

APR 14

THE RIGHT CAR FOR YOU



WHICH ONES TO AVOID

# ConsumerReports®

APRIL 2014 | CONSUMERREPORTS.ORG

ANNUAL  
**AUTO**  
ISSUE

# 2014 BEST CARS

- ✓ FUEL ECONOMY
- ✓ RELIABILITY
- ✓ SAFETY

GREAT CARS  
UNDER \$25,000  
20 expert  
recommendations

TOP PICKS  
Sedans, SUVs,  
luxury cars,  
trucks & more

SAVE  
MONEY  
5 steps to a  
great deal

BEST & WORST  
USED CARS  
Exclusive 12-year  
history



2014 MAZDA3  
33 MPG

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\*\*Guaranteed Savings currently not available in all states. See site for details.

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Volume 79 No. 4



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\$25,000



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### SEE HOW WE TEST CARS

Download the ShopSavvy or RedLaser app to your smart phone to scan the codes in this issue.



## How we test cars



**AUTO TRACK** Consumer Reports' car-testing center includes winding courses and a rock hill.

Consumer Reports is the world's largest independent consumer-product-testing organization. We also survey millions of consumers about their experiences with products and services. We're based in Yonkers, N.Y., and are a nonprofit organization.

The Ratings and reviews in this issue are based on the most comprehensive independent auto-testing program and reliability information of any U.S. publication or website.

▣ **We buy our test cars** anonymously from dealers, just as you would. This past year, we spent \$2.2 million on test cars. Other reviewers base their evaluations on free loaner cars that are handpicked by the automakers.

▣ **We drive our test vehicles** thousands of miles over several months. Most other auto reviews are based on one or two weeks of driving, some on only a day or two.

▣ **Experienced automotive engineers** and their support staff evaluate each test car at our 327-acre Auto Test Center in Connecticut and on public roads, from freeways to twisty two-laners. Our staff members and their families live with the cars to get insights that aren't possible from brief test drives.

▣ **Each vehicle undergoes** more than 50 tests and evaluations, including special tests for braking, accident avoidance, real-world fuel economy, ride comfort, headlight illumination, and cargo space.

▣ **Reliability Ratings** are based on the problems of 1.1 million vehicles, as reported by subscribers in our Annual Auto Survey, which is conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center.

## Tester's notes

Every car we buy goes through more than 50 tests at our track and on the road.

**JAKE FISHER**  
DIRECTOR,  
AUTO TESTING



▣ **Recommended car** These tested well, are reliable, and performed adequately if crash-tested or included in a federal rollover test.

# Up front

Buick Regal



## 5 great cars you may be overlooking

**IN TESTING HUNDREDS OF CARS**, we've found that many widely hyped and popular models don't live up to expectations. And some of the better ones never make it to the radar screen of a lot of

buyers. That's a shame. Here are five models that are worth checking out. All did well in our testing, and we expect them to have good reliability, unless noted. Prices are what we paid for the car.



**LUXURY COMPACT SEDAN**  
**Buick Regal Premium I \$34,485**

Don't let the Buick name fool you: The Regal is a well-honed sports sedan. Our car delivered a taut and steady ride, somewhat sporty handling, and quick steering. The 2.0-liter turbo engine is quick, fairly quiet, and relatively sparing with fuel. The nicely furnished interior has supportive seats and excellent fit and finish. All-wheel drive is optional. An honorable mention goes to the Acura TSX, which has the character of a European sports sedan, very good reliability, agile handling, and a smooth engine. A redesigned model is coming soon, though.



**MIDSIZED SUV**  
**Mazda CX-9 Grand Touring \$38,615**

Despite its size, the CX-9 is fairly agile, especially for an SUV with three rows of seats. The quick steering has nice weight and feedback. Power comes from a smooth and refined 3.7-liter V6, although it delivers only 16 mpg overall. The ride is firm and steady, yet comfortable. You'll find a cabin that's comfy, quiet, and nicely finished. As in many SUVs, the 60/40-split second-row seats slide fore and aft to provide extra leg room for passengers in either the second or third row. The third-row seat is relatively hospitable and easy to access. The CX-9 can also tow a 3,500-pound trailer.



**COMPACT PICKUP**  
**Honda Ridgeline RTS \$30,825**

Honda isn't exactly known for building trucks, but its lone pickup has surprisingly agile handling and a supple, steady ride. The 3.5-liter V6 is quiet, smooth, and responsive. Its 15 mpg is OK for a truck. The roomy crew cab is nicely detailed, with good fit and finish, and easy access to the front and rear seats. The rear wheel wells don't intrude on the 5-foot-long composite cargo bed, and the handy tailgate opens vertically or horizontally. Plus, you get a clever, lockable, all-weather trunk beneath the bed. The Ridgeline is capable in mild off-road conditions and can tow 5,000 pounds.



**SPORTS SEDAN**  
**Volkswagen Jetta GLI Autobahn \$26,835**

The GLI is a sleeper among sports sedans. Compared with standard-fare Jettas, it has a firmer suspension, better brakes, and grippier tires, as well as a nicer interior. The 200-hp turbo four-cylinder engine delivers ample acceleration and a respectable 27 mpg overall with the six-speed manual transmission. The GLI is also easy to live with; a spacious rear seat and large trunk assure a good measure of practicality. We can't recommend it because of insufficient reliability data, but the GLI is a car we would be happy to have in our driveway.



**SMALL SUV**  
**Volkswagen Tiguan SEL \$37,020**

The Tiguan stands out as a premium SUV that delivers a rewarding driving experience. It feels solid and sporty, with sharp steering and secure, agile handling. The 2.0-liter turbo four-cylinder engine is smooth and punchy, although it returned only 21 mpg overall in our tests. The low-profile tires on the SEL trim line make the ride stiff. A better choice might be the lower-trim SE, which rides more quietly and comfortably, and costs \$5,000 less. The cabin looks and feels top-drawer, with good attention to detail. Rear passengers will find the seats roomy and comfortable.

# Latest from the track

Here's a sneak peek at some new and noteworthy vehicles we're currently testing, or have just finished testing, at our Auto Test Center in Connecticut.

## ▶ Mazda3

**Price as tested** \$21,740 (i Touring sedan)  
\$24,040 (i Grand Touring hatchback)  
Redesigned for 2014, the compact Mazda3 combines sporty handling with superior fuel economy and top-notch crash-test scores. The versions we tested, a hatchback with a manual transmission and an automatic-equipped sedan, averaged 32 and 33 mpg, respectively. That's better mileage than you'll get in any other compact car, or even a subcompact, without opting for a hybrid or diesel.

Both cars were equipped with the base 155-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine, which we found had ample power. So there's little reason to go for the livelier—but costlier and 2-mpg thirstier—184-hp 2.5-liter.

We were particularly impressed with the hatchback, which has an almost perfect blend of sportiness and practicality. The shift action is crisp and precise. The Grand Touring trim brings such welcome features as a backup camera, a navigation system, and an up-level infotainment system. Our sedan, in the run-of-the-mill Touring trim, still included push-button start, blind-spot monitoring, and cross-traffic alert.

Downsides? The ride is a bit nervous, the rear seats are tight, and too much noise enters the cabin. Still, many should find it a good choice. We expect above-average reliability.



## ▶ Jeep Cherokee

**Price as tested** \$27,490 (Latitude)  
\$37,525 (Limited)

Based on our experience with the well-built Jeep Grand Cherokee, we had high hopes for the new compact Cherokee SUV. But we came away underwhelmed. On the plus side, the cabin is relatively quiet and has a roomy rear seat. In addition, some features are laudable, such as the nifty UConnect infotainment system and available electronic safety systems. In some versions, a high towing capacity and surprisingly good off-road credentials set the Cherokee apart from the herd.

But Jeep didn't get the basics right. The new nine-speed automatic transmission is unrefined, the ride is choppy, handling lacks agility, and visibility is so-so. The 184-hp 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine feels anemic and averaged just 22 mpg overall. The energetic 271-hp, 3.2-liter V6 is a better choice; it averaged 21 mpg.

The Cherokee seems to be infinitely configurable, with four trim lines and a wide range of options and packages. But no matter which route you take, you're going to wind up paying a lot to get such common features as heated power seats and a backup camera. We tested one each from the middle two trim lines, a four-cylinder Latitude and a Limited V6. The Cherokee has plenty of potential, but it still seems like a work in progress.

## ▶ Chevrolet SS

**Price as tested** \$47,170

Chevrolet's new flagship, the rear-wheel-drive SS, is a modern muscle car that comes off like a Corvette dressed as a stylish family sedan. Built by Holden, GM's Australian brand, the SS shares underpinnings with the Chevy Camaro, but it's far more refined. Under the hood is a strong 415-hp, 6.2-liter V8, which is borrowed from the previous-generation Corvette and mated to a six-speed automatic transmission.

The car's potent power is complemented by a lavishly equipped cabin, with leather upholstery, Chevy's very good MyLink infotainment system, and an automatic self-parking system. Advanced safety gear includes forward-collision alert, lane-departure warning, blind-spot monitors, and a backup camera with cross-traffic alert.

The taut, quick steering and well-controlled suspension keep the SS stable and buttoned down, allowing for sporty, athletic handling. The ride is firm but tolerably compliant, especially for a high-performance car.

Inside, you'll find a very good driving position. Controls are mostly easy to see and use, although the central touch screen can be a bit of a reach. The seats' side bolsters are somewhat aggressive but not too confining, and the spacious rear cabin and good-sized trunk make the SS more practical than the typical muscle car.



## Biggest car-buying gripes

Listen up, car dealers: When we asked our Facebook followers about what annoys them most when buying a car, we got an earful. And across the board, their biggest complaint was how they were treated at dealerships.

By an overwhelming margin, respondents said it was a salesperson who made the experience an unhappy one, followed by the sales or finance manager. Many also complained about having to haggle, about the amount of time it took to close a deal, and about feeling like pawns in a time-consuming game.

Here's a representative sample of their feedback:

**Charles:** "Why do they still do that 'get-up-and-go-check-on-something' rigmarole?"

**Jim:** "The worst part for me is to do all the homework and have the facts and figures with me, and still have a sales/finance manager talk to me like I'm stupid!"

**Dianne:** "Because I am a woman, most dealerships suffer from 'dumb-broad syndrome' and assume I know squat.

I surprised a few salesmen by knowing more than they did about the car."

**Kelly:** "Don't ever ask me if I am the sole decision-maker in my household if I am the only person at the dealership test-driving the vehicle. No sale for that salesperson!"

**Stephen:** "Getting the runaround on the phone when calling with an offer based on Internet pricing. They always say that you really need to come in to talk price, which is a huge time dump."





### ► Kia Soul

**Price as tested** \$24,115

Kia's funky little Soul hatchback has matured a bit with its 2014 redesign, gaining slightly more passenger space and a lot more refinement. In addition to being a nimble and convenient runabout, its big draw might be its long list of high-tech features.

Our midtrim Plus version came with a very sophisticated navigation system, front and rear heated seats, a heated steering wheel, a push-button start system, and a backup camera. It also has the Android-based UVO infotainment system, which communicates through a beautiful high-def touch screen that you can swipe to scroll, like an iPad. At \$24,115, the car is a truly good value, and it's welcome in a class where other automakers nickel-and-dime you to death for most of those features, if they offer them at all.

Most Souls come with a 164-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine paired with an unobtrusive six-speed automatic transmission, which is a combo that delivers more than adequate go-power. A manual shift is available only with the base 130-hp, 1.6-liter engine.

Though the Soul's footprint is rather small, it offers a surprising amount of room, versatility, and ease of access. The car's one drawback is a stiff, jittery ride. People who can look past that might well be tempted.

The most positive comments came from buyers who did their homework. "I researched the real price of the car," Kevin said. "Coming from a position of strength and knowledge helped a great deal. And be willing to walk out, and make it clear you will."

Several also reported good experiences by avoiding the haggling experience entirely, by either buying at a fixed-price location such as CarMax or Costco, or by getting up-front dealer pricing information from a service such as TrueCar or the Consumer Reports Build & Buy service. For expert tips from our car-buying pros, see page 26.

# Best & worst fuel economy

Cars are squeezing more mileage out of fuel. It used to be conventional wisdom that you got the best fuel economy from a small car. But some of today's midsize sedans are getting similar or even more mpg than their pint-sized cousins. Even better are hybrids, which usually top their categories among non-plug-in models. Small electric cars get the equivalent of more than 100 mpg, but their driving range is only about 75 miles between charges. The overall mpg shown is based on city and highway driving in our real-world tests.

## THRIFTIEST

MPG

MPG

### Electric cars and plug-in hybrids

Mitsubishi i-MiEV	111 <sup>1</sup>
Ford Focus Electric	107 <sup>1</sup>
Nissan Leaf SL	106 <sup>1</sup>
Tesla Model S (85 kWh)	84 <sup>1</sup>
Chevrolet Volt	99 <sup>1</sup> /32 <sup>2</sup>
Toyota Prius Plug-in Advanced	67 <sup>1</sup> /43 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Miles-per-gallon equivalent on electric power.

<sup>2</sup> Miles per gallon using gas engine only.

<sup>3</sup> Miles per gallon in normal hybrid mode.

### Small cars

Toyota Prius Four (hybrid)	44
Toyota Prius C Two (hybrid)	43
Honda Civic Hybrid	40
Smart ForTwo Passion	39
Honda Insight EX (hybrid)	38
Volkswagen Jetta Hybrid SE	37
Honda CR-Z EX (hybrid, manual)	35
Scion iQ	34
Volkswagen Jetta TDI (diesel)	34
Chevrolet Cruze Turbo Diesel	33
Fiat 500 Sport (manual)	33
Ford Fiesta SE Sedan	33

### Midsized cars

Toyota Prius V Three (hybrid)	41
Ford Fusion SE Hybrid	39
Toyota Camry Hybrid XLE	38
Ford C-Max Hybrid SE	37
Volkswagen Passat TDI SE (diesel)	37
Hyundai Sonata Hybrid	33
Mazda6 Sport	32
Nissan Altima 2.5S (4-cyl)	31
Honda Accord LX (4-cyl)	30

### Large and luxury cars

Lexus CT 200h (hybrid)	40
Lexus ES 300h (hybrid)	36
Toyota Avalon Hybrid Limited	36
Lincoln MKZ Hybrid	34
Mercedes-Benz E250 BlueTec (diesel)	30
Acura ILX 2.0	28
Audi A7 3.0 TDI (diesel)	28
BMW 328i	28
Mercedes-Benz CLA250	28

### Small SUVs

Mini Cooper Countryman S	26
Subaru Forester 2.5i Premium	26
Subaru XV Crosstrek Premium	26
Mazda CX-5	25

### Midsized SUVs

Hyundai Santa Fe Sport (2.4)	23
Chevrolet Equinox 1LT (4-cyl.)	21
Ford Edge SEL (4-cyl., FWD)	21
Hyundai Santa Fe GLS (V6)	20
Kia Sorento EX (V6)	20

### Large and luxury SUVs

Lexus RX 450h (hybrid)	26
Volkswagen Touareg TDI (diesel)	24
Lexus RX 350	21
Acura MDX Tech	20
Mercedes-Benz GL350 BlueTec (diesel)	20

## THIRSTIEST

MPG

MPG

### Small cars

Scion xB	23
Mitsubishi Lancer ES	25

### Midsized cars

Chrysler 200 Limited (V6)	21
Dodge Avenger SXT (4-cyl)	21
Ford Fusion Titanium (2.0T)	22
Subaru Legacy 3.6R Limited	22

### Large and luxury cars

BMW 750Li	18
Chrysler 300C	18
Hyundai Equus Signature	19
Jaguar XJL Portfolio	19

### Small SUVs

Jeep Cherokee Limited (V6)	21
Jeep Patriot Latitude	21
Kia Sportage SX (2.0T)	21
Volkswagen Tiguan SEL	21

### Midsized SUVs

Dodge Journey Limited (V6)	16
Mazda CX-9 Grand Touring	16
Subaru Tribeca Limited	16

### Large and luxury SUVs

Ford Expedition EL Eddie Bauer	13
Lincoln Navigator Ultimate	13
Nissan Armada Platinum	13



Toyota Prius C

OWNER COST  
\$25KOWNER COST  
\$78K

Mercedes-Benz GL350 BlueTec

# Most & least expensive cars to own

**IF YOU WANT A CAR** that won't cost a lot down the road, consider a hybrid built by Toyota. Among vehicles we've tested, Toyota and Lexus hybrids had the lowest owner-cost estimates in six of the 12 categories we analyzed, thanks in part to their great fuel economy and high resale value. Below are other thrifty choices, and the models that have the highest owner

cost in each category. Our estimates reflect a car's cost during the first five years based on depreciation, fuel, loan interest, insurance premiums, sales tax, and maintenance and repairs. We assume that a car is driven 12,000 miles per year. Vehicles are equipped with typical options and an automatic transmission unless noted.

