixed; lightest: mostly positive. Mostly UAE.



Source: public Reddit and YouTube discussion, 2023 to October 2026, 784 items mentioning Chinese car brands, mostly from the UAE. Themes tagged by Skelmore.

Chinese quality and innovation have improved enormously, and the prices are still very hard to beat.

Reddit, UAE, 2024. Paraphrased.

Friends with an MG and a Jetour each pay around AED 5,000 a year to insure them. That is too much.

Reddit, UAE, 2025. Paraphrased.

You get a lot of features for the price, but they tend to lose value faster than Japanese or Korean cars.

Reddit, UAE, 2025. Paraphrased.

No other dealer I visited came close on warranty and extras; they even covered registration and the first year of insurance.

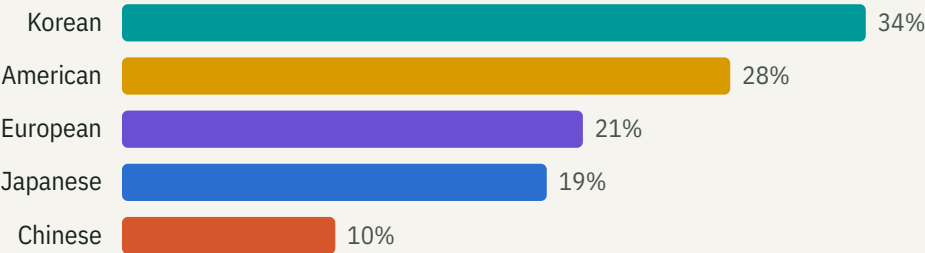
Reddit, UAE, 2025. Paraphrased.

5 · ALSO IN THE DATA

Non-GCC-spec imports, and the cars the UAE lists most

34% of used Korean cars listed in the UAE are not GCC spec

Share of used listings in the UAE that are not GCC spec, by brand origin



Source: AutoData listing data, systematic sample of 28,353 of 438,895 live listings in six GCC countries, 13 October 2026. Analysis: Skelmore. A like-for-like price gap needs more matched listings than this sample holds.

The most-listed used cars in the UAE

Listings in the sample, median asking price (AED) and median days the live listings have been on sale

#	MODEL	ORIGIN	LISTINGS	MEDIAN ASKING PRICE	DAYS LISTED
1	Dodge Charger	American	304	58,000	218
2	Dodge Challenger	American	212	66,000	218
3	Jeep Grand Cherokee	American	192	49,500	34
4	Nissan Patrol	Japanese	191	184,500	18
5	Jeep Wrangler	American	169	76,500	34
6	Toyota Land Cruiser	Japanese	144	167,500	67
7	Nissan Altima	Japanese	101	41,000	34
8	BMW X5	European	94	127,500	9
9	Ford Explorer	American	94	29,500	214
10	Jeep Wrangler Unlimited	American	93	99,000	103

Source: AutoData listing data, systematic sample of 28,353 of 438,895 live listings in six GCC countries, 13 October 2026. Analysis: Skelmore.

 6 · METHOD

How we measured it

Listings. AutoData collects car listings every day from dealer, marketplace and brand websites across the six GCC countries, cleans them and maps each to its make, model and model year. For this edition we took a systematic sample of 28,353 listings spread evenly across the 438,895 live, catalogue-mapped listings on 13 October 2026. Cars with under 1,000 km are treated as new-car stock.

Value retention. We compare each model with itself. The log asking price is regressed on age with a separate baseline for every make, model and country, so a cheap model does not drag down its origin's average.

First-year value. For each model and country with at least 10 listings on each side, the median asking price of one- to two-year-old used cars is divided by the median asking price of model year 2025 to 2026 new-car stock. An origin is shown only with 30 listings on each side across at least three models.

Weighting and Oman. Pooled GCC shares weight each country by its live listings, since the sample covers countries at different rates. Oman listings count toward shares, but Oman prices are left out of every price figure while we resolve sources that list on different currency scales.

Brand origin follows the brand's home market and ownership. **Search interest** is Google Trends, monthly, rescaled to a common Toyota anchor.

Warranties come from official distributor websites on 13 October 2026.

Built in China. Distinct VINs looked up through AutoData's VIN decoding service from 5 to 11 October 2026, pooled across all client accounts; no account is reported on its own, and the China-built share moves by less than half a point when the largest account is left out. Build country is read from the VIN's first character (L or H for China), model year from its tenth.

Thresholds. No figure is shown for a group of fewer than 30 listings. Figures are at country level only. All prices are asking prices.

Coming in the full edition: 28 months of listing history; the AutoData GCC Used Car Price Index; time to delisting by model; and the AutoData Value Retention Awards.

 ABOUT SKELMORE

Skelmore Consulting Group

Founded in 1996 and based in Dubai, Skelmore provides business and management consulting across the broader Middle East and emerging markets, with a record of turnaround strategies and of building profitable brands in automotive, transport and hospitality.

The data. This report draws on AutoData, a WAG company within the Skelmore group. AutoData collects and maps hundreds of thousands of car listings a day across the six GCC countries and runs a VIN decoding and valuation service used by lenders, insurers and dealers in the region.

Skelmore Automotive Intelligence. The October edition is the first in a monthly series. Subscribers would receive the monthly report, a GCC used-car price index, brand and competitor trackers, and analysis built to their questions.

Monthly

- Skelmore GCC Automotive Monthly
- Price board and brand tracker
- News and what to watch

Tracker

- Everything in Monthly
- Price history and depreciation curves by model
- Chinese Brand Tracker, country by country

Advisory

- Everything in Tracker
- Residual value and pricing work
- Market entry and dealer network strategy

Subscription tiers are illustrative for this proof of concept.

THIS EDITION

GCC Automotive Report, October 2026.
Pilot edition. Data as of 13 October 2026.

ALSO FROM SKELMORE

GCC Automotive Monthly: the month's sales, prices, brands and news, in the same place every issue.

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