



The Lexus Timeline

11 November 2019

Key moments from Lexus's first 30 years are captured in this timeline, charting the development of the brand, its products and its technical achievements.

	BRAND	CARS	INNOVATIONS
1983	August 1983. At a secret meeting in Japan, Toyota's Chairman Dr Eiji Toyota sets a challenge to a team of strategists, engineers and designers: "Can we create a luxury car to challenge the very best?"	More than 400 prototype vehicles are built, 100 are crash tested and more than 4.3 million test kilometres are driven in Japan, the USA and Europe.	More than 1,400 engineers and 2,300 technicians rise to Toyoda-san's challenge. Sixty designers, 24 engineering teams, and 220 support workers are engaged on the "F1" project. Every detail was exhaustively thought through - build tolerances were at least twice as accurate as competitors'.
1987		In May 1987, four years of development time and many full-sized clay models later, Lexus executives sign off on the final LS design.	
1988	The brand name 'Lexus' is chosen to represent luxury and high-end technology. Early alternative suggestions included Alexis and Lexis.		

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1989	The Lexus brand is born	The first LS 400 is launched, incorporating hundreds of new patents and setting new standards for quality and value. Almost 3,000 are sold in the first month after launch.	At the Lexus Tahara plant in Japan, the welding process for the LS 400 is fully automated, making welds 1.5 times stronger than those on conventionally welded vehicles.
1990	Lexus is launched in Europe with a single model range: the LS 400.		On the LS 400, aerodynamic considerations lead to the underside of the vehicle having a smooth floorpan and a number of special fairings to direct airflow. This gives the model class-leading underbody aerodynamics.
1991	Lexus starts its dominance in J.D. Power customer satisfaction surveys in the USA, becoming the first brand to win the 'triple crown' of sales satisfaction, initial quality and being rated overall top brand for customer satisfaction.	A new coupé, the SC 400, is launched for the American market. Its design is the work of the CALTY centre in California.	
1993	Lexus becomes the USA's number one luxury import brand, outselling BMW and Mercedes-Benz.	The new Lexus GS 300 is launched in Europe at the Frankfurt Motor Show.	
1995		The second-generation LS 400 is launched. The philosophy of steady evolution of Lexus cars was evident in its design.	The second-generation Lexus LS 400 is also the first production car to feature a collapsible steering column. This patented innovation features a corrugated shaft coupling to absorb primary and secondary impacts in the event of a collision.

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1997			A 4.0-litre V8 engine with VVT-i is used in the HPS concept car. This intelligent valve technology revolutionises efficient yet high-performance driving.
1998	Lexus becomes the USA's top-selling luxury brand for the first time, outperforming domestic manufacturers Cadillac and Lincoln.	The RX 300 is launched creating a completely new market segment - the luxury SUV	The RX 300 4x4 is fitted with a V6 3.0 litre VVT-i engine and an automatic transmission with Power, Normal and Snow modes. The European-specification LS 400 becomes the first car in the world to have satellite navigation fitted as standard.
1999		The IS 200 compact sports saloon is introduced; the first Lexus model to be specifically developed for the European market.	IS 200 features the best of Lexus innovation and engineering, including aluminium driving pedals, chronometer-style instruments and the first use of LED rear lights.
2000		The first generation RX 300 goes on sale in Europe	Air suspension debuts on the new LS 430, in a system that maintained vehicle ride height regardless of the number of passengers or load level. It could be raised by 20mm for uneven roads and automatically lowered at high speeds to improve aerodynamics.
2001	Lexus receives its first JD Power & Associates gold award in the UK.	Lexus's European model range expands to five cars with the launch of the SC 430 coupé-convertible. Its sleek lines and classic styling were created by the Lexus European Design Centre (ED ²) in the South of France	The SC 430 is equipped with an elegant, all-weather aluminium hardtop that can be retracted in 25 seconds.