Type	Thrifty	5-year owner cost	Cost per mile	Expensive	5-year owner cost	Cost per mile
<b>Subcompact cars</b>	Toyota Prius C Two	\$24,600	\$0.41	Hyundai Veloster (base, manual)	\$32,400	\$0.54
<b>Compact cars</b>	Toyota Prius Four	28,200	0.47	Dodge Dart Aero (1.4T)	37,200	0.62
<b>Midsize sedans</b>	Toyota Camry Hybrid XLE	31,800	0.53	Volkswagen Passat SEL Premium (V6)	45,600	0.76
<b>Large cars</b>	Toyota Avalon Hybrid Limited	41,400	0.69	Chrysler 300C	55,800	0.93
<b>Upscale sedans</b>	Buick Verano Leather (2.4)	37,800	0.63	Lexus IS 250 (AWD)	54,000	0.90
	Lexus CT 200h Premium	37,800	0.63			
<b>Luxury sedans</b>	Lexus ES 300h	42,000	0.70	BMW 750Li	106,200	1.77
<b>Sporty cars</b>	Honda Civic Si (manual)	34,800	0.58	Porsche Boxster 2.7 (manual)	64,200	1.07
<b>Small SUVs</b>	Subaru XV Crosstrek Premium	34,200	0.57	Volkswagen Tiguan SEL	48,000	0.80
<b>Midsize SUVs</b>	Hyundai Santa Fe Sport 2.4	36,600	0.61	Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited (V6)	57,000	0.95
<b>Large SUVs</b>	Chevrolet Traverse LT	51,000	0.85	Nissan Armada Platinum	72,000	1.20
<b>Compact luxury SUVs</b>	Mini Cooper Countryman S	37,800	0.63	Cadillac SRX Luxury	57,000	0.95
				Mercedes-Benz GLK350	57,000	0.95
<b>Midsize &amp; large luxury SUVs</b>	Buick Enclave CXL	54,600	0.91	Mercedes-Benz GL350 BlueTec	78,000	1.30

## Cool and not-so-cool features

We see lots of new features while testing about 80 new vehicles each year. Here are some that are worth getting and some that we definitely wouldn't pay extra for.

### Worth looking for

**Voice controls.** Using your voice to operate sophisticated controls is safer and easier than fumbling with a touch screen while driving. The best voice controls, such as those used by the Cadillac CUE and Ford Sync systems, allow you to use natural speech instead of requiring specific commands spoken in order. The latter can be frustrating to use.

**Backup cameras.** Most models are now available with a backup camera. It can be especially valuable in cars with poor rear visibility by helping you avoid backup accidents, guiding you into a tight parking space, and even making it easier to hook up a trailer. We like systems with a big dashboard screen. Systems with lines superimposed on the image to help guide

you when the car is in reverse.

**Cross-traffic alert.** This can help take the guesswork out of backing up in a busy parking lot. It can warn you about a potential collision with a vehicle approaching from either side. Available on many new vehicles, the systems use sensors mounted on the rear bumper and issue a visual and audible warning when danger is detected.

**In-car apps.** The infotainment systems in some models, such as Ford's Sync and Toyota's Entune, include built-in apps that stream data through a smart phone to let you listen to Internet radio, search the Web, make restaurant reservations, and more. The options vary by carmaker and are evolving. Make sure to get a thorough explanation of what's available with any model that you're considering.

**Heated steering wheels.** A nice luxury on cold mornings, these were available only on high-end models until recently. Now they're within the reach of drivers shopping for more mainstream cars, such as the Ford Fusion sedan and compact Kia Forte and Soul.

**Automatic high beams.** Adding a measure of safety and good manners, these high beams automatically dim your headlights to avoid blinding other drivers and switch back to high beams when the road is clear. They're available on models from Chrysler, Jeep, Mercedes-Benz, and others.

**Hands-free entry.** This lets you unlock and lock the car's doors without having to remove the key from your pocket or purse. A sensor detects when the key is close to the vehicle and activates the system. It's a great when your hands are full.

# Double-check these features before you buy

Today's new cars are full of surprises that didn't exist when many people bought their last vehicle. Here are five things that you could easily overlook when car shopping. They could become rude surprises down the road.

**1 Smart-phone compatibility.** Many cars now come with Bluetooth wireless phone capability, but not all systems work with all phones. So as part of your pre-purchase walk-around, make sure to pair your phone and test all the features.

**2 Infotainment controls.** Many modern cars come with large, in-dash screens through which you can control the audio, climate, navigation, and communication systems. But some systems are overly complicated and very distracting to use while driving. Moreover, infotainment systems such as the Cadillac CUE and MyLincoln Touch use touch-sensitive buttons that are difficult to operate accurately, especially in a moving car (see below). During your test drive, try some typical functions, such as changing the radio volume, setting a radio preset, adjusting the



CHILD SEAT: GILKIS-EMILKE VAN WYK/GETTY IMAGES

temperature and airflow direction, and turning on seat heaters to see how easy or distracting it is.

**3 Performance tires.** Big wheels might look cool, but the high-performance, low-profile tires they come with can be impractical and expensive. Many mainstream sedans come with performance tires that are more expensive to replace. And even some SUVs come with summer tires that aren't suitable for snow. So before you commit to a car, make sure its tires meet your needs and that you know how much they will cost to replace.

**4 No spares.** More cars are coming with no spare tire; all you get is a can of sealant and maybe an air compressor. If you blow out a sidewall, however, you'll need a tow. Check to see whether your car has a spare or a sealant kit, and if it does, make sure you know how to use it.

**5 Child-seat fit.** Even with today's "easy to use" LATCH anchors, our child-seat experts have trouble installing some seats securely. So take your child seats with you on your test drive to ensure that you can get a snug fit.



## Best cars under \$25,000

With average prices for new vehicles topping \$32,000, a lot of people must be wondering whether it's still possible to get a good car for an affordable price. You bet it is. Here we list 20 good-performing, reliable vehicles that we recommend, all of them with sticker prices of less than \$25,000. Prices include destination charges, typical options, and an automatic transmission, except where noted. Rebates, incentives, and smart negotiating can bring the price even lower (see page 26). The cars are listed in alphabetical order, by category.

MODEL	PRICE
<b>SMALL SEDANS</b>	
Chevrolet Sonic LT (1.8)	\$18,290
Honda Civic EX	21,605
Honda Civic Si (manual)	23,175
Hyundai Elantra SE	19,010
Kia Rio EX	18,450
Mazda3 i Touring	21,740
Subaru Impreza Premium	23,065
Toyota Corolla LE Plus	20,652
<b>MIDSIZE SEDANS</b>	
Honda Accord LX (4-cyl.)	\$23,270
Hyundai Sonata GLS (2.4)	22,495
Kia Optima LX (2.4)	22,775
Mazda6 Sport	23,590
Subaru Legacy 2.5i Premium	24,189
Toyota Camry LE (4-cyl.)	23,830
<b>HATCHBACKS</b>	
Mazda3 i Grand Touring (manual)	\$24,040
Subaru Impreza Sport Premium	22,565
<b>WAGONS</b>	
Mazda5 Touring	\$23,065
Scion xB	18,612
<b>SMALL SUVs</b>	
Subaru Forester 2.5i	\$23,820
Subaru XV Crosstrek Premium	24,215



**20/20 HINDSIGHT** A backup camera helps you see what's behind your car and where it's going while in reverse.

### ▶ Don't bother

**Adaptive headlights.** They turn with the front wheels and are intended to help you see into curves better. We have found them to be helpful when driving at slower speeds on twisty roads, but they're often part of an expensive lighting package.

**HD radio.** It's advertised as having better fidelity than conventional AM/FM signals, but we've seen little benefit on the road. It's offered by most major carmakers. We've found that the signals tend to come and go, resulting in annoying changes in sound quality.

**Touch-sensitive capacitive switches.** In place of conventional switches and knobs, capacitive switches are meant to respond to a quick tap or swipe of a finger. They're used in models including some from Cadillac and Lincoln, but we've found that they just don't work very well. Alternative voice and steering-wheel controls can be easier, but they don't provide all of the functions.

# Top Picks

## The best models in 10 categories

**ALL-AROUND WINNERS.** That, in essence, is what our Top Picks are. Each is an exceptional, well-rounded vehicle, chosen from more than 260 we've recently tested. They have excelled in our testing, are reliable, and have performed well in independent crash tests. In other words, it's hard to go wrong with any of them.

Our 2014 picks include models from eight automakers; only Honda and Subaru earned more than one spot. And there are four new winners: the slick, electric-powered Tesla Model S; the impressive Subaru Forester

and Hyundai Santa Fe SUVs; and the freshened Ram 1500 pickup truck, which is the first Chrysler model to make the list in 16 years.

### What it takes

Top Picks must meet our criteria in three areas:

**Test performance.** Each must rank at or near the top of its class in our overall test score.

**Reliability.** Each must have an average or better reliability Rating, based on the problems our subscribers reported on 1.1 million vehicles in our latest Annual Auto Survey conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center.

**Safety.** Top Picks must perform adequately

if included in crash or rollover tests conducted by the government or insurance industry.

We show each model's overall road-test score, predicted-reliability Rating, and the overall fuel economy we measured. Multiple Ratings apply to different versions. Prices reflect the sticker prices when we bought our tested cars.

 **SEE THE TOP PICKS ON OUR TRACK**

Use your smart phone to download the RedLaser or ShopSavvy app and scan the code for the video.



### ✓ BEST OVERALL

## Tesla Model S

Sure, you can talk about this electric luxury car's blistering acceleration, razor-sharp handling, compliant ride, and versatile cabin, which can fit a small third-row seat. But that just scratches the surface of this technological tour de force. The Tesla is brimming with innovation. Its massive, easy-to-use 17-inch touch screen controls most functions. And with its totally keyless operation, full Internet access, and ultra-quiet, zero-emission driving experience, the Tesla is a glimpse into a future where cars and computers coexist

#### REPORT CARD

Test score: 99

Reliability: ○

Overall mpg: 84\*

in seamless harmony. Its 225-mile driving range and 5-hour charges, using Tesla's special connector, also make it the easiest, most practical, albeit pricey, electric car to live with. **\$89,650.**



\*Miles-per-gallon equivalent (MPGe).



## ■ MIDSIZED SEDAN

# Honda Accord (4-cyl.)

The four-cylinder Accord occupies a true sweet spot in today's auto market. It's a roomy, well-equipped, and competitively priced sedan that gets a lot right. The four-cylinder Accord squeezes out an impressive 30 mpg overall and 40 on the highway, which is as good as the tiny Honda Fit subcompact. Handling is agile, although the ride isn't quite as comfortable as that in some competitors. Just avoid the HondaLink infotainment system that comes on EX-L versions; we can't recommend those versions because of reliability problems. **\$23,270.**

REPORT CARD
Test score: 90
Reliability: ○
Overall mpg: 30



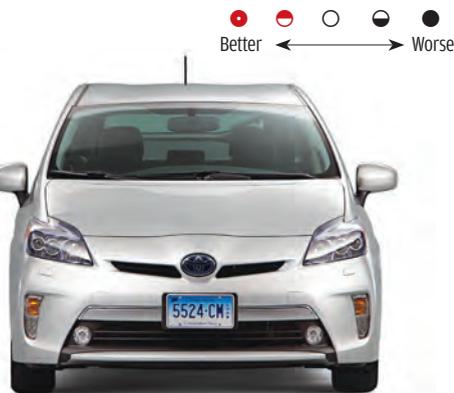
## ■ COMPACT CAR

# Subaru Impreza

The all-wheel-drive Impreza gives you a lot for its affordable price. Both sedan and hatchback versions are well-rounded packages, with nimble handling and an impressively compliant, absorbent ride that's among the best in its class. Fuel economy is also commendable for an AWD car. And the Impreza is easy to live with, thanks to a roomy interior, spacious rear seat, simple controls, and refreshingly good visibility.

REPORT CARD
Test score: 79-82
Reliability: ○
Overall mpg: 26-27

Our only serious gripe is pronounced road noise. But it's no deal breaker. **Sedan: \$21,345; hatchback: \$22,345.**



## ■ GREEN CAR

# Toyota Prius

Today's showrooms have no shortage of hybrids. But none can match the combination of affordability, practicality, and fuel efficiency that the Prius delivers. That's why it has captured our Green Car pick for the 11th year in a row. Its 44 mpg overall is still the best we've measured in any five-passenger, non-plug-in vehicle. And its roomy interior and hatchback versatility make it practical. Skip the slow, noisy Prius C econobox. The 41-mpg Prius V wagon is

REPORT CARD
Test score: 79
Reliability: ●
Overall mpg: 44

efficient and roomy, but it did poorly in an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety crash test. **\$26,750.**



## ■ LUXURY CAR

# Audi A6

Simply put, the A6 is a joy to drive. Its potent, supercharged V6 engine and super-smooth eight-speed automatic transmission deliver invigorating power. Its agile handling is complemented by a comfortable ride. Inside you're treated to a sumptuous, impeccably finished, first-class cabin that's brimming with the latest high-tech features. And the A6 returns a respectable 22 mpg overall, even with all-wheel drive; the diesel-powered TDI delivers 28 mpg.

REPORT CARD
Test score: 93
Reliability: ○
Overall mpg: 22

Yes, some controls take getting used to, so you may have extra homework. It's worth cramming. **\$56,295.**

● Better ← → Worse ●

## SPORTS SEDAN

### BMW 328i

The 3 Series has long set the standard for sports sedans. And the current model delivers excellent handling and a high fun-to-drive factor. It's also roomier, more luxurious, and more fuel-efficient than past models. The 328i's 2.0-liter, turbocharged four-cylinder engine is quick and thrifty, posting 28 mpg overall, which is best among gas-powered models in its class. Ride comfort and fit and finish are also impressive, although

#### REPORT CARD

Test score: 86

Reliability: ○

Overall mpg: 28

the rear seat is a bit snug. A diesel version, called the 328d, is new for 2014. **\$43,195.**



● ○ ● ● ●  
Better ← → Worse

## SMALL SUV

### Subaru Forester

The Forester climbed to the top of its class after its 2014 redesign. With a space-efficient design and large windows and doors, this user-friendly SUV provides the easiest access and best visibility in its category. It has an excellent driving position, simple controls, and one of the roomiest rear seats in the category. Plus the Forester delivers a class-leading 26 mpg overall and a frugal 35 on the highway. OK, the ride is a bit firm and the in-car electronics are behind the curve; there's still room for improvement. **\$26,814.**

#### REPORT CARD

Test score: 88

Reliability: ●

Overall mpg: 26



## MIDSIZED SUV

### Hyundai Santa Fe

Redesigned for 2013, the seven-passenger Santa Fe is one of the most pleasant and well-rounded SUVs. This spacious vehicle provides a comfortable ride, a quiet interior, a limolike rear seat, and generous cargo area. Yet the Santa Fe doesn't feel too bulky to drive or park. Its smooth, refined 290-hp V6 engine delivers a decent 20 mpg overall. And the Santa Fe offers a lot of features for the money,

#### REPORT CARD

Test score: 83

Reliability: ○

Overall mpg: 20

including a standard backup camera. But the tiny third-row seat is for kids only. **\$36,290.**



## MINIVAN

### Honda Odyssey

The Odyssey is the most complete family vehicle you can buy. It can easily carry up to eight people, and the comfy second- and third-row seats can be configured in myriad ways to accommodate a wide range of cargo- and passenger-carrying needs. Other highlights include easy access, excellent child-seat accommodations, a quiet interior, and plenty of cabin storage. Decent fuel economy helps, too. The Odyssey is also relatively fun to drive for a minivan, with

#### REPORT CARD

Test score: 86

Reliability: ○

Overall mpg: 21

its vigorous V6 engine, responsive handling, and supple ride. A backup camera is standard. **\$36,830.**



## PICKUP TRUCK

### Ram 1500

With its 2013 freshening, the Ram is surprisingly refined and inviting. A coil-spring rear suspension—unique for full-sized pickups—makes it the most comfortable-riding truck. And the whisper-quiet cabin makes it feel like a luxury vehicle. Still, the Ram is fully capable of getting its hands dirty when duty calls. The 5.7-liter V8 and new eight-speed automatic transmission deliver effortless power while returning a relatively good 15 mpg overall.

#### REPORT CARD

Test score: 78

Reliability: ○

Overall mpg: 15

The Chevrolet Silverado outscored the Ram in our testing, but its reliability is unknown. **\$42,810.**





# Who makes the best cars?

Lexus is tops, with Acura and Audi challenging

**A** LOT CAN GO WRONG when building cars—especially ones packed with luxury features and advanced technology, such as hybrid powertrains and cutting-edge infotainment systems. That’s why it’s quite impressive that Lexus, Toyota’s luxury brand, earned the highest score in our brand report cards for the second straight year. Its models are usually quiet, comfortable, and fuel efficient, and they’re among the most reliable cars made.

Following close behind Lexus, which scored 79, are two rivals: Acura, the luxury division of Honda, and Audi, Volkswagen’s luxury brand.

With models that are reliable, well-finished, and somewhat sporty, Acura earned a score of 75. Audi came in at 74, thanks to its cars’ well-crafted interiors, nice handling, and good gas mileage from its range of modern, efficient engines. Plus, Audi models have shown improved reliability.

## Making the grade

Our brand report cards are intended to show which brands are making the best all-around vehicles, based on how their models perform in our comprehensive road tests and how they rate in reliability based on subscribers telling us their experiences with 1.1 million vehicles.

We calculate each brand’s overall score using an equally weighted composite of our road-test and reliability scores for each of its models that we’ve tested and for which our subscribers have provided reliability data in our Annual Auto Survey. To be included, each brand needs at least three models for which we have test and reliability data. This year we don’t have report cards for Fiat, Jaguar, Land Rover, Lincoln, Mini, Mitsubishi, Porsche, Ram, Scion, Smart, and Tesla because we have too few currently tested models from those makes or we lack sufficient reliability data to make a valid comparison.

Here are other notable findings:

- Japanese brands dominated, taking seven

of the top eight spots. Following the three highest-scoring are Subaru, Toyota, Mazda, Honda, and Infiniti. The only Japanese brand that wasn’t in the upper half is Nissan, which ranks 18th out of the 23 makes in our analysis.

- At the other end of the spectrum, Jeep and Ford tied for the lowest score. Jeep has a mix of spotty reliability and mediocre road-test results, and Ford continues to have reliability problems, especially with its MyFord Touch system.

- Audi’s luxurious, fun-to-drive, and fuel-efficient cars earned it the highest overall average road-test score of 83. Mercedes-Benz followed at 81, and Chrysler, Infiniti, and Subaru tied at 80. Jeep has the lowest road-test score, dragged down by the Wrangler, which scored 20 points; the dated Compass and Patriot; and the unimpressive new Cherokees.

- Lexus is the only brand to achieve an excellent overall reliability score, with the following six makes earning a very good rating. Only Cadillac, Dodge, and Ford had a below-average reliability score.

- In general, luxury brands outperformed their mainstream stablemates. In other words, Lexus outscored Toyota, Acura was higher than Honda, Audi outpaced Volkswagen, and Infiniti fared far better than Nissan. The only exception was Cadillac, which scored the lowest of any of General Motors’ brands, based mainly on problems with the XTS’ CUE infotainment system.

### A domestic mixed bag

The bottom five brands are from Detroit: Jeep, Ford, Dodge, Cadillac, and Chevrolet. The top American makes—Buick, GMC, and Chrysler—scored midpack.

The reasons are varied: Ford struggles with widespread reliability problems, particularly with its MyFord Touch and MyLincoln Touch infotainment systems and with the automatic transmissions in the Focus and Fiesta. The fact that so many of its recent models are nice to drive gives it fairly high test scores. Ford began re-vamping its model lineup in 2010 with the Explorer and Fiesta, followed recently by the Escape, Fusion, C-Max, and Focus. And most have had teething problems.

Last year's leading U.S. brand, Cadillac, ran into similar problems with its CUE system, but it didn't affect a wide swath of cars. Cadillac dropped six places after replacing its large DTS with the XTS and introducing the small ATS. The redesigned



Lexus ES



Acura MDX

## Both Lexus and Acura outscored their non-luxury siblings from Toyota and Honda.

CTS sports sedan is engaging to drive, but a tight rear seat and trunk and complicated controls hurt its road-test score.

GM has recently revamped most of its cars and pickups, and the redesigned Impala and Silverado impressed us in our tests, boosting Chevy's average road-test score. But we lack reliability data on the new models. We have yet to test the redesigned Corvette, and the Tahoe and Suburban SUVs, which go on sale this spring. Among the rest of the GM lineup, reliability is inconsistent: Though the Buick LaCrosse V6 and the Chevrolet

Camaro and Cruze are subpar, the Chevrolet Malibu and Sonic are average. Some new models score well in our tests, but there aren't enough to make up for the inconsistent reliability.

Chrysler is still reworking its model lineup. For example, the updated Jeep Grand Cherokee and Dodge Durango have performed quite well in our tests. But the Jeep has poor reliability and the Dodge has unknown reliability, so we can't recommend either. The Chrysler 300 is a polished luxury car and is fairly reliable. But too many lack-luster older models weigh down Chrysler's

## Brand report cards

Each brand's overall score is a composite of the average road-test score for each of its models we've tested, along with each brand's average predicted-reliability score for tested models, based on the problems reported by subscribers in our Annual Auto Survey. For a brand to be included, we require test and reliability data for at least three models.

Better ← → Worse

**Lexus** Overall score **79**

**Average road-test score: 77**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 78%**

Lexus makes quiet, plush, and very reliable cars, but most aren't very engaging to drive. The GS 350 is an exception. Its hybrids are fuel efficient. The new IS sedan disappoints, however.

**Acura** Overall score **75**

**Average road-test score: 79**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 83%**

The MDX, RLX, and TL are enjoyable to drive and offer an inviting blend of luxury and reliability. Though the ILX and RLX are reliable, they aren't as fun or as rewarding.

**Audi** Overall score **74**

**Average road-test score: 83**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 50%**

Audis are beautifully finished, with smooth, efficient engines and responsive handling. Audi makes some of the top cars we've tested and offers a range of fuel-sipping engines, including diesels.

**Infiniti** Overall score **69**

**Average road-test score: 80**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 63%**

Nissan's luxury division builds quiet, nicely finished, and powerful cars and SUVs. But their fuel economy lags behind the class leaders, and reliability trails Lexus and Acura.

**Mercedes-Benz** Overall score **68**

**Average road-test score: 81**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 50%**

Mercedes-Benz models usually deliver plush rides, excellent handling, comfortable seats, and up-to-date electronic features with straightforward controls. The new CLA is an exception.

**BMW** Overall score **66**

**Average road-test score: 78**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 67%**

BMW's are engaging to drive, but they may not be quite the ultimate driving machines. Most are fuel efficient and comfortable, but some lack either the driving dynamics of yesteryear or top-notch reliability.

**Volvo** Overall score **66**

**Average road-test score: 71**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 60%**

Solid and staid as ever, Volvos keep you comfortable while providing many of the latest safety aids. But they're not the most refined vehicles.

**Hyundai** Overall score **60**

**Average road-test score: 76**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 50%**

A bargain alternative, Hyundai builds good cars that are well-rounded and comfortable, with good fuel economy. But reliability is just average.

**Volkswagen** Overall score **59**

**Average road-test score: 77**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 46%**

With powertrain updates, improved ride comfort, and responsive handling, VW is getting back to building enjoyable vehicles. But its reliability record is spotty.

**Nissan** Overall score **59**

**Average road-test score: 70**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 28%**

Recent redesigns have left Nissan lagging its Japanese competitors in reliability and refinement. The Murano is still worth considering, but older models need updates.

**Chevrolet** Overall score **56**

**Average road-test score: 70**

**Reliability:**

**Recommended vehicles: 28%**

Nice interiors, cushy rides, and smooth powertrains are the ice cream on this apple pie. But fuel economy isn't top-notch and reliability is inconsistent.



Audi Q5



Subaru Impreza Sport

## Audi earned the highest overall road-test score: 83. Most Subarus are very reliable.

brands, including older Jeeps, the Chrysler Town & Country minivan, and the Dodge Journey. The Dart falls short, and the new Jeep Cherokee isn't competitive enough.

### European models advance

European brands improved somewhat this year, spearheaded mainly by Audi, with its impressive A6 and diesel-powered A7 TDI. Mercedes-Benz placed ninth in the rankings, moving up one place over last year. BMW and Volvo tied with an overall score of 66. BMW gained two places, and Volvo jumped from 19th place last year to

11th this year because we lack reliability data on the ancient XC90 and excluded the now-discontinued C70. Volkswagen held pat mostly, scoring 59. Though it has a number of high-scoring cars in our tests, several have reliability problems, which dragged down the brand's overall score.

### Asian brands diverge

Hyundai and Kia rank in the lower third, between the best American brands and the stragglers. Honda's troublesome new infotainment system hurt reliability on high-end versions of the Accord, but it

didn't drag down the brand significantly. Nissan dropped five places following reliability problems with redesigns of the Pathfinder and the mid-sized Altima. The Sentra and Versa marked backward steps in our testing. The older Armada and Titan were extremely unreliable, as well.

Overall, you can't go far wrong choosing a car from one of the top Japanese automakers in our rankings. Subaru builds a range of all-wheel-drive cars and SUVs with very good fuel economy and solid reliability, except for the rear-wheel-drive BRZ sports coupe. Toyota builds impressive hybrids and very reliable cars that are quiet and comfortable but rarely engaging. Mazda has come on strong with models that deliver impressive fuel economy while still being fun to drive. Honda is another consistent performer, delivering well-constructed cars that perform well in our tests and hold up over the long haul.



**Subaru**

Overall score **72**

Average road-test score: 80

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 78%

Subarus are simple, dependable, and fuel-efficient, and usually provide standard all-wheel drive—plus some are also great fun to drive. But they often lack modern connectivity features and can be noisy.



**Toyota**

Overall score **72**

Average road-test score: 71

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 62%

Toyota's forte is building solid, reliable cars, and most are pleasant, comfortable, and quiet. Its hybrids are impressive. But few models are fun to drive.



**Mazda**

Overall score **71**

Average road-test score: 77

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 70%

Mazdas are sporty to drive and provide very good reliability. They successfully blend ownership and driving satisfaction. But they usually ride stiffly and are noisier than most other brands.



**Honda**

Overall score **70**

Average road-test score: 73

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 57%

Most Hondas satisfy the right brain with great reliability and the left brain with responsiveness and comfort. Sportiness is often lacking, but they are fuel-efficient and functional.



**Buick**

Overall score **63**

Average road-test score: 74

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 67%

Buicks are comfortable, quiet, smooth-riding, and beautifully trimmed. The well-honed Regal and large LaCrosse are changing the brand's stodgy image.

**GMC GMC**

Overall score **63**

Average road-test score: 73

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 25%

GMC's models are mechanical twins to Chevrolet's SUVs and trucks, with some having more upscale trim. They're nicely finished and practical but don't really stand out.



**Chrysler**

Overall score **62**

Average road-test score: 80

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 67%

The 300 is a classic luxury car with good handling, a nice interior, decent reliability, and power and style to spare. Though older models hold the brand back, the new 200 could bring some needed change.



**Kia**

Overall score **61**

Average road-test score: 76

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 30%

Like its Hyundai sister brand, Kia builds well-rounded, functional models that rapidly improve with every redesign.



**Cadillac**

Overall score **54**

Average road-test score: 73

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 25%

Cadillac makes some great-handling, stylish, and luxurious cars, but they are dragged down in both testing and reliability by their complicated controls.

**Dodge Dodge**

Overall score **53**

Average road-test score: 69

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: None

The recently updated Durango is an excellent SUV but has unproven reliability. Only the mediocre Dart with its base engine is reliable. Other models aren't competitive.



**Ford**

Overall score **50**

Average road-test score: 73

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: 27%

Newer designs have subpar reliability and so-so fuel economy, but they drive like European sports sedans. Its hybrids have excellent fuel economy. MyFord Touch is a problem.

**Jeep Jeep**

Overall score **50**

Average road-test score: 54

Reliability:

Recommended vehicles: None

Though the Grand Cherokee is a great performer, it's unreliable. Older models are crude and outdated, and the new Cherokee isn't that competitive.

# The road to self-driving cars

Today's crash-avoidance systems are the mile markers to tomorrow's autonomous vehicles

**T**HIS SCENARIO may not be as far away as you think: You get into your car in the morning and start to back out of the driveway. Suddenly you hear a warning sound, telling you that a vehicle coming down the street will intersect your path. Your car applies the brakes on its own while the vehicle passes harmlessly by. You continue to drive and get on the highway, then press a button, take your hands off the wheel, and reach for your coffee. The car takes over the steering, centering itself in the lane and following the vehicle ahead at a safe distance. As you reach your exit, you take back control and get off the highway. Another car cuts you off at an intersection, however, and your car immediately sounds an alert and applies the brakes, avoiding a collision. When you reach your destination, you get out of the car and press a button, and the vehicle parks itself.

No, that isn't science fiction. Most of the technology needed to make the scenario an everyday reality already exists, either in today's production vehicles or in prototypes being tested on public roads (see "Behind the Wheel of a Self-driving Car," on page 18). Though there is a lot of talk about self-driving, or autonomous, cars coming at some indefinite future, those types of real-world crash-avoidance systems are already taking us step-by-step toward that goal.

At this time, for example, we're testing the redesigned 2014 Mercedes-Benz S550 at our track. Among its many features is a system, designed as an aid in congested traffic, that allows the car to virtually drive itself. It automatically maintains a set distance behind a car in front, speeding up and slowing down as necessary. It keeps

itself centered in the driving lane and brakes when necessary to maintain a safe distance from other vehicles. All that it requires is for the driver to keep one hand on the steering wheel. The new BMW X5 SUV has similar systems. And additional models with those and even more advanced features will be showing up every year.

## Taking control

Research shows that 90 percent of crashes are caused by human error. That's why the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and every major automaker are increasingly focusing on systems that allow the vehicle to become a partner in the drive by monitoring a car's surroundings, warning the driver of danger, and even taking control of the car in some situations. "For the past 40 years, we've been working on protecting people from the crash," says David Strickland, NHTSA's former administrator. "This is the new North Star, making sure the crash never happens."

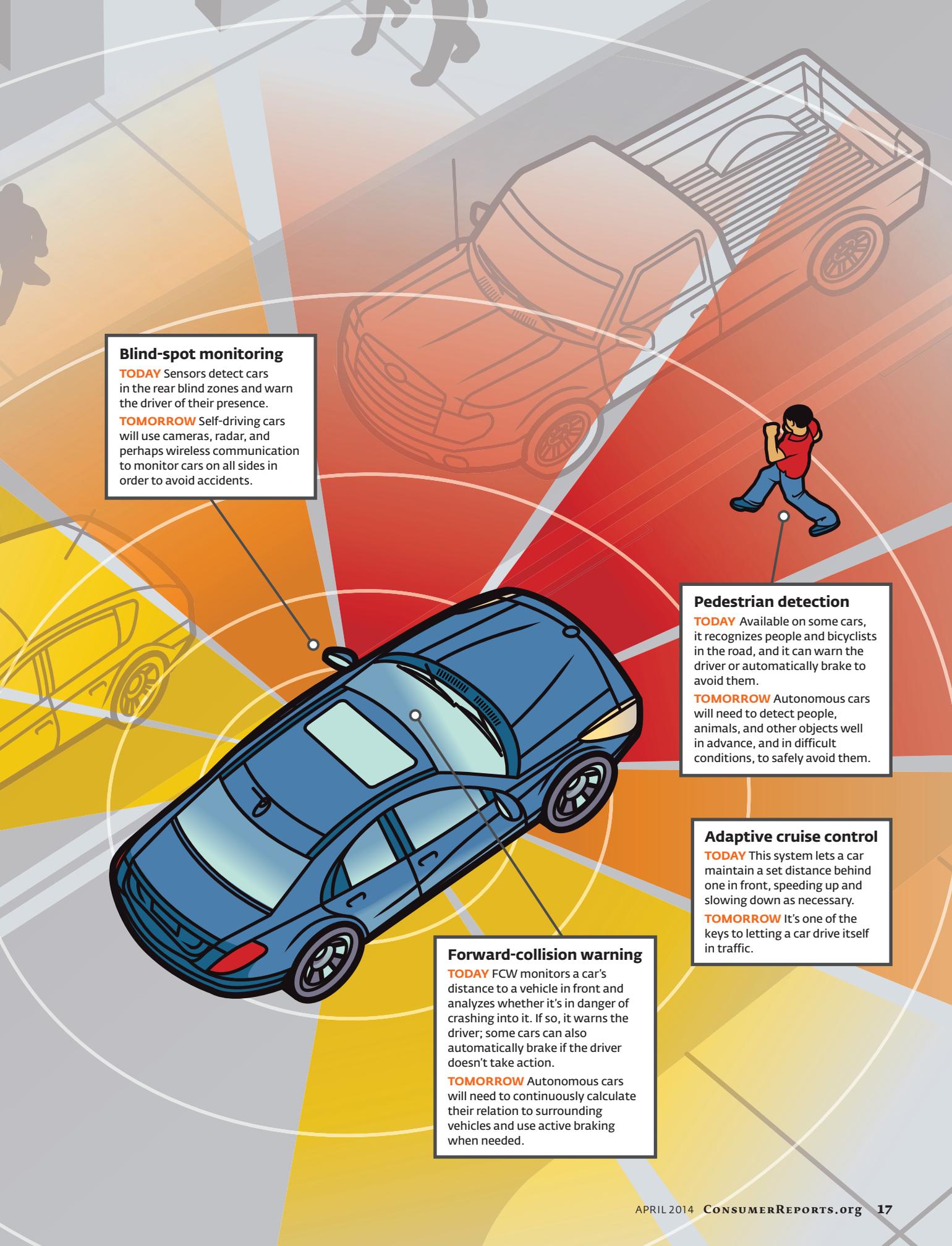
Overall, the advanced safety systems are just getting warmed up, but they are already showing promise in reducing the number of accidents and fatalities on today's roads. Here's a rundown of advances you can find in showrooms that are also the building blocks of tomorrow's autonomous cars.

**Looking down the road.** One of the most promising features is forward-collision warning (FCW). It uses sensors or cameras to monitor the distance between your car and one in front. If the system calculates that you are at risk of hitting that vehicle, it alerts you through an audible and visual warning. It can also pre-charge the brakes to provide maximum braking power to the

### Lane-departure warning

**TODAY** The system warns the driver if the car starts drifting out of its lane. Some actively direct the car back.

**TOMORROW** Effective lane monitoring is essential for a car to drive itself in traffic. A future challenge will be developing cars that can safely change lanes.

An illustration of a blue car from a top-down perspective, centered on a road with lane markings. The car is surrounded by several overlapping circular sensor beams in white and yellow. Four callout boxes with white backgrounds and black borders are connected to the car by thin lines. In the background, there are faint, semi-transparent illustrations of a white van and a red pickup truck, and a pedestrian in a red shirt and blue pants walking. The overall background is a mix of grey, orange, and yellow geometric shapes.

### Blind-spot monitoring

**TODAY** Sensors detect cars in the rear blind zones and warn the driver of their presence.

**TOMORROW** Self-driving cars will use cameras, radar, and perhaps wireless communication to monitor cars on all sides in order to avoid accidents.

### Pedestrian detection

**TODAY** Available on some cars, it recognizes people and bicyclists in the road, and it can warn the driver or automatically brake to avoid them.

**TOMORROW** Autonomous cars will need to detect people, animals, and other objects well in advance, and in difficult conditions, to safely avoid them.

### Adaptive cruise control

**TODAY** This system lets a car maintain a set distance behind one in front, speeding up and slowing down as necessary.

**TOMORROW** It's one of the keys to letting a car drive itself in traffic.

### Forward-collision warning

**TODAY** FCW monitors a car's distance to a vehicle in front and analyzes whether it's in danger of crashing into it. If so, it warns the driver; some cars can also automatically brake if the driver doesn't take action.