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2002	<p>In Germany, the IS saloon achieves a customer satisfaction index of 86%, the highest score of all cars listed in the J.D. Power survey.</p> <p>This year sees Steven Spielberg ask Lexus to help design a car for Tom Cruise to drive in his blockbuster movie, <i>Minority Report</i>, a film set in 2054.</p>	<p>Without the support of Akio Toyoda, President and Member of the Board of the Toyota Motor Corporation, the legendary Lexus LFA supercar may never have been built. Approached for support in 2002 by the vehicle's creators, Chief Engineer Haruhiko Tanahashi and the late master driver Hiromu Naruse, Toyoda-san quickly becomes the LFA's primary champion</p>	<p>Technology highlights on the second-generation RX 300 include air suspension, intelligent Adaptive Front-lighting, an automatic tailgate and Park Assist.</p>
2003	<p>Lexus's L-finesse design direction is unveiled, inspired by traditional Japanese aesthetic values.</p>	<p>An all-new RX 300 goes on sale in Europe.</p> <p>By June 2003, Akio Toyoda, Chief Engineer Haruhiko Tanahashi and the late master driver Hiromu Naruse, were already test driving LFA prototypes.</p> <p>The LF-C concept makes its debut at the New York Motor Show, establishing the hallmarks of the new Lexus design direction, incisive simplicity and advanced technology.</p>	<p>The RX 400h is launched - the world's first luxury hybrid SUV. Its Lexus Hybrid Drive powertrain gives it the fuel consumption and emission levels of a much smaller, compact vehicle.</p>
2005	<p>This year the Lexus brand is launched in Japan and becomes an instant success. In its home market, Lexus successfully developed a network of 143 new dealerships and trained 2,000 high performing employees, from sales people on the shop floor to engineers.</p>	<p>Lexus's L-finesse design philosophy is applied to new production vehicles - the second-generation IS and third-generation GS saloons.</p>	<p>The second-generation Lexus IS becomes the world's first car to be fitted with a twin-chamber front passenger airbag, designed to deliver greater protection to the neck and shoulders in an impact.</p>

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2006	<p>The LS 460, the fourth-generation of the Lexus flagship saloon, is launched and features the world's first eight-speed automatic transmission.</p> <p>The new RX 350, replacing the RX 300 offers greater fuel economy, acceleration and improved driving dynamics.</p>	<p>The world's first high-performance luxury hybrid saloon is launched. The GS 450h offers a unique combination of performance, economy and low emissions.</p> <p>Four world firsts in advanced safety technology are introduced with the new LS: Advanced Obstacle Detection System, Emergency Steering Assist, Rear Pre-Crash Safety system and Driver Monitoring System.</p>
2007	<p>The LS 460 is voted "World Car of the Year 2007".</p>	<p>The new IS F, the first of Lexus's 'F'-marque cars is launched in Europe at the Geneva Motor Show.</p>
2009	<p>Lexus presents its LF-Ch hybrid concept car at the Frankfurt Motor Show, signalling its interest in launching its first model to compete in the European C-premium market.</p> <p>Lexus introduces the third-generation RX 350 and RX 450h, reinventing the vehicle that created the luxury SUV market.</p> <p>The all-new IS 250C hard-top convertible and the all-new third-generation GS 460 go on sale.</p>	<p>The LS 600h and LS 600h L take V8-powered Lexus Hybrid Drive technology into the super-premium limousine market.</p> <p>The LFA team take their V10 supercar prototype to the Nürburgring in Germany and compete in the legendary 24-hour endurance race "to get more feedback on the production car," as Akio Toyoda says. The LFA finishes an impressive 18th in the race, turning heads immediately, and prompting universal acclaim.</p>
2010	<p>World premiere of the CT 200h hybrid luxury compact at the Geneva Motor Show.</p>	

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2011	A unique Lexus full hybrid LS 600h L Landaulet featuring a one-piece, transparent polycarbonate roof serves as the official royal wedding car on the occasion of the marriage of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco.	<p>The first LFA V10-powered production car arrives in Europe, one of only 500 hand-built supercars that are planned for production.</p> <p>The CT 200h, the world's first full hybrid luxury compact, becomes Lexus fifth hybrid to go on sale in Europe.</p>	<p>Lightweight, balanced, powerful and amazing to drive, the Lexus LFA supercar features advanced Carbon Fibre Reinforced Plastic (CFRP) construction for its chassis and bodywork to deliver a light, incredibly strong and impact-resistant structure.</p>
2012	The final Lexus LFA is completed on December 14, 2012, ending the supercar's production run of 500 units.	<p>World premiere of LF-LC concept vehicle in Detroit which is named best concept car in the annual EyesOn Design Awards at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.</p> <p>A hallmark of Lexus design innovation, the sporty mesh of the Lexus signature grille is a daring visual statement that is now a brand-defining element on every Lexus. The feature is first introduced on the GS saloon establishing a new, stylish and provocative identity for Lexus.</p>	
2013	Located in Tokyo's fashionable Aoyama district, INTERSECT BY LEXUS opens, looking beyond the traditional car showroom to give visitors a chance to experience the lifestyle around the Lexus brand without having to get behind the wheel.	The third generation IS saloon is launched.	