**TOMORROW** Autonomous cars will need to continuously calculate their relation to surrounding vehicles and use active braking when needed.

driver, and some systems tighten the seat belts in preparation for a collision. A few FCW systems go a step further by automatically braking the car if the driver does not respond quickly enough. Volvo's City Safety and Subaru's EyeSight systems, for example, can do that at speeds up to 30 mph. Even if a car can't avoid a crash altogether, it can reduce the severity of the impact and the chance of injury and damage by reducing the vehicle's speed.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) has seen a 7 percent reduction in crashes for vehicles with a basic forward-collision warning system, and a 14 to 15 percent reduction for those with automatic braking. "Even in the cases where these systems failed to prevent a crash, if there's automatic braking going on, or if the driver does brake in response to a warning, that crash is going to be less severe than it would have been otherwise," says David Zuby, senior researcher at IIHS. Because the effectiveness of

FCW systems can vary from one model to the next, IIHS recently began testing cars equipped with them. It factors those results, along with its various crash tests, into whether vehicles earn its coveted Top Safety Pick+ designation. You can review its results by going to [iihs.org](http://iihs.org). NHTSA does not evaluate individual systems, but it

## Modern systems let the Mercedes S550 virtually drive itself.

does list which models have FCW on its website, at [safercar.gov](http://safercar.gov), along with its own crash-test results.

FCW is standard on many luxury cars, and it's beginning to show up as an available feature on some mainstream models, such as the Chevrolet Traverse, Ford Edge,

and Honda Accord. Automatic braking isn't as widely available in lower-priced models, but it's an option in the redesigned Mazda3's Grand Touring and Subaru Forester. The Jeep Cherokee also provides limited autonomous braking.

**An extra set of eyes.** Many crashes occur when a car inadvertently runs into an unseen vehicle while changing lanes. A blind-spot monitoring system is designed to prevent that by monitoring the area next to and behind the car. If a vehicle is present, it will illuminate a warning light in or near the side-view mirror. If you activate a turn signal while a car is there, the system could send a stronger alert, such as a blinking light or an audible warning, to tell the driver that it's unsafe to move over.

Though that feature is widely available and has worked well in vehicles we've tested, studies haven't been able to link it to a reduction in crashes.

A rear cross-traffic alert system is often paired with blind-spot monitoring because

## Behind the wheel of a self-driving car

**While the major automakers** are developing autonomous vehicles behind closed doors, we were able to experience Audi's latest prototype at Las Vegas' CES show in January. California, Florida, Michigan, and Nevada are the only states, along with Washington, D.C., that currently allow companies to test such vehicles on public roads.

Audi's A7 test car is equipped with the company's traffic-jam assist feature, which uses an array of cameras, sensors, and radar to let the car take over the driving in highway traffic. In the driver's seat was Björn Giesler, Ph.D., project leader for development of piloted driving at Audi AG, and in the backseat was an engineer equipped with a laptop and radio to monitor the system and communicate with our police escorts and other Audi vehicles.

During rush-hour traffic, we headed out on Route 15, one of Las Vegas' major freeways. With the vehicle's speed under 40 mph, a notification appeared that the system's pilot mode was available. Then with the push of a button on the steering wheel, the car took control and



**NO HANDS, NO FEET** Audi's A7 prototype can drive itself in rush-hour traffic, as demonstrated by the company's Björn Giesler.

the instrument cluster graphic changed to an illustration of the road with vehicles in the lanes.

As Giesler took his hands off the wheel and his foot off the pedals, the vehicle seamlessly followed the car in front at a safe distance. When a vehicle cut into our lane, the A7 automatically slowed down and adjusted the distance. When that car moved out of the lane, our car again closed the gap with the next car

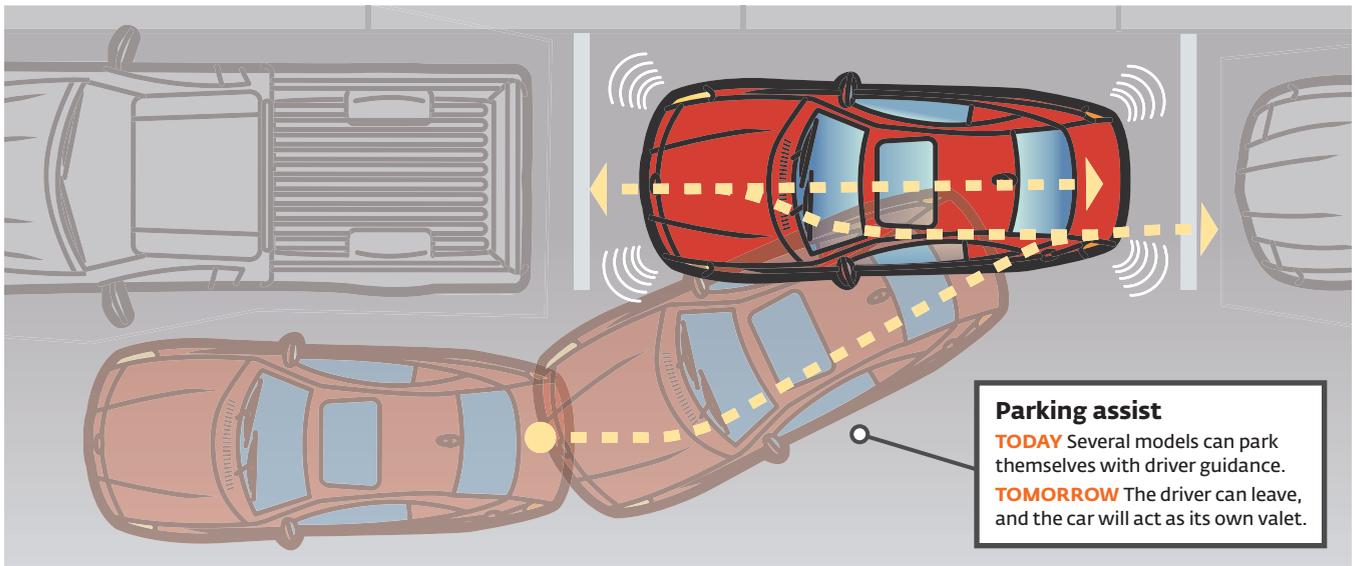
in front. The driver can turn off the system at any time by placing his hands on the steering wheel and foot back on the pedals.

With the A7 in control, the driver could do other things, although sleeping was not one of them. The vehicle was equipped with two cameras with facial recognition that monitored the driver's eyes. Giesler showed off that feature in an unnerving moment. "I don't want to lie to

you, this is still pretty scary for me," he said as he pretended to sleep. After about 10 seconds the vehicle noticed. An audible alert sounded and, when he still didn't open his eyes, the vehicle shut down in the middle of the highway and activated the hazard lights. That is a safeguard on the prototype A7 in case the driver is ill or incapacitated. But production cars will be designed so that they can make autonomous lane changes, which will allow the vehicle to safely pull off the road.

During the demonstration, Giesler pointed out an eye-opening reminder of how quickly the technology is advancing. The previous year the test car's trunk was filled with three desktop-sized computers to make the system work. This year the hardware had been reduced to the size of a small box, which was tucked away in the trunk's side storage compartment.

Overall we were quite impressed with the Audi's capabilities. The company expects the technology to be available in a production car within five years.



they use the same sensors. That system helps detect approaching vehicles that are crossing behind your car as you're backing up. An alert sounds, and if the vehicle is equipped with a backup camera and display screen, a visual warning may also appear. It's a useful feature in parking lots or when backing out of your driveway. The Infiniti QX60 and Jeep Cherokee can even apply the brakes.

**Stay the course.** Lane-departure warning (LDW) is designed to help prevent a sleepy or distracted driver from accidentally drifting out of his or her lane. It uses cameras and radar to detect lane markings and triggers a warning if the car starts to leave its lane without a turn signal being activated. Some advanced systems can take corrective steering action to help keep the vehicle on course. The Jeep Cherokee, for example, employs what feels like a tug on the steering wheel to direct the car back into the proper lane. The Mercedes-Benz S-Class uses a vibration in the steering wheel to alert the driver, and it can apply the brakes to individual wheels if necessary. We prefer the Jeep's gentle nudge back into the lane rather than having the car slow down.

There are some limitations to those systems because they rely on well-marked lanes that cameras and sensors can see. So if it's dark or the road is snow-covered, the system may not work. In addition, getting frequent alerts on narrower secondary roads, where you often cross the center line, can be annoying.

NHTSA lists the vehicles that have the feature on its website. The IIHS, however,

has not found a link between that type of system and reduced crashes in its insurance claims data.

**Go with the flow.** Adaptive cruise control helps your car automatically maintain a set distance behind one in front. Though it has been around for some time, newer systems have more capabilities. Some, for example, will disengage and require the driver to take over if the vehicle in front is traveling below a certain speed. The BMW X5's system will stop the car completely if the vehicle in front stops for a short time. It then starts moving the car

when the other vehicle resumes speed.

Combining adaptive cruise control with steering assist and lane-monitoring technologies is the key behind Mercedes' congested-traffic system. In our evaluations, the system has worked well so far. But it's not meant to be a completely autonomous system. The driver needs to keep his eyes on the road and be ready to take back control when needed. If you remove your hand from the steering wheel, the S-Class sounds an alert after a few seconds.

**Pedestrian detection.** In 2012 pedestrian deaths from motor vehicle accidents ac-

▣ CLOSE-UP



## The word from the street

We asked our Facebook followers what they think about the possibility of cars driving themselves. We received dozens of responses and a wide range of opinions, including these:

**Chuck:** "The end of distracted driving and DUI."

**Emily:** "I question an automated vehicle's ability to make safety judgments."

**James:** "I do NOT want a car that drives itself. I don't even like cars that shift themselves! I still ENJOY driving and improving my skills."

**Gisele:** "Would love one for my husband, who is blind. This represents a lot of independence for the visually impaired."

**William:** "Given that so many people have everything but driving to do while behind the steering wheel, it's great that at least something will be doing the driving."

counted for 14 percent of all crash fatalities. Though Volvo was the first automaker to bring pedestrian detection to its vehicles, others offer it as well. The systems can recognize a person in front of the car and automatically apply the brakes, if needed, before an impact. They're a good investment if you spend a lot of time driving in crowded areas because they have the potential to help you avoid hitting a pedestrian or reduce the chance of serious injuries to one. Some newer systems can also detect bicyclists. The forthcoming Volvo XC90, which is due out at the end of 2014, will offer a system that can detect pedestrians in the dark.

**Self-parking.** Parallel parking is a challenge for many drivers. And more cars are available with a park assist feature that can help. The feature debuted in the 2007 Lexus LS, but it wasn't always foolproof. A number of automakers currently offer such systems, with more advanced capabilities. The 2014 Jeep Cherokee, for example, can help with both perpendicular and parallel parking.

Bosch is working on a smart-phone app

that will allow the driver to get out of the car, which will park itself, although he'll need to hold down the button on a cell phone while he monitors the parking. Valeo recently showed off a system that will automatically park the car, shut off the engine, and lock the doors when it's securely in a spot. The Bosch and Valeo systems are not yet available to consumers, but they're small steps toward full automation.

**Vehicle-to-vehicle communication.** Although the technology is not yet available in production cars, NHTSA recently announced that it was moving toward mandating that vehicles come equipped with wireless systems termed "V2V" that would allow cars to "talk" to each other, exchanging speed and location data so that they can avoid accidents. Some automakers see the technology as a way to enhance the capabilities of autonomous cars.

### The cost of safety

In our testing, we've had the opportunity to try out dozens of safety systems. We think they provide real benefits to drivers,

but the devil is often in the details. That's why automakers are working hard to make sure their systems are intuitive and foolproof, and that drivers will respond to the warnings with the correct action. "We put a lot of time and energy into making sure we don't have a system that people want to turn off because it annoys them more than they feel it benefits," says Steve Kenner, Ford's global director of automotive safety.

An IIHS field test found that 72 percent of people who tried multiple crash-avoidance technologies said they would want them in their personal vehicle. However, the cost can be an obstacle. Most of the systems come only as part of a large options package or on a model's higher, more expensive trim versions. That can add an average of \$2,000 to the cost of a vehicle. And not every model offers all of the features.

As word gets out about the benefits of those types of systems, automakers say consumer acceptance will grow, which will help to bring down the cost and make the safety advances more affordable.

## Roadblocks to autonomous cars



**MAKING CONNECTIONS** Though many of the building blocks for self-driving cars are already available, tying them together in an effective, reliable way is one of the big challenges.

Over the coming years, the advanced safety features that are being developed will increasingly be linked into larger systems that will eventually allow cars to drive themselves. The benefits in terms of safety and convenience could be significant. Autonomous vehicles could help reduce crashes caused by human error, ease congestion, extend the driving years of the aging boomer population, and allow those who are visually or physically impaired to have greater mobility. But are we ready for them?

"It's all about the T word—trust," says John Hanson, Toyota's national manager, advanced technology and business communications.

"There has to be a level of trust that you have that the vehicle is going to perform the way you think it's going to perform."

"Getting a car that can operate with the reliability that today's cars do is a staggering challenge," says Bryant Walker Smith, fellow at the center for automotive research at Stamford University. Even if autonomous cars save countless lives, "one headline, 'Machine Kills a Child,' trumps 30,000 obituaries," he adds.

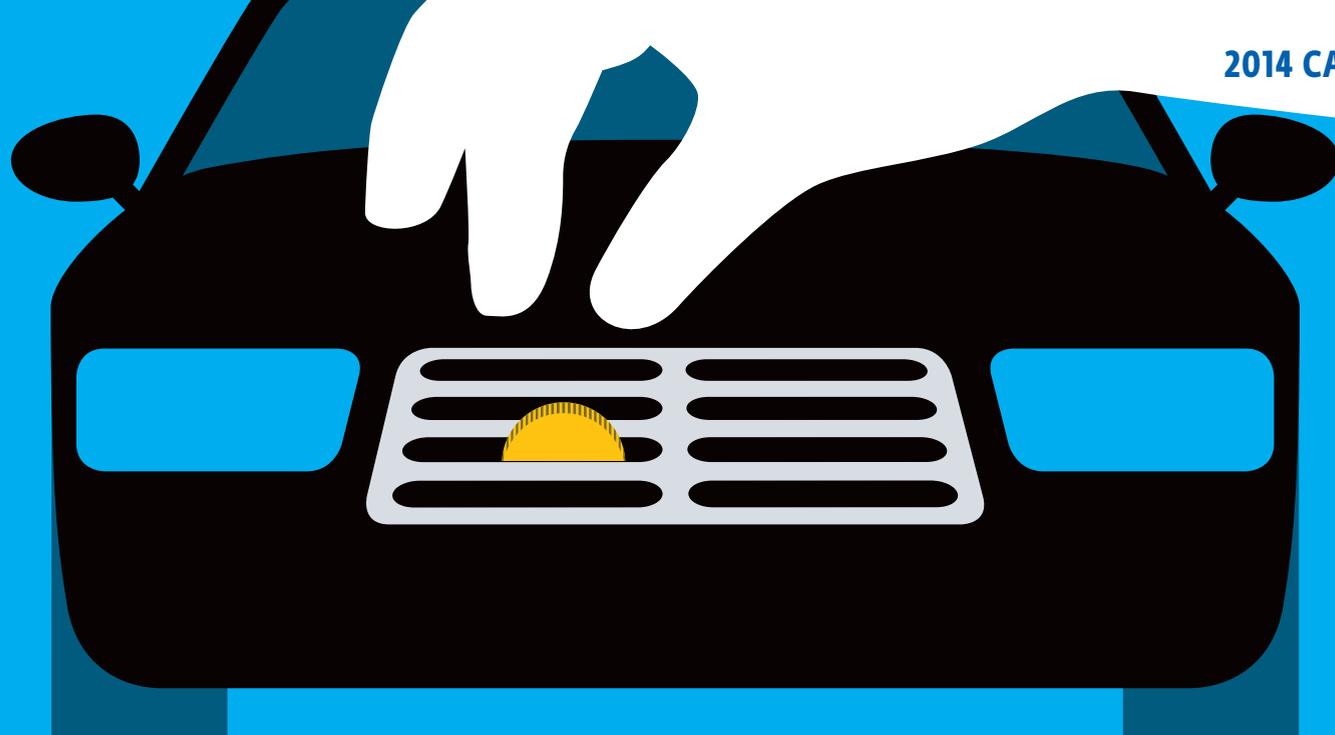
"People shouldn't think that there will never be an accident," says Ron Medford, Google's director of safety for self-driving cars. Autonomous cars will be "much, much

better than a human," he says, but they won't be perfect.

Volvo is planning a test of 100 autonomous cars on public roads in 2017. Nissan has said it will have an autonomous vehicle in production by 2020. But pinning down a firm date can be difficult. Some automakers such as Mercedes-Benz and Toyota say they can't give firm dates until the crash-avoidance technologies that are the building blocks of the cars are accepted and trusted, and that they prove they can reduce accidents.

Even then, approval of autonomous vehicles may be challenging in our legal and regulatory climate. One critical issue: Who is ultimately responsible for the driving, the driver or the vehicle? The answer will be developed over time, as will the impact on insurance liability, and it may depend on the situation. An initial concern is how to pass control back and forth between human and machine, and what is the appropriate timing of that transition. Audi says 10 seconds is reasonable, based on its testing, and it will need to guarantee that a driver won't have to take control in an emergency.

Despite the challenges, using leading-edge technology to replace our current system that "consists of old, poorly maintained vehicles operated by poorly trained, easily distracted, unsupervised individuals has a lot of potential for safety gains," Smith says.



# Extended warranties: An expensive gamble

The majority of buyers never use the coverage

**L**OOKING FOR an easy way to save hundreds on your next new car and simplify the buying process at the same time? Skip the extended warranty. The dealer will probably try hard to sell you one, telling horror stories about the thousands of dollars it can cost to replace an engine or transmission. But the odds are you'll never need the coverage, and even if you do, the money you'll save in repairs won't come close to what you paid for the added warranty.

A recent CONSUMER REPORTS survey found that 55 percent of owners who purchased an extended warranty hadn't used

it for repairs during the lifetime of the policy, even though the median price paid for the coverage was just over \$1,200. And, on average, those who did use it spent hundreds more for the coverage than they saved in repair costs.

Among survey participants who used their policy, the median out-of-pocket savings on repairs covered by extended warranties for all brands was \$837. Based on a \$1,214 average initial cost, that works out to a net loss of more than \$375. Factoring those who didn't use their policy, the median savings was zero. And that may have something to do with why satisfaction with

automobile extended warranties is among the lower rated of all products and services surveyed by CONSUMER REPORTS, and why only about a quarter of respondents said they would definitely get it again.

Conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center in late 2013, the survey included responses from more than 12,000 CONSUMER REPORTS subscribers who purchased an extended warranty. The survey covers vehicles built during model years 2006 to 2010. We targeted those years to focus on vehicles that are typically no longer covered by a traditional three-year new-car factory warranty.

## Reliability and satisfaction

When we asked car owners whose extended warranties had taken effect how satisfied they were with their experiences, the most satisfied were primarily owners of less-reliable brands, including BMW, Chrysler, Dodge, and Mercedes-Benz. Those are all brands that have had average or below-average reliability in our Annual Auto Survey. Interestingly, some of these brands also had the most expensive extended warranties, with Mercedes-Benz

### BY THE NUMBERS

**\$1,214**

Average amount paid for extended warranty coverage.

**26%**

Percentage of consumers who would definitely buy the same extended warranty again.

Source: Consumer Reports National Research Center subscriber survey, November and December 2013.

owners paying \$2,200 on average, followed by BMW owners, at \$2,007, and Chrysler owners, at \$1,525.

The reason for those owners' higher satisfaction may be that they tended to use the coverage more often than owners of cars from historically reliable brands. That probably helps consumers feel more justified about having spent money for the coverage—a bittersweet way to rationalize the purchase. BMW owners were more likely to have used the coverage than any other brand we rated, with 71 percent saying they had done so. Chrysler owners were next, at 65 percent, followed by Dodge, at 63 percent, and Mercedes-Benz, at 60 percent. Still, even among this group, only around 40 percent of owners for each of the four brands said they would definitely buy the coverage again.

Conversely, owners of Hondas, Subarus, and Toyotas—perennially high-ranking brands for reliability—were among the least satisfied overall with their extended warranties. They were also far less likely to have used them, compared with owners of most other brands' models. Just 39 percent of Honda and Toyota owners reported having used their coverage, followed by only 36 percent of Subaru owners. Not surprisingly, owners of those brands were among the least likely to say they'd definitely purchase the coverage again; less than a quarter of policyholders for each make said they would do so. "100,000 miles came and went, and the car never needed any repairs other than regular maintenance. What a waste! I will never buy another extended warranty for a car," said Honda Civic owner Liz Garibaldi.



**"It was a horrific experience. I feel like the dealer ripped me off."**

**—HELENE HELLER**  
2006 Volvo S40

## Beware of extended-warranty scams

Even if you're considering an extended warranty, be wary of any solicitation you get through the mail or over the phone. Scammers have found that the warranty business can be very lucrative, and the Better Business Bureau has received thousands of complaints from consumers who have been stung. Typically, the questionable outfits contact an unsuspecting owner whose warranty has just expired or is about to expire.

"The impression they want to give people is that they are contacting them on behalf of their dealer or manufacturer, or they are associated with them, which, in fact, they are not," says Michelle Corey, president and CEO of the St. Louis office of the BBB.

Once they've taken the bait, the unfortunate victims often find that their problems have just begun. "They're not able to read the contract until it's mailed to them," says Corey. "They don't see the conditions, the limitations, or exclusions. Then when they try to use it, they're informed that pre-existing conditions don't apply, or they're told they don't have maintenance records showing that they followed the manufacturer's requirements for upkeep."

The final insult comes when unhappy



customers try to get a refund, and they are either refused or only given a prorated amount based on when they signed the contract.

The first step to take to defend yourself against this type of fraud is to contact your dealer to ask whether whoever is trying to sell you coverage is associated either with them or the carmaker. Also ask whether your original warranty really has expired to avoid paying for redundant, overlapping coverage.

Moreover, don't give your credit-card number or commit to anything over the phone or through the mail without seeing a contract and reviewing what is covered first. And be sure to keep maintenance records and receipts for future reference. Beyond warranty concerns, it may help in selling your car down the road.

## How warranties work

Available for both new and used vehicles, extended warranties are normally pitched as extra security for car buyers, reducing the risk of expensive repairs that might not be covered by the factory warranty.

Indeed, peace of mind was the most common reason given by our survey respondents for purchasing the coverage, and for many that may be a sufficient motive.

Many types of plans are offered, both through dealerships and from other sources, such as auto clubs and insurance companies. And most extended-warranty-service purveyors offer more than one plan, with everything from comprehensive bumper-to-bumper coverage to more targeted protection for the powertrain only or specific components. Plans can also vary in duration, with most providing three to five years of coverage.

Our survey results indicated that costs are similar regardless of where the coverage is purchased; there was no more than about a \$100 difference between factory and third-party programs. Of those who purchased an extended warranty, 86 percent did so at the same time they bought their car. One of the reasons to do so is the convenience of rolling the cost into the car loan. That costs more money in the long run, however, because you have to pay interest on the warranty's fee.

Survey respondents who purchased automaker-backed coverage through a dealership were substantially more satisfied with the policy than those who purchased coverage from a third party, with 53 percent and 41 percent, respectively, saying they were highly satisfied. But even those customers were not much more likely to buy such coverage again. Less than 30 percent of all respondents who purchased an extended warranty said they would definitely do so.

More than 60 percent of survey respondents who purchased an extended warranty opted for bumper-to-bumper coverage, and buyers of that type of coverage were more satisfied than those who opted for other, less comprehensive plans. Beyond covering more potential faults, bumper-to-bumper warranties are more likely than powertrain warranties to include helpful extras such as repair-related reimbursements for towing charges or rental-car coverage.

We also found that respondents who bought an extended warranty were more likely to have had their car repaired during the lifetime of their policy than those who did not buy the coverage. That may be because those who opt for the coverage tend to be more meticulous about maintenance, or it might simply mean they wanted to get their money's worth. In either case, it may suggest that a car previously covered by an extended warranty would be more likely to have received better maintenance than one that did not have the coverage.

An extended warranty can limit the risks of expensive surprises. But such comforting protection might lead many owners to buy an extended warranty,



**“I feel like I probably paid too much for peace of mind.”**

**—BRENT LAMMERS**  
2010 Subaru Outback

only to have regrets later. Both our survey findings and our reliability analysis underscore that the smart money points to simply buying a reliable car and properly maintaining it. With diligent care, following the guidelines in the owner's manual, any of the cars that shine in our reliability Ratings (see page 90) should improve your odds of virtually trouble-

free driving, without the added cost of an extended warranty.

Instead of buying the warranty, invest that \$1,200 in an interest-bearing account. That way, you'll have an emergency fund if a post-warranty problem arises. And if your car doesn't need pricey repairs, you'll already have the money for a down payment on your next car.

## If you decide to buy a coverage plan

**Peace of mind comes at a price.** If you opt for an extended warranty, consider these smart-buying tips.

**Don't buy under pressure.** Dealers often try to sell the convenience of rolling coverage into a new-car loan, but that means you may be paying up front for coverage that you already have with the factory warranty. You can purchase an extended warranty after buying the car, although you may find the cost increases as the vehicle ages.

**Don't be afraid to bargain.** Among those who purchased an extended warranty, only a third of our survey respondents tried to negotiate a better price for their contract.

Most of those who did haggle were successful, saving about \$325 on average.

**Shop around.** You don't have to buy an extended warranty through a dealership. In fact, you may find a better deal through your auto club or insurance company. But consider this: Satisfaction in our survey was highest among those who bought an automaker-backed warranty.

**Go all in.** Our survey found little difference in cost between limited and bumper-to-bumper coverage, which is more likely than powertrain plans to include reimbursement for towing, travel expenses, and a rental car. If you're going to buy, get the full protection.

**Read the small print.** Before signing, be sure you understand what is covered and where you can take your car for authorized service. Third-party warranties, especially, may have notable restrictions on approved shops. Given how many dealerships have closed in recent years, the availability of participating repair shops is a particular concern.

**Consider an extended warranty for the long haul.** All cars tend to become less reliable over time, so an extended warranty might be worth considering if you're planning to keep your vehicle long after the factory warranty runs out.



# Top tires

## Best choices in 7 categories for your car, SUV, or truck

**D**ON'T WAIT until your car is hydroplaning, or slipping on a wet road, before thinking about replacing your tires. Any tire with tread that's worn down to  $\frac{2}{32}$  of an inch should be swapped out right away. But tires lose a lot of their grip in wet and snowy conditions well before that mark.

Here's an easy way to know when you should start shopping for tires: Insert a quarter into a tread groove, with George Washington's head pointing down. If

you can see the top of his head, the tread is worn to about  $\frac{4}{32}$  inch. So start looking for deals.

We've made it easy to choose a new tire by listing only the cream of the crop: our top-scoring models in seven categories. We recommend that you stay with the same size and speed rating (such as T, H, or V) as the tires that originally came on your car, because that's what it was specifically designed to use.

Prices vary widely over time and among

tire retailers. So shop around, locally and online. When comparing prices, consider the total out-the-door deal, including shipping (if necessary), mounting, balancing, taxes, and disposal fee.

You can get more buying advice on tires free at [ConsumerReports.org](http://ConsumerReports.org); Web subscribers can access our full Ratings on all tested models, including individual Ratings for handling, braking, hydroplaning, comfort, tread wear, rolling resistance, snow traction, and more.

### What's wrong with used tires? Plenty.

When money is tight, you might be tempted to buy used tires instead of new ones. They can be much cheaper and might even look practically new. But we recommend against it. After all, you don't really know the history of that used rubber. And because tires affect your car's safety, we don't think it's worth the risk to save a few bucks. What could go wrong? Here are some concerns.

**Misuse.** If a tire was driven while it was underinflated or overloaded, which is very common, it may have sustained internal damage that's not visible to the naked eye.

**Defects that aren't obvious.** Most consumers probably aren't skilled enough to detect problems that a tire expert would spot immediately, such as a torn mounting bead, probably caused by removing the tire from the wheel, or badly executed repairs.

**Unknown effects of aging.** Tire compounds degrade over time. Some automakers recommend against installing tires that are 6 years or older. And some tire makers recommend replacing any tire that's 10 years or older. Because you can't see how aging weakens the tire's internal structure,

an older tire, whether or not it has been used, shouldn't be trusted. You can check a tire's date of manufacture by looking at the DOT serial number embossed on the sidewall. The last four digits are the date code; the first two are the week, the last two are the year. A code of 3312 means the 33rd week of 2012.

**Mismatch.** For the best handling—and the safest—you want your tires to match each other in tread pattern, construction, age, wear, and so forth. It's not a great idea to put on a replacement tire that doesn't match the one on the opposite side.

## Best tires by category

### ▶ FOR MOST NEWER CARS

Most new vehicles come with performance all-season tires with speed ratings of H and V. They handle more responsively than regular all-seasons.

#### MODEL

##### Performance all-season (H rated)

Michelin Primacy MXV4

Continental PureContact

Nexen CP672

##### Performance all-season (V rated)

Continental PureContact

Pirelli P7 Cinturato All Season

Michelin Primacy MXV4



Michelin Primacy MXV4



Continental PureContact



**GETTING A GRIP** Among our many tests, we see how tires resist hydroplaning to retain their grip on the road in water.

### ▶ FOR MANY OLDER CARS

Many older cars, and a few newer ones, use regular all-season tires. They're often cheaper and last longer than performance tires.

#### MODEL

##### All-season (T rated)

Michelin Defender

Continental ProContact EcoPlus

Goodyear Assurance TripleTred All Season

Pirelli P4 Four Seasons

Michelin Energy Saver AS/S

Yokohama Avid Ascend



Michelin Defender

### ▶ FOR SPORTY CARS

Ultra-high-performance (UHP) tires come in all-season and summer-only varieties. They excel in dry and wet grip, and in handling. But they ride more stiffly than other all-season tires. Speed ratings are usually W, Y, and Z.

#### MODEL

##### UHP all-season tires

Michelin Pilot Sport A/S 3

Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric All Season

Continental Extreme Contact DWS

Hankook Ventus S1 Noble 2

BFGoodrich g-Force Super Sport A/S

Pirelli P Zero Nero All Season

Cooper Zeon RS3-A

##### UHP summer tires

Pirelli P Zero

Michelin Pilot Super Sport

Yokohama Advan Sport V105

Nokian zLine

Continental Extreme Contact DW

Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric 2

Vredestein Ultrac Vorti



Michelin Pilot Sport A/S 3



Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric All Season



Pirelli P Zero

### ▶ FOR SUVs AND LIGHT-DUTY PICKUPS

All-terrain tires provide more grip in moderate off-road conditions than all-season tires, but all-seasons usually handle better on paved roads.

#### MODEL

##### All-season light-truck tires

Michelin LTX M/S2

Michelin X Radial LT2

Continental CrossContact LX20 EcoPlus

Michelin Latitude Tour HP

Michelin Latitude Tour

##### All-terrain light-truck tires

Cooper Discoverer A/T3

Michelin LTX A/T2

Hankook Dynapro ATM

Kumho Road Venture AT KL78

Kumho Road Venture SAT KL61



Michelin LTX M/S2



Cooper Discoverer A/T3

### ▶ CLOSE-UP

## Keep the pressure up

The government estimates that tire failure causes 11,000 crashes per year and that underinflated tires are a major cause of those failures. To maximize your tires' service life as well as maintain the best braking and handling performance, keep them inflated to the pressure recommended by your car's manufacturer. That's usually listed on a placard mounted on the driver's doorjamb. (Check your owner's manual, too.) Don't go by the "max pressure" figure that's embossed on the tire itself. Newer cars come with a tire-pressure monitoring system that alerts you when a tire has lost air pressure.



**PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE** Use a tire-pressure gauge to check your tires at least once per month.



# 5 steps to the best deal

## Money-saving tips from our car-buying pros

Even if you get a low price on a new car, you may still come out on the wrong end of the deal if you don't pay close attention to other areas of the buying process. Here are five critical steps you can take to save money across the board. Fortunately, a lot of the work can be done from the comfort of your home by using the Internet, a phone, and e-mail.

### ► Choose your exact car

It's important to identify which car you want, down to the trim level and options. Use the Ratings and advice in this issue to help narrow down your choices. Every automaker lets you configure a car on its website, and most let you search their dealers' inventory. It's also vital that you test drive any models you're considering before you get deep into the process; cars can feel very different when driven back to back, and less obvious things, such as seat comfort, visibility, and dash controls, can make a big difference.

### ► Set up your financing in advance

Once you know approximately how much your car will cost, you should focus on your financing options. Shop around for the lowest interest rate. You can get a good idea of current rates at [bankrate.com](http://bankrate.com).

Ask your lender for preapproval, and get it to issue a bank check that you later fill out at the dealership. That option gives people "more negotiation power with the dealer and as much flexibility as possible when shopping," says Amy Doane, a spokeswoman for PenFed, one of the country's largest credit unions.

Getting approved in advance takes a lot of stress out of the buying process. And you can still choose the dealer's financing if the terms are better.

### ► Get dealers to compete

That is one of the most effective ways of getting a good discount on a new car. Call or e-mail several dealers in your area, or request a quote through their websites. Tell them the exact car you want and ask for their lowest price. Also, let them know that you are shopping around and that you will buy from the dealership with the lowest price.

Some dealers may not have the exact vehicle you configured, so double-check any prices that seem out of the normal range. And resist their attempts to draw you in to the dealership to negotiate.

You can also get quotes online through automaker websites or at such sites as [AutoTrader.com](http://AutoTrader.com), [Cars.com](http://Cars.com), [CarsDirect](http://CarsDirect.com), and [TrueCar](http://TrueCar.com). Consumer Reports subscribers can use our Build & Buy car-buying service to get up-front dealer pricing and guaranteed savings in most states from local dealers who are dedicated to high customer satisfaction. There is no obligation to buy, and you remain anonymous until you choose your dealer.

The more quotes you get, the better. And you can always use lower quotes as leverage to negotiate with other dealers.

## ▶ Get the most for your trade-in

If you plan on trading in your current car, give it some attention before going to the dealership to close the deal. Find out how much it's worth by going to Edmunds ([edmunds.com](http://edmunds.com)), Kelley Blue Book ([kbb.com](http://kbb.com)), or the National Automobile Dealers Association ([nada.org](http://nada.org)), or by buying a Consumer Reports Used Car Price Report.

To maximize your car's value, it's worth putting a little effort into its curb appeal. Wash and wax the exterior, and clean the interior. "If you bring us an especially clean car, you can get a lot more money," a Seattle-area dealer told us. But don't go overboard, he says. "We can deal with scuffs and scrapes cheaper than you can."

It does pay to do major repairs. A dealer can't sell a car with a chipped windshield, so it will deduct about \$300 to get it fixed, the dealer told us. They will also take off \$500 to \$600 for worn tires. So replace them if you can do it for less.

Once in the dealership, nail down the new-car transaction before discussing the trade-in. Don't let salespeople roll the

transactions—or the financing—together into one monthly payment figure. That gives them too much leeway to manipulate the figures to the dealer's advantage. And be ready to negotiate the trade-in value if you feel you're being lowballed.



## ▶ Just say no to dealer extras

You should have the price locked down when you go to the dealership to finalize the sale. But the staff will still try to sell you extras to pad the dealer's bottom line.

Those can include undercoating, fabric and paint sealants, and VIN etching, in which the dealer etches the vehicle identification number (VIN) into the windows to help prevent theft. Don't bite. All modern cars are factory treated for rust protection, and additional undercoating can do more harm than good. You can get a can of fabric sealant or paint protectant or wax at an autos parts or other retail store for a few dollars and apply it yourself. And if you want VIN etching, you can often have it done at an independent shop or do it yourself for a lower price.