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2014	<p>Lexus collaborates with the multi-faceted and highly talented will.i.am for the <i>Striking Angles</i> campaign for the new NX crossover. The musician-artist designs a one-off version of the car that is unveiled during Paris Fashion Week.</p> <p>In the UK, Lexus is ranked first in the What Car?/ J .D. Power customer satisfaction for a 12th year.</p>	<p>The Lexus NX crossover and RC F high-performance coupé are launched.</p> <p>At the Geneva Motor Show, Lexus also showcases the iridescent, rainbow-adorned RC F GT 3 race car.</p>	<p>The Lexus Torque Vectoring Differential (TVD) is the world's first torque transfer-type torque-vectoring system to be installed in a front-engined, rear-wheel drive sports coupé. TVD enhances traction and control for extraordinary levels of handling and performance.</p>
2015	<p>Lexus partners with experts in superconductor technology to create one of the most advanced hoverboards ever developed. The project forms part of its <i>Amazing in Motion</i> international brand campaign.</p> <p>Lexus becomes the first vehicle manufacturer to win the "Best Entertaining" honour in the Milano Design Awards for its <i>Lexus - A Journey of the Senses</i> exhibit at Milan Design Week.</p>	<p>The fourth generation RX is launched.</p>	<p>Lexus introduces the Lexus Safety System+ package of advanced active safety features, designed to help prevent accidents happening and lessen the consequences if an impact does occur. Features include a Pre-Collision System, Lane Departure Alert and an Adaptive High-beam System.</p> <p>The visionary Lexus LF-FC (Lexus Future-Flagship Car/Fuel Cell) Concept offers a glimpse of the design and technology under consideration for a future flagship saloon that could reach the market around the end of the decade.</p>
2016	<p>Lexus forms a creative collaboration with the actor Jude Law to launch the <i>The Life RX</i>. The international promotional campaign is designed to amplify the qualities and appeal of the new luxury SUV, the 2016 Lexus RX.</p>	<p>The production version of the LF-LC, the Lexus LC, is unveiled.</p>	<p>Lexus develops its Multi Stage Hybrid System for the LC 500h coupé and LS 500h flagship saloon, a next-generation drivetrain technology designed specifically for high-performance vehicles.</p>

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2017	<p>The Lexus Sport Yacht concept is launched in Miami Beach, USA, and is followed shortly afterwards by a futuristic Lexus Skyjet in <i>Valerian</i> and the <i>City of a Thousand Planets</i>, a science fiction film set in the 28th century.</p>	<p>The all-new Lexus LS embraces Japanese <i>takumi</i> craft forms such as <i>kiriko</i> cut glass for interior trim and <i>origami</i> handwork for the hand-pleated door panels. Exquisite laser-cut marquetry is perfected for the Art Wood decoration on the new flagship saloon.</p>	<p>Imaginative new technologies such as the new Multi-Stage Hybrid system and the advanced Lexus Safety System+ A are launched with the all-new Lexus LS flagship saloon. The safety elements include Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Alert and Active Steering Assist, Lexus Co-Drive (Lane Tracing Assist with the Dynamic Radar Cruise Control) and Front Cross Traffic Alert.</p>
2018	<p>Lexus breaks new ground with its <i>Driven by Intuition</i> commercial for the new ES, the world's first advert written entirely by artificial intelligence (AI).</p> <p>THE LOFT by Lexus and Brussels Airlines opens at Brussels Airport, marking the next milestone for the Lexus luxury lifestyle brand.</p>	<p>Inspired by the design of the LS flagship saloon and LC luxury coupé, the provocative yet elegant new ES executive saloon is the first ES to be introduced to Western and Central Europe.</p> <p>Especially designed for European urbanites, the new UX compact crossover displays a fresh yet dynamic approach to contemporary luxury, while the LF-1 Limitless concept explores the future of Lexus luxury SUV design and innovation.</p>	<p>The UX 250h and ES 300h are launched with fourth generation Lexus self-charging hybrid powertrains. Both hybrids feature an incredibly efficient petrol engine, new hybrid transaxle, new compact battery and new power control unit. Both are also capable of running in zero emissions mode for up to 50% of the time.</p>
2019	<p>Marking 30 years of amazing experiences, in February Lexus announces its 10 millionth vehicle sale. Key to this growth is the world's widest range of electrified luxury hybrid cars. More than 1.6 million Lexus self-charging hybrids have been sold since 2005.</p>	<p>The new RC F Track Edition coupé is 55kg lighter than the standard RC and features exclusive motorsport-inspired carbon fibre styling. It makes its European debut at the Geneva Motor Show alongside the new LC Convertible Concept.</p>	<p>The pioneering new RX luxury SUV offers segment-leading levels of safety provided by the world's first BladeScan-type Adaptive High-beam System and latest Lexus Safety System+.</p>

ENDS