Dealers will also try to sell you a service contract, or extended warranty. But if you've

picked a reliable car, in many cases you'll spend more for the warranty than you'll save in repairs (see page 21).

Review the paperwork carefully. If you're financing through the dealer, verify that your payments equal the amount of the loan, plus interest. Most dealers will include a documentation fee and sometimes a regional advertising fee. We've found that it's difficult to negotiate those away, but you may be able to bargain for an extra set of floor mats or another low-cost accessory in return. Also check the fine print on the back side of the contract. Many dealers will include a clause requiring you to agree to binding arbitration and give up your right to claims under fraud and lemon laws. We've had mixed results when asking to strike such language.

If you follow those five simple steps, you'll be on the road in no time, enjoying your new car without a hint of buyer's remorse.



## When is the best time to buy a new car?

Every month dealers try to meet sales goals and quotas. That's why there's often a big push during the last week to make a deal. If you can wait, however, the final week of the year is the best time to buy a car of the same model year (a 2014 model in the end of 2014), according to data from TrueCar. The reasons are simple. Manufacturers and sales managers offer their salespeople incentives to boost year- and month-end sales totals, and manufacturers offer additional sales incentives to clear out old inventory and to lure buyers during an otherwise slow sales period.

That tactic may not be for everybody, though. On paper, some leftover cars look older than the next model-year vehicles, even if they're bought at the same time. That can make them depreciate faster. But if you lease or keep your car for more than eight years, the financial hit will be minimal.

# Ratings

We steer you to the best models in 11 categories

**YOU CAN SPIN YOUR WHEELS** trying to compare the plethora of models in today's showrooms. Many highly hyped cars don't live up to expectations, and the best ones might not even be on your shopping list. And with many people keeping their cars longer, it's more important than ever to choose the right one.

In this section, we give you our complete Ratings for more than 260 vehicles, spanning every major category. You can easily compare test scores, reliability, real-world fuel economy, owner cost,

and more. You can also see which models have met the stringent requirements for receiving our recommendation.

Within each section, we also highlight the best overall models, the cars that our testers would recommend that you buy if you cornered them one-on-one. And we tell which models are best for different people based on their priorities, such as fuel economy, how fun the car is to drive, comfort, and so on. And in many categories we show you which models to avoid and the new or redesigned cars that are coming down the road.



Volkswagen Jetta

From fun to fuel economy, we show which models are best for you, depending on your needs.

## Looking for more info?

For crash-test ratings, see page 79. For more information on any model, as well as free videos, go to [ConsumerReports.org/april](http://ConsumerReports.org/april). Web subscribers can access our full, detailed road-test reports on any tested model.

## Car category index



### Small cars

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### Sedans

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Toyota Corolla

## Guide to the Ratings charts

The vehicles are grouped by category and ranked according to their overall test scores, regardless of price. **Recommended vehicles** are good all-around models, designated with a , that we think are worth considering. To be recommended, a vehicle must perform well in our testing, have average or better reliability, and perform adequately if included in a government or an insurance-industry crash test (see page 79). In addition, pickups and SUVs must not have tipped up in the government's rollover test, if tested. **Price as tested** is the sticker price at the time of purchase of our test vehicle, including an automatic transmission and typical equipment. **Overall road-test score** is based on results from more than 50 tests and evaluations and is comparable among similar vehicle types. **Survey results** include predicted reliability, our forecast of how well a new car is likely to hold up based on its recent history from our 2013 Annual Auto Survey, which was conducted by our National Research Center. We might make a reliability prediction for a redesigned or new model if the vehicle or its manufacturer has a consistently outstanding track record. The survey also includes owner satisfaction, which is based on the percentage of subscribers

who said they would definitely buy or lease their vehicle again. A  rating means 80 percent or more would do so; a  means fewer than 50 percent would do so. A newly introduced model without any data is identified as "new." A model that lacks sufficient data for either category is identified with "NA." **Cost per mile** is an estimate of the five-year projected cost per mile to own a vehicle, including depreciation, interest, insurance, fuel, maintenance and repair, and sales tax. The estimates are based on the assumption that a vehicle is driven 12,000 miles per year. **Fuel economy** is the overall gas mileage a vehicle achieved, based on the results of our real-world fuel-economy tests.

## Why some vehicles are not in the Ratings

We don't yet have test results on the following models because they either are new or have been redesigned since our last test: Audi A3; BMW X5; Cadillac Escalade; Chevrolet Corvette, SS, Suburban, and Tahoe; Chrysler 200; Dodge SRT Viper; Hyundai Genesis; Kia Soul; Land Rover Range Rover and Range Rover Sport; Mercedes-Benz S550; Mini Cooper Hatchback; Nissan Rogue; Porsche 911; Subaru WRX and WRX STI; Toyota Highlander; and Volkswagen Golf and GTI.

## COMPACT CARS

Today's compacts are not the underpowered, wheezing econoboxes of yesteryear. The best provide enough room for four adults to travel in relative comfort.

Most have plenty of power to get around town and cruise highways while also helping stretch your fuel dollars. Some are fun to drive, ride nicely, offer the latest connectivity, and have desirable options like heated leather seats, a sunroof, and automatic climate control. And you can often choose between a sedan and a hatchback.

**Drawbacks:** If you start checking off options, you can quickly crest \$24,000. That's midsize-sedan territory, where some larger, more comfortable cars roam without any real penalty in fuel economy.

# Best overall

OVERALL SCORE  
**82**  
Sedan

OVERALL SCORE  
**79**  
Hatchback



## Subaru Impreza

**Price as tested** \$21,345-\$22,345 **Overall mpg** 27 (sedan), 26 (hatchback)

Our Top Pick for compact cars, the Impreza offers standard all-wheel drive in a choice of sedan and hatchback body styles. Moreover, it gets relatively thrifty fuel economy for an all-wheel-drive car. Inside you'll find a large backseat with ample room for adults. Once underway the car has a ride that's absorbent and controlled. Handling is nimble, with responsive and linear steering. Reliability has

also been very good. The Impreza can be noisy, especially because its continuously variable transmission often allows the engine to hold engine revs high. In addition, the audio system has only rudimentary connectivity.

### THE IMPREZA LINE

**Price range** \$17,895-\$23,195  
**Engine** 148-hp, 2.0L four



## Hyundai Elantra

**Price as tested** \$19,410 **Overall mpg** 29

OVERALL SCORE  
**80**

The Elantra provides a lot for just under \$20,000, including a roomy interior, nimble handling, a fairly comfortable ride, and good reliability. Bluetooth and iPod connectivity are both standard. Upper trim levels get heated leather seats, automatic climate control, a touch-screen navigation system, and a backup camera. The standard 1.8-liter engine offers very good performance and fuel economy, and the six-speed automatic transmission shifts smoothly.

For 2014, the GT hatchback and new Sport version get a more powerful 2.0-liter engine with direct fuel injection for better gas mileage. The GT didn't do as well as the sedan in our testing, mainly because of its stiff ride and tight rear seat. A two-door coupe version is also available.

### THE ELANTRA LINE

**Price range** \$17,200-\$22,700  
**Engine choices** 145-hp, 1.8L four; 166-173-hp, 2.0L four

# Small

DID YOU KNOW?

## Plug-in hybrids

Some hybrids, such as the Chevrolet Volt and Toyota Prius Plug-in, can be plugged in to provide better fuel efficiency than a conventional hybrid. With larger batteries, they can run on electricity more of the time, which uses less gasoline and lowers their operating costs. Plug-in hybrids can be charged relatively quickly on a standard 120-volt household outlet, and they don't



**Chevrolet Volt: 99 MPGe\* on electricity, 32 mpg on gas**

have the range limitations of dedicated electric cars because they can use their gas engines for longer trips. Capability varies widely: The Volt can go 35 miles before using any gas at all,



**Toyota Prius Plug-in: 67 MPGe in EV mode, 43 mpg in hybrid mode**

which is enough for many commuters to drive gas-free. The Prius Plug-in can only go about 10 miles; even then, its gas engine kicks in for anything more than moderate acceleration.

\*Miles-per-gallon equivalent.



### Toyota Prius

**Price as tested** \$29,230  
**Overall mpg** 44

**OVERALL SCORE 79** Long the champion of real-world gas mileage, the Prius is no one-trick pony. It's roomy, with a large backseat and good cargo space under its hatchback. It rides reasonably well and has secure handling. Hybrids are known for boosting city mileage, but the Prius also gets an excellent 55 mpg on the highway. With outstanding reliability and low depreciation, it also has the lowest five-year owner cost in its class. But driving a Prius is more practical than fun. Interior materials feel cheap, and its engine can sound strained when passing or climbing hills at highway speeds. A plug-in version can go about 10 miles on electric power, getting the equivalent of 67 mpg. After that, it reverts to regular hybrid operation, returning 43 mpg overall.

#### THE PRIUS LINE

**Price range** \$24,200-\$34,905

**Engine choices** 134-hp, 1.8L hybrid four; 134-hp, 1.8L hybrid plug-in four



### Mazda3

**Price as tested** \$21,740-\$24,040  
**Overall mpg** 33 (sedan), 32 (hatchback)

**OVERALL SCORE 78** If you want a fuel-efficient car that's fun to drive and doesn't compromise practicality, look no further than the Mazda3. Available as a sedan or hatchback, it has agile handling, a polished powertrain, and an array of available features. It also gets the best fuel economy of any car in its class that isn't a hybrid or diesel-powered. The Mazda3 is one of the few small cars you can really dress up. Top-trim versions get full Bluetooth connectivity with smart-phone apps, heated leather seats, blind-spot detection, forward-collision and lane-departure warning systems, and rear cross-traffic alert. Unfortunately the rear seat is tight, the ride is a bit stiff, and the car is loud. We expect reliability to be very good.

#### THE MAZDA3 LINE

**Price range** \$16,945-\$26,495

**Engine choices** 155-hp, 2.0L four; 184-hp, 2.5L four

## Coming soon

### 2015 Volkswagen Golf, June 2014

The Golf has always been a versatile, fun-to-drive car. It offers hatchback practicality, compact efficiency, and luxury-car features for a relatively affordable price tag.

Despite being lower and wider, the new model sticks so closely to that formula that it's almost indistinguishable from the current model. The well-finished cabin has more elbow room, and Volkswagen claims a 15 percent improvement in fuel economy with the new 1.8-liter turbo gas engine. Six-speed manual and automatic transmissions are available. Power is also up a little in the thrifty, diesel-powered TDI version and the sporty GTI.

Volkswagen has updated the infotainment system to include 3D navigation and a touch screen with smart-phone-like swipe controls and a proximity sensor to detect when your hand is near. We briefly drove the new Golf and GTI, and we came away impressed with their upscale feel, quietness, agility, and ride comfort. And unlike some other recent VW products, the revamped Golf continues to have high-quality soft-touch trim throughout the interior.

## MODELS TO AVOID

There's no need to settle for an outdated, unrefined, and dull compact car.



### Scion tC

Scion's update to the "sporty" tC missed the target, with its lack of driving enjoyment, hard ride, and unimpressive performance.



### Mitsubishi Lancer

The Lancer, redesigned six years ago, is showing its age with an underpowered engine, a noisy interior, and a low-rent cabin.



### Dodge Dart

The Dart isn't particularly fuel efficient, and the turbo engine is unrefined. It is also more expensive than most competitors.

# Which is right for you?

## Fuel-sippers

Gas mileage is our overall mpg.

**Ford Focus Electric** 107 MPGe<sup>[1]</sup>

**Nissan Leaf** 106 MPGe<sup>[1]</sup>

**Chevrolet Volt** 99 MPGe<sup>[2]</sup> / 32 mpg<sup>[3]</sup>

**Toyota Prius Plug-in** 67 MPGe<sup>[2]</sup> / 43 mpg<sup>[4]</sup>

**Toyota Prius** 44 mpg

**Honda Civic Hybrid** 40 mpg

**Volkswagen Jetta Hybrid** 37 mpg

**Volkswagen Jetta TDI** 34 mpg

**Mazda3** 32-33 mpg

**Chevrolet Cruze Turbo Diesel** 33 mpg

**Toyota Corolla** 32 mpg

Great fuel economy comes in many flavors: hybrid, diesel, electric, and even modern

gas engines. Most of the models here don't make you sacrifice comfort or features, and a few, like the Jetta and Mazda3, are fun to drive. The all-electric Focus and Leaf get the equivalent of triple-digit mpg for about 75 miles before you have to recharge them, which takes about four hours. Plug-in hybrids, like the Volt and Prius Plug-in, run on electricity until their gas engine needs to kick in to keep driving. The Focus, Leaf, and Volt also garner buyers a \$7,500 tax rebate; the Prius Plug-in, \$2,500. Conventional hybrids like the Prius, Civic, and Jetta, are very efficient without the cost, hassle, or limitations of plug-ins. The diesel-powered Jetta TDI and Cruze excel in highway mileage. And the Mazda3 and Corolla prove conventional engines are still competitive.

## Fun to drive

**Ford Focus**

**Mazda3**

**Volkswagen Jetta SE (1.8L)**

These three make every drive more rewarding. The Focus rides well, handles with agility, and feels as solid and sophisticated as some more-expensive European sports sedans. The Mazda3 is one of our favorites to drive, with great handling and a smooth-shifting manual or automatic transmission. The Jetta's new 1.8-liter turbo engine and revised suspension and steering make it fun to drive.



Ford Focus

## Ratings Compact cars

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
✓	Subaru Impreza Premium	\$21,345	82	⊖ ⊖	\$0.55	27	Ride, fuel economy for AWD, rear seat, visibility, controls, IIHS crash-test results.	Noise, excessive engine braking with CVT.
	Kia Forte LX	19,570	81	new new	0.56	28	Ride, braking, controls, relatively roomy rear seat, value.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, unknown reliability, agility, low rear seat, so-so fuel economy.
✓	Hyundai Elantra SE (1.8)	19,410	80	○ ○	0.53	29	Fuel economy, ride, handling, transmission, rear seat, value, IIHS crash-test results.	Road noise.
✓	Toyota Prius Four	29,230	79	● ●	0.47	44	Fuel economy, transmission, rear seat, access, turning circle, reliability, IIHS crash tests.	Agility, rear visibility, fit and finish.
✓	Subaru Impreza Sport Premium	22,345	79	⊖ ○	0.54	26	Ride, handling, braking, fuel economy for AWD, rear seat, visibility, controls, IIHS crash tests.	Noise, excessive engine braking with CVT.
	Volkswagen Jetta Hybrid SE	28,055	79	NA NA	0.52	37	Fuel economy, quietness, ride, transmission, roomy rear seat.	Unknown reliability, touchy brake pedal, small trunk, can roll back when starting on hills, premium fuel.
✓	Mazda3 i Grand Touring (hatchback, MT)	24,040	78	⊖ new	0.56	32	Handling, fuel economy, transmission, high-end options, IIHS crash-test results.	Ride, noise, rear seat, visibility, gets pricey.
✓	Mazda3 i Touring (sedan)	21,740	78	⊖ new	0.53	33	Handling, fuel economy, transmission, high-end options, IIHS crash-test results.	Ride, noise, rear seat, gets pricey.
	Ford Focus SE SFE Sedan	21,650	77	● ○	0.55	31	Fuel economy, handling, ride, solid feel, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, controls, rear seat.
✓	Volkswagen Jetta TDI	25,100	75	○ ⊖	0.51	34	Fuel economy, agility, trunk space, rear seat.	Ride, ESC slow to react.
	Ford Focus SE Hatchback	22,185	74	● ⊖	0.57	28	Handling, ride, solid feel, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, controls, rear seat.
	Volkswagen Jetta SE (1.8T)	22,610	73	new new	0.54	30	Agility, acceleration, refined engine, fuel economy, roomy rear seat, large trunk, simple controls, visibility.	Unknown reliability, ride, ESC slow to react, lackluster interior finish.
✓	Toyota Corolla LE Plus	20,652	72	⊖ new	0.48	32	Ride, fuel economy, interior space, large trunk, secure emergency handling, value.	Lackluster handling, inconsistent interior quality, too easy to turn DRL off.
	Chevrolet Cruze Eco	21,775	72	● ⊖	0.60	27	Ride, quietness, agility, solid feel, front-seat space.	Subpar reliability, so-so fuel economy, rear seat.
✓	Toyota Prius Plug-in Advanced	40,510	71	○ ⊖	0.56	67 <sup>[2]</sup> / 43 <sup>[4]</sup>	Fuel economy, transmission, rear seat, access, IIHS crash-test results.	Agility, fit and finish, rear visibility, not entirely electric in EV mode.
	Ford Focus SE Sedan	20,280	71	● ○	0.54	28	Handling, ride, solid feel, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, controls, rear seat.
✓	Honda Civic EX*	21,605	71	⊖ ○	0.50	29	Fuel economy, powertrain, ride, roomy interior, IIHS crash-test results.	Fussy onboard computer.
	Chevrolet Cruze 1LT (1.4T)	20,530	70	● ⊖	0.58	26	Ride, quietness, agility, solid feel, front-seat space.	Subpar reliability, so-so fuel economy, rear seat.



Chevrolet Cruze

## High-tech features

- Chevrolet Cruze**
- Kia Forte**
- Dodge Dart**
- Mazda3**
- Ford Focus**
- Hyundai Elantra**
- Toyota Corolla**

With the right infotainment system, it's easy to make hands-free calls and stream music. The best also let you access and control other types of content, such as Pandora, iHeartRadio, and Slacker Internet radio. Systems in the Dart, Focus, and Cruze connect seamlessly; the others make you download an automaker app to your smart phone to get full functionality. A big drawback to these systems is the distraction factor. Some of the controls can be difficult to navigate while driving, particularly ones that incorporate the climate controls. Fortunately, voice controls are getting better.

## Room to spread out

- Subaru Impreza**
- Kia Forte**
- Volkswagen Jetta**
- Toyota Corolla**
- Fiat 500L**

Compact cars aren't typically known for their roomy rear seats, but these are some standouts. The Impreza, Corolla, and Jetta can actually challenge some midsize sedans, with enough space to let adults sit in the rear in reasonable comfort. The Forte also provides ample rear leg room. The real space champ is the Fiat 500L. It provides a limo-like rear seat and, thanks to its height, super-easy cabin access. For added cargo-carrying flexibility, get a hatchback or wagon version of the Impreza, Forte, or Jetta.

Kia Forte



TOM MUTCHLER,  
PROGRAM  
MANAGER, AUTO  
TEST CENTER



## Tester's notes

With fantastic steering, a quiet interior, a good ride, and handy Sync voice commands, the Ford Focus is a joy to drive. It's too bad it has had such poor reliability.

● Recommended
 
● Better
 
○
◐
◑
●
←
→
Worse

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
	<b>Chevrolet Cruze Turbo Diesel</b>	\$27,300	<span style="color: red;">70</span>	new new	\$0.57	33	Fuel economy, quiet on highway, roomy front cabin, ride.	Unknown reliability, diesel clatter, jerky driving at low speeds, rear seat.
	<b>Ford Focus Electric</b>	40,990	<span style="color: red;">69</span>	NA NA	NA	107 <sup>①</sup>	Fun to drive, handling, ride, instant power delivery, quietness.	Unknown reliability, touchy throttle and brake pedal, battery takes up trunk space, rear seat, MyFord Touch controls.
✓	<b>Nissan Leaf SL</b>	35,430	<span style="color: red;">69</span>	● ●	NA	106 <sup>①</sup>	Running costs, ride, instant power delivery, quietness, access, turning circle, reliability.	Limited range, high-pitched whine, no telescoping wheel, agility.
	<b>Chevrolet Cruze LS (1.8)</b>	18,375	<span style="color: red;">69</span>	● ○	0.55	26	Ride, quietness, agility, solid feel, front-seat space.	Subpar reliability, so-so fuel economy, rear seat.
✓	<b>Scion xB</b>	18,360	<span style="color: red;">68</span>	● ○	0.50	23	Access, interior room, rear seat, neat interior details, reliability.	Driving position, dark cabin, visibility, fit and finish, fuel economy.
✓	<b>Hyundai Elantra GT</b>	20,445	<span style="color: red;">68</span>	○ ○	0.56	27	Transmission, controls, lots of features.	Ride, noise.
✓	<b>Chevrolet Volt</b>	43,700	<span style="color: red;">68</span>	○ ●	NA	99 <sup>②</sup> / 32 <sup>③</sup>	Fuel economy, quiet, instant acceleration in electric mode.	Visibility, controls, seats only four, narrow driving position, cold weather's effect on electric range.
✓	<b>Honda Civic Hybrid</b>	25,140	<span style="color: red;">66</span>	● ○	0.48	40	Fuel economy, IIHS crash-test results.	Noise, fussy onboard computer.
	<b>Dodge Dart SE (2.0L)</b>	20,680	<span style="color: red;">64</span>	● ●	0.57	27	Handling, solid feel, relatively quiet and roomy, reliability, IIHS crash-test results.	Acceleration, front-seat comfort, touchy brake pedal.
	<b>Nissan Sentra SV</b>	20,570	<span style="color: red;">64</span>	○ ●	0.56	29	Fuel economy, braking, spacious rear seat, access, lots of features for the money.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, ride, noise, agility, fit and finish, front-seat comfort.
	<b>Mitsubishi Lancer ES</b>	17,515	<span style="color: red;">62</span>	NA NA	0.55	25	Agility, steering, controls.	Noise, fit and finish, braking, fuel economy.
	<b>Dodge Dart Aero (1.4T)</b>	24,490	<span style="color: red;">61</span>	● ●	0.62	29	Braking, fuel economy, solid feel, handling, relatively quiet and roomy, feature content, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, uneven power delivery, clunky transmission, front-seat comfort, noise, touchy brake pedal.
	<b>Volkswagen Beetle 2.5L (MT)*</b>	20,835	<span style="color: red;">60</span>	● ○	0.52	26	Compliant ride, turning circle.	Reliability, rear visibility, wind noise, long clutch travel, tricky at-the-limit handling.
	<b>Scion tC</b>	21,130	<span style="color: red;">54</span>	NA NA	0.56	27	Relatively roomy rear seat and cargo area, hatchback versatility, IIHS crash-test results.	Ride, noise, visibility, lackluster handling, cheap interior, no rear wiper.
	<b>Fiat 500L Easy</b>	24,595	<span style="color: red;">52</span>	new new	0.61	27	Distinctive looks, roomy interior, handy size, access.	Jerky transmission, stiff ride, touchy brake pedal, front seats, driving position.

① Miles-per-gallon equivalent. ② Miles-per-gallon equivalent in electric mode. ③ Miles per gallon when running on gas engine. ④ Miles per gallon in regular hybrid mode. \*Powertrain has changed since last test.

**Why some models are not recommended.** The Chevrolet Cruze (Eco, 1.4T, and 1.8), Dodge Dart (1.4T), Ford Focus (nonelectric versions), and Volkswagen Beetle have had below-average reliability. We lack sufficient reliability data for the Volkswagen Jetta Hybrid and Ford Focus Electric. The Chevrolet Cruze Turbo Diesel, Kia Forte, and Volkswagen Jetta SE are too new for us to have reliability data. The Dodge Dart (2.0 and 1.4T), Fiat 500L, Mitsubishi Lancer, Nissan Sentra, and Scion tC didn't score well enough in our testing.

## SUBCOMPACT CARS

These small, efficient models are easy to park and maneuver through traffic around town. The best ones are also relatively quiet, refined, fun to drive, fairly roomy, and packed with the latest features.

Several models are available as a hatchback or sedan, so you can choose to have more flexible cargo space or the security of a trunk.

**Drawbacks:** Be aware that a subcompact car is at a disadvantage in a crash with a larger vehicle. They also generally have subpar performance in crash tests, which leads us to recommend only those that offer the best protection. Most subcompacts have a stiff ride and a noisy, cramped cabin. The gas mileage of many subcompacts is no better than that of the most efficient compact and midsize sedans, which are roomier and more refined. Overall, unless your budget and/or parking space is tight, we advise spending \$2,000 more to get a compact car.

# Small

# Best overall



## Kia Rio

**Price as tested** \$17,275 **Overall mpg** 30 (sedan)

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**67**

As a sedan or a hatchback, the Rio feels like a bigger car. It comes well equipped with a six-speed automatic transmission, Bluetooth connectivity, and steering-wheel-mounted radio controls. The sedan's rear seat is roomy enough for two adults, and the trunk is fairly spacious. On the road it rides and handles well for the class and is a bit quieter than other small cars. Higher trim models offer amenities

such as heated seats and a backup camera, though they can push the price up steeply. But fuel economy can't match that of some larger compact and midsize cars. Reliability has been average, but the hatchback scored too low in our tests to be recommended.

### THE RIO LINE

**Price range** \$13,900-\$18,090  
**Engine** 138-hp, 1.6L four



## Chevrolet Sonic

**Price as tested** \$17,290 **Overall mpg** 28 mpg

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**65**

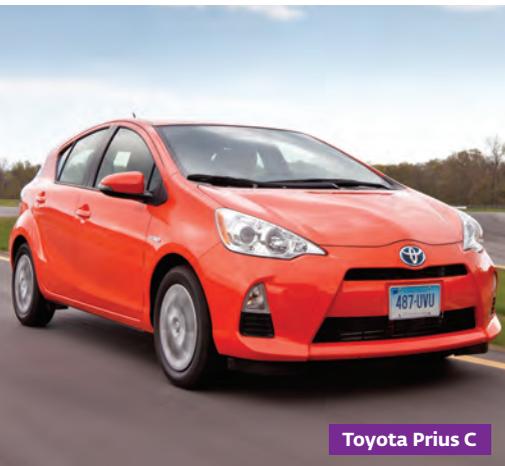
The Sonic's relatively quiet interior and optional safety features, such as forward-collision alert and lane-departure warning, set it apart in the class. Inside, the backseat is cramped, but the ride is surprisingly comfortable for a small car. The sedan has generous trunk space, but cargo room in the hatchback is tight. The base 1.8-liter engine feels adequate; the more responsive turbo 1.4-liter is marginally quicker

and doesn't use any more gas. But either version's fuel economy is unimpressive for a small car. Reliability has been average. The LTZ hatchback we tested scored too low in our tests to be recommended.

### THE SONIC LINE

**Price range** \$14,170-\$21,610  
**Engine choices** 138-hp, 1.8L four; 138-hp, 1.4L turbo four

# Narrow your choices



Toyota Prius C

## ▶ Best fuel economy

Gas mileage is our overall mpg.

**Mitsubishi i-MiEV** (electric) 111 mpg equiv.

**Toyota Prius C** 43 mpg

**Smart ForTwo** 39 mpg

**Honda Insight** 38 mpg

**Honda CR-Z** 35 mpg

**Scion iQ** 34 mpg

**Ford Fiesta** 32 to 33 mpg

**Fiat 500** 33 mpg

**Honda Fit** 30 to 33 mpg

**Mazda2** 30 to 33 mpg

**Hyundai Accent** 31 to 32 mpg

**Nissan Versa Sedan** 32 mpg

**Toyota Yaris** 32 mpg

If fuel economy is the bottom line, you can't beat the electric Mitsubishi i-MiEV, the Toyota Prius C and Honda Insight hybrids, or the tiny Smart ForTwo. But each is slow, noisy, and uncomfortable; we also think the ForTwo is a model to avoid (see page 36).

Ironically, the highest-scoring cars in this category get lower fuel economy. But the trade-off gets you a quieter, more comfortable subcompact. Among the nicer-to-drive models, the best get 30 to 31 mpg with an automatic transmission; a manual can give you 2 or 3 more mpg.

You can often do just as well in a larger model. In general, subcompacts get about the same mpg as the best compact cars: 32 to 33 mpg overall with an automatic transmission. Similarly, subcompact hybrids get no better gas mileage than larger ones.



Fiat 500 Abarth

## ▶ Fun to drive

**Ford Fiesta ST**

**Fiat 500 Abarth**

**Mini Cooper**

These three are a real blast to drive, and you can have plenty of fun in them without risking your driver's license.

The Fiesta ST is our favorite car here. Sure, its backseat is tight and the tiny radio screen is hard to reach, but the ST is quick, and it hugs corners with great grip and terrific steering. It also comes with the latest navigation and infotainment technology.

The Abarth is the performance version of the cute but flawed Fiat 500. It's engaging to drive, with plenty of power and an exhaust that pops and burbles with every shift. That might sound invigorating at first, but it grows tiresome. The Abarth also suffers from an awkward driving position and a hard ride. Ratings for the Ford and Fiat are on page 54.

Spunky and stylish, the Mini Cooper is known for combining go-kart handling and great fuel economy. A redesigned Mini is in the wings (see Coming Soon, at right), with hardtop models coming first. It's too bad previous Minis have been unreliable.

## ▶ Small car, big footprint

**Honda Fit**

**Nissan Versa Note**

**Nissan Cube**

Space is at a premium in these tiny cars, so it's important that manufacturers make the most of it. The best at that is the Honda Fit, with its Transformers-like interior. With the rear seats folded down, the Fit provides a deep cargo area. Folding the seat cushion up vertically against the seatbacks results in a space tall enough to accommodate a bicycle.

The Versa Note is another good choice, with a useful, roomy cargo area. Both it and the Fit are narrow, but they have plenty of knee and head room for two adults to sit comfortably in back. An alternative is the boxy Nissan Cube; interior space is enormous, and it gets a decent 28 mpg overall, but it feels long in the tooth.

## Coming soon

**2015 Honda Fit, spring 2014**

Every subcompact car inevitably gets compared with the Fit, given its impressive blend of space, efficiency, sportiness, and value. But the Fit is also noisy and tiring on long trips, and it recently did poorly in a tough new insurance-industry crash test.

That makes the redesigned Fit a timely arrival. Honda claims 15 percent better fuel economy from the stronger engine and six-speed manual transmission; a continuously variable transmission is new. The new version will also offer such handy features as optional heated leather seats, a backup camera, blind-spot assistance, and a 7-inch touch screen. SUV and hybrid variants will also be available.

Despite being shorter than the old model, it remains super-space-efficient. We also expect better crash-test performance. And we hope it retains its fun-to-drive factor while getting a bit quieter.



**2015 Mini Cooper, spring 2014**

At first blush the new Mini is almost indistinguishable from the old car.

But the new version is 4.5 inches longer overall and 2 inches wider. Cargo space is slightly improved, but rear-seat room remains tight. Base Minis switch to a 1.5-liter, turbo three-cylinder engine; S models get a turbo four. Higher-end models get a touch-screen infotainment system with smart-phone apps. Also available for the first time is a heads-up display, backup camera, precollision braking, and parking assist.



Nissan Versa Note

# Ratings

**Why some models are not recommended.** The Honda Fit and Hyundai Accent performed poorly in the IIHS small-overlap crash test. The Hyundai Veloster and Ford Fiesta have below-average reliability. Cars scoring lower than 65 didn't score well enough in our tests.

● Recommended
 ● Better
 ○
● Worse

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
	<b>Honda Fit Sport (MT)</b>	\$17,850	76	● ●	\$0.44	33	Fuel economy, handling, space utilization, reliability.	Poor IIHS small overlap crash-test result, ride, road noise, fit and finish, headlights.
	<b>Hyundai Accent hatchback SE (MT)</b>	16,695	72	● ●	0.49	32	Fuel economy, secure handling, controls.	Poor IIHS small overlap crash-test result, ride, noise, rear visibility.
	<b>Hyundai Veloster (base, MT)</b>	20,340	71	● ○	0.54	31	Handling, fuel economy, extra door, turning circle.	Subpar reliability, ride, noise, lacks low-end torque, rear visibility, rear seat.
	<b>Honda Fit (base)</b>	16,915	68	● ●	0.43	30	Handling, space utilization, reliability.	Poor IIHS small overlap crash-test result, ride, road noise, fit and finish, headlights.
✓	<b>Kia Rio sedan EX</b>	17,275	67	○ ●	0.51	30	Transmission, controls, equipment levels.	Ride, noise.
	<b>Hyundai Accent sedan GLS</b>	16,050	65	● ●	0.49	31	Fuel economy, transmission, secure handling, controls.	Poor IIHS small overlap crash-test result, ride, noise.
✓	<b>Chevrolet Sonic sedan LT (1.8)</b>	17,290	65	○ ○	0.48	28	Braking, trunk, quick and quiet for class.	Fuel economy, darty steering, narrow driving position, seat comfort.
	<b>Ford Fiesta SES Hatchback (MT)</b>	17,795	65	● ●	0.49	32	Handling, ride, noise, fuel economy, turning circle.	Subpar reliability, acceleration, rear seat, some controls, rear visibility.
	<b>Mazda2 Sport (MT)</b>	14,770	64	○ ●	0.43	33	Handling, fuel economy, shifter, turning circle.	Acceleration, ride, road noise, front-seat comfort.
	<b>Nissan Cube 1.8S</b>	16,790	64	NA NA	0.49	28	Space efficiency, access, transmission, turning circle.	Braking, acceleration, agility, noise, fit and finish, headlights, swing-out tailgate.
	<b>Kia Rio hatchback EX</b>	17,475	63	○ ●	0.52	29	Transmission, controls, equipment levels.	Ride, noise, rear visibility, fuel economy.
	<b>Nissan Versa Note SV</b>	17,495	63	new new	0.49	31	Space, access, versatility, fuel economy, controls.	Driving position, unsupportive front seats, acceleration, quirky CVT.
	<b>Scion XD (MT)</b>	15,820	62	NA NA	0.44	34	Handling, interior space, access, fuel economy.	Noise, ride, driving position, fit and finish, rear visibility.
	<b>Ford Fiesta SE Sedan</b>	16,595	61	● ●	0.47	33	Handling, ride, noise, fuel economy, turning circle.	Subpar reliability, acceleration, braking, rear seat, some controls.
	<b>Fiat 500 Sport (MT)</b>	18,600	61	● ●	0.49	33	Handling, shifter, fuel economy, front access.	Reliability, acceleration, ride, noise, seats, driving position, controls, poor IIHS small overlap crash test.
	<b>Mazda2 Touring</b>	17,075	60	○ ●	0.47	30	Handling, turning circle.	Acceleration, ride, road noise, front-seat comfort.
	<b>Scion xD</b>	16,620	60	NA NA	0.45	29	Handling, interior space, access.	Noise, ride, driving position, fit and finish, rear visibility, fuel economy for class.
	<b>Chevrolet Sonic hatchback LTZ (1.4T MT)</b>	19,870	59	○ ●	0.51	30	Braking, quick and quiet for class.	So-so fuel economy, manual gear ratios and shifter, narrow driving position, seat comfort, rear visibility.
	<b>Honda CR-Z EX (MT)</b>	21,510	57	● ○	0.48	35	Fuel economy, shifter, turning circle, cargo flexibility, reliability.	Only two seats, noise, ride, visibility, access, A/C shutoff at stop.
	<b>Honda Insight EX</b>	21,790	54	● ○	0.48	38	Fuel economy, transmission.	Acceleration, handling, ride, noise, rear seat.
	<b>Toyota Prius C Two</b>	20,850	53	● ●	0.41	43	Fuel economy, smooth transmission, turning circle, relatively roomy rear seat, reliability.	Acceleration, ride, noise, driving position, rear visibility, fit and finish, IIHS small overlap crash test.
	<b>Nissan Versa sedan SV</b>	15,490	52	○ ●	0.46	32	Fuel economy, rear seat, trunk.	Handling, engine noise, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, poor IIHS small overlap crash test.
	<b>Toyota Yaris LE</b>	17,290	41	NA NA	0.45	32	Fuel economy, roomy rear seat, turning circle.	Noise, ride, agility, driving position, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, radio controls, rear visibility.
	<b>Chevrolet Spark 1LT</b>	15,820	36	NA NA	0.45	31	Braking, secure on-limit handling, fuel economy, access, relatively roomy, IIHS crash-test results.	Acceleration, transmission, ride, noise, agility, front-seat comfort, complicated radio.
	<b>Mitsubishi i-MiEV SE</b>	33,630	31	NA NA	NA	111*	Low energy consumption, parking ease, turning circle.	Short range, charge time, weak heat, acceleration, ride, agility, driving position, spartan interior, radio.
	<b>Scion iQ</b>	16,205	29	NA NA	0.43	34	Fuel economy, turning circle, transmission, front access, rear seat adds flexibility.	Ride, noise, acceleration, steering, driving position, fit and finish, radio controls, blind spots, tiny rear seat.
	<b>Smart ForTwo Passion</b>	15,355	28	NA NA	0.44	39	Fuel economy, ease of parking, turning circle, access.	Transmission, acceleration, ride, agility, noise, seats only two, premium fuel.

\*Miles-per-gallon equivalent (MPGe).

## MODELS TO AVOID

These minicars are meant for crowded city driving, but all scored too low in our tests to be recommended.

### Smart ForTwo

A tiny, two-passenger cabin, a herky-jerky transmission, an underpowered engine, and the required use of premium fuel are four reasons the Smart is, well, a dumb choice. There are far better cars in this class.



### Scion iQ

Even if you need a car that's easy to park and maneuver on city streets, you can do better than the iQ. The rear seat is awful, the cabin is loud, acceleration is molasseslike, and fit and finish is totally unimpressive.



### Chevrolet Spark

Aside from its low price, there's no real reason to buy the Spark. The cabin is extremely loud, the ride is stiff and jittery, the chunky 1.2-liter engine is slow, and handling is lackluster.



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\*Between 04/01/13 and 04/30/13, the average estimated savings off MSRP presented to program users by participating based on user new vehicle configurations was \$2,791.

## MIDSIZED SEDANS

There's a good reason sedans are the most popular choice among car buyers. They provide the best combination of performance, fuel economy, comfort, practicality, and affordability. And the latest models keep pushing the envelope, with some midsized sedans delivering fuel economy that rivals subcompacts and agility that's reminiscent of a sports sedan.

**Drawbacks:** These sedans can carry five people, but they don't provide the cargo-carrying flexibility of a wagon, a hatchback, or an SUV. Also, your choices are pretty slim if you're looking for all-wheel drive; see page 42.

# Sedans

## Best overall



### Honda Accord (4-cyl.)

Price as tested \$23,270 Overall mpg 30

OVERALL  
SCORE  
**90**

The four-cylinder Accord is a spacious, well-equipped family car that does almost everything well. It provides responsive handling, a roomy cabin, comfortable seats, and a great view out. And it delivers a surprising 30 mpg overall, similar to some small subcompacts. An overly firm ride is one of our few reservations. We also tested an EX-L V6 version, but below-average reliability prevents us from recommending it. Hybrid and plug-in hybrid models are also available.



#### THE ACCORD LINE

**Price range** \$21,955-\$39,780

**Engine choices** 185-hp, 2.4L four; 196-hp, 2.0L hybrid four; 196-hp, 2.0L four plus electric motor; 278-hp, 3.5L V6





## Hyundai Sonata (2.4L 4-cyl.)

Price as tested \$21,800 Overall mpg 27

OVERALL SCORE  
**89**

The Sonata gives you a lot for your money. Its 200-hp four-cylinder engine is smooth and responsive, and it returns a thrifty 27 mpg overall. Good handling, a supple ride, and comfortable power seats are other pluses. Its coupelike styling is eye-catching yet doesn't restrict visibility or rear access. Our major gripe is that there's more road noise than we'd like. Versions with a more powerful 274-hp turbocharged

four-cylinder engine return 25 mpg, but their reliability has been below average, so we don't recommend them. We suggest skipping the hybrid version, which didn't score high in our tests and returns mediocre fuel economy for a hybrid.

### THE SONATA LINE

Price range \$21,350-\$28,650

Engine choices 198- or 200-hp 2.4L four; 199-hp, 2.4L hybrid four; 274-hp, 2.0L turbo four

DID YOU KNOW?

**85%**

of Mazda6 owners said they'd definitely buy the car again, topping its class.



## Toyota Camry

Price as tested \$23,830-\$29,052 Overall mpg 26-38

The Camry treats drivers to a refined, quiet, and roomy environment while getting from point A to point B. It provides a comfortable ride, and its handling is responsive and secure, if not sporty. You can choose from

OVERALL SCORE  
**93**

Hybrid XLE

OVERALL SCORE  
**92**

XLE (V6)

OVERALL SCORE  
**88**

LE (4-cyl.)

three efficient engines. We measured a frugal 27 mpg with the four-cylinder; the powerful V6 got only 1 mpg less. The hybrid version delivers an excellent 38 mpg, which is among the best in its class. The main drawback is a touch-screen radio that isn't very user-friendly.

### THE CAMRY LINE

Price range: \$22,425-\$28,625

Engine choices: 173- or 178-hp 2.5L four; 200-hp 2.5L hybrid four; 268-hp, 3.5L V6



JENNIFER STOCKBURGER, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, AUTO TEST CENTER

## Tester's notes

With today's midsize sedans, there's no reason to give up comfort, roominess, and refinement for fuel economy. Several models get gas mileage that's as good as or better than much smaller—and far less comfy—subcompact cars.



# Which car is right for you?



## ▶ Most fuel-efficient

Gas mileage is our overall mpg.

**Ford Fusion Hybrid** 39 mpg

**Toyota Camry Hybrid** 38 mpg

**Volkswagen Passat TDI** 37 mpg

**Mazda6** 32 mpg

**Nissan Altima** (4-cyl.) 31 mpg

**Honda Accord** (4-cyl.) 30 mpg

You can generally expect about 27 mpg overall with a four-cylinder engine; 24 with a more powerful V6 or turbocharged engine. But several models do much better. Standouts among conventional models are the Mazda6 and four-cylinder versions of the Nissan Altima and Honda Accord, which deliver gas mileage that's as good as or better than many smaller cars. But the Altima has had poor reliability. If you want to stretch your fuel dollars even further, consider a hybrid. You'll pay about \$3,000 more and give up some trunk room for the battery. But you can get almost 40 mpg overall. Another option is a diesel-powered car; Volkswagen's Passat TDI posts 37 mpg overall and an impressive 51 on the highway.

## Ratings Midsized sedans

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
✓	<b>Toyota Camry Hybrid XLE</b>	\$29,052	93	● ●	\$0.53	38	Fuel economy, ride, powertrain, interior room, reliability, IIHS crash-test results.	Overly complicated radio.
✓	<b>Toyota Camry XLE (V6)</b>	32,603	92	○ ●	0.67	26	Ride, fuel economy, powertrain, acceleration, interior room, IIHS crash-test results.	Overly complicated radio.
✓	<b>Honda Accord LX (4-cyl.)</b>	23,270	90	○ ●	0.54	30	Fuel economy, drivetrain, handling, roomy interior, visibility, driving position, controls, lots of features, IIHS crash-test results.	Complicated optional radio, ride a bit choppy.
	<b>Honda Accord EX-L (V6)</b>	30,860	90	● ●	0.66	26	Fuel economy, drivetrain, handling, roomy interior, visibility, driving position, controls, lots of features, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, complicated optional radio, ride a bit choppy.
	<b>Hyundai Sonata Limited (2.0T)</b>	28,090	89	● ○	0.65	25	Acceleration, handling, transmission, controls.	Subpar reliability, road noise, limited head room with sunroof.
✓	<b>Hyundai Sonata GLS (2.4)</b>	21,800	89	○ ○	0.55	27	Ride, handling, transmission, fuel economy, controls, value.	Road noise.
✓	<b>Chevrolet Malibu 2LTZ (2.0T)</b>	33,865	89	○ ○	0.71	24	Ride, quietness, controls, transmission, braking.	Rear seat.
✓	<b>Subaru Legacy 3.6R Limited</b>	30,094	88	○ ○	0.69	22	Acceleration, ride, rear seat, controls, IIHS crash-test results.	Complicated radio controls with optional navigation system.
✓	<b>Toyota Camry LE (4-cyl.)</b>	23,830	88	● ●	0.54	27	Fuel economy, ride, powertrain, interior room, IIHS crash-test results.	Overly complicated radio.
✓	<b>Mazda6 Sport</b>	23,590	85	● ●	0.56	32	Fuel economy, agility, transmission, IIHS crash-test results.	Noise, ride, snug interior, low dash vents, Sport trim lacks power seat.
	<b>Ford Fusion SE Hybrid</b>	28,290	85	● ●	0.55	39	Fuel economy, agility, ride, quietness, fun to drive, powertrain, styling, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, visibility, touchy brakes, slightly snug cabin, small trunk opening.

\*Powertrain has changed since last test.

## ▶ Fun to drive

Ford Fusion  
Mazda6

Sure, you need a car that's practical for everyday duties, but you still want to be able to enjoy threading through a twisty road when you get the chance. That used to be a tall order, but the Fusion and Mazda6 might just meet your expectations. With the Fusion, go for the 231-hp, 2.0-liter turbo four-cylinder engine, which gives the car quick, effortless acceleration. It even emits a sporty exhaust note. The Fusion's handling is like a well-tuned European sedan's. Even when pushed, it remains settled, tied down, and composed. The Mazda6 can fly under a buyer's radar, but it's one of the most engaging sedans to drive. And with 32 mpg, it's a fun-to-drive car that's economical, too.



Ford Fusion



Mazda6



■ Recommended
 ●
○
◐
◑
●
 Better ← → Worse

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
✓	<b>Chevrolet Malibu</b> 1LT (2.5L)*	\$26,030	84	○ ○	\$0.60	26	Ride, quietness, controls, transmission, fuel economy.	Rear seat.
	<b>Nissan Altima</b> 3.5 SL	31,610	84	● ○	0.70	24	Acceleration, roomy interior, controls, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, agility, ride.
	<b>Kia Optima</b> SX (2.0T)	29,050	84	◐ ◑	0.70	24	Acceleration, handling, transmission, controls, feature content, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, road noise, low rear seat, rear visibility.
	<b>Volkswagen Passat</b> SEL Premium (V6)	33,720	82	NA NA	0.76	23	Ride, handling, acceleration, interior room, rear seat, access, IIHS crash-test results.	Unknown reliability, premium fuel, slow touch-screen controls.
	<b>Ford Fusion</b> SE (1.5T)	27,720	82	new new	0.64	24	Agility, ride, quietness, fun to drive, braking, styling, IIHS crash-test results.	Unknown reliability, visibility, slightly snug cabin, small trunk opening.
✓	<b>Kia Optima</b> LX (2.4)	21,885	81	○ ○	0.59	25	Secure handling, transmission, controls, IIHS crash-test results.	Road noise, low rear seat, rear visibility.
	<b>Nissan Altima</b> 2.5 S	23,410	81	● ○	0.55	31	Fuel economy, roomy interior, controls, IIHS crash-test results.	Subpar reliability, agility, driver's seat lumbar support, no USB port.
✓	<b>Subaru Legacy</b> 2.5i Premium	24,189	81	● ◑	0.59	26	Fuel economy, visibility, rear seat, controls, standard AWD, reliability, IIHS crash-test results.	Acceleration, engine noise, unrefined CVT.
✓	<b>Volkswagen Passat</b> TDI SE	28,665	80	○ ●	0.54	37	Fuel economy, ride, interior room, rear seat, access, IIHS crash-test results.	Acceleration, transmission operation at low speeds.
✓	<b>Ford Fusion</b> Titanium (2.0T)	33,180	78	○ ◑	0.73	22	Agility, ride, quietness, fun to drive, braking, styling, IIHS crash-test results.	MyFord Touch controls, fuel economy, visibility, slightly snug cabin, small trunk opening.
	<b>Hyundai Sonata</b> Hybrid	26,695	69	○ ◐	0.55	33	Fuel economy, controls.	Drivability, braking, on-limit handling, road noise.

**Why some models are not recommended.** The Honda Accord EX-L (V6), Hyundai Sonata (2.0T), Ford Fusion SE Hybrid, Nissan Altima 3.5 SL and 2.5 S, and Kia Optima SX (2.0T) have had below-average reliability. We don't have sufficient reliability data for the Volkswagen Passat SEL (V6). The Ford Fusion SE (1.5T) is too new for us to have reliability data. The Hyundai Sonata Hybrid didn't score well enough in our testing.

## MIDSIZED SEDANS

### ▶ High in comfort

**Chevrolet Malibu**  
**Toyota Camry**

If you frequently drive in urban areas or on winter-ravaged roads, you might put a lot of weight on ride comfort. There's nothing more fatiguing than spending a lot of time in a car that makes you feel every bump in the road. The best models ride almost like luxury cars; the worst feel like compact budget cars. The midsize sedans with the most comfortable ride are the Malibu and the Camry. The Malibu's ride is absorbent, mopping up every bump and rut in its way, providing a relaxed and tranquil feel. The Camry's ride is also absorbent, masking bumps quite well. On the other hand, you might want to scratch the Sonata, Optima, and perhaps the Accord from your short list. Their firmer ride is less cushy and comfy.



Chevrolet Malibu



Ford Fusion

### ▶ All-wheel drive

**Subaru Legacy**  
**Ford Fusion**

All-wheel drive provides extra traction in slippery conditions. But if you want it in a moderately priced sedan, your options are pretty limited. All Subarus except the sporty BRZ come with AWD as a standard feature, so you can choose a Legacy with a four- or six-cylinder engine. The Fusion also offers AWD as a \$2,000 option, but only on the high-end Titanium versions, which start at about \$30,000. If you can wait, the 2015 Chrysler 200 will also offer AWD. For a wider range of models with AWD, consider an SUV (see page 58) or a luxury car (page 44).



## ► **Tops in reliability**

**Toyota Camry** (hybrid and 4-cyl.)

**Subaru Legacy** (4-cyl.)

**Mazda6**

With drivers keeping their cars longer, having one that will hold up well over the years and reduce visits to the shop might be a high priority. If that's the case for you, jot down the Camry Hybrid and four-cylinder Legacy on your list. According to our latest reliability survey data, those two models had the fewest problems of any midsize sedan. The four-cylinder Camry and Mazda6 were also above average, although the six-cylinder Camry and Legacy were only average. Steer clear of the Nissan Altima with either of its engines, because it was below average in reliability.



Subaru Legacy



Volkswagen Passat

## ► **Room to spare**

**Toyota Camry**

**Volkswagen Passat**

**Honda Accord**

Many midsize sedans provide adequate room for the driver and front-seat passenger, but pity those who are relegated to the rear. Any of these sedans will treat you right up front and help you stay in good standing with your backseat passengers. All three provide wide, spacious, and comfortable front seats that accommodate taller people. The Camry's spacious rear bench has ample shoulder, head, and leg room to seat three people comfortably, though it's a little low for optimum thigh support. The Passat's rear seat is exceptional, on par with a large luxury sedan's. The center position is narrow, though, and any occupant there must straddle a wide tunnel. Similarly, the Accord's rear seat is supportive and comfortable for two but tight for three.

## **Coming soon**

### **2015 Chrysler 200, spring 2014**

The redesigned 200 promises to be a big improvement over the current model (see "Models to Avoid"). To help fuel economy, it will be the first midsize car to use a nine-speed automatic transmission, which it shares with the new Jeep Cherokee. When equipped with the 184-hp, 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine, Chrysler says the 200 will get 35 mpg on the highway. A 295-hp, 3.6-liter V6 will also be available. The transmission will be controlled by a rotary dial-a-gear knob, as in the Dodge Durango and Ram 1500. All-wheel drive will be optional. The interior will have a center console that doubles as a charging station for mobile devices. The company's well-designed Uconnect 8.4-inch touch-screen system is optional. Pricing will start at \$21,700.



### **2015 Subaru Legacy, fall 2014**

In redesigning this affordable all-wheel-drive sedan, Subaru has focused on enhancing fuel economy and refinement. A continuously variable transmission is now standard on both the four- and six-cylinder models. Addressing our gripes with the current model, Subaru claims better noise isolation, more upscale features, and better connectivity. A backup camera is standard, and high-tech EyeSight safety features are available on more models.



## **MODELS TO AVOID**

These models just don't measure up to the competition, either because of low test scores or below-average reliability.

### **Chrysler 200/ Dodge Avenger**

Even though these corporate cousins are being replaced and discontinued, respectively, there might be plenty of them on dealers' lots at a discount. Don't be tempted. They are outdated and outclassed. The noisy and unrefined four-cylinder engines get only 21 mpg overall. And neither scored high enough in our testing to be recommended. The redesigned 200 is expected this spring.



Chrysler 200



Dodge Avenger

## LUXURY SEDANS

For drivers looking for more comfort, convenience, and refinement than mainstream sedans offer, there is a wide choice of upscale and luxury sedans and sports sedans. The best models are inviting, all-around packages that deliver spirited performance, frugal fuel economy, comfortable and well-equipped cabins, advanced safety and infotainment features, and good reliability.

Drawbacks: Luxury cars aren't the most rational choice from a financial perspective. Sports sedans usually sacrifice rear-seat room. Some also have complex control systems that have proved highly distracting to use in our testing and troublesome in our reliability survey.

# Best overall

## COMPACT LUXURY



### BMW 328i

Price as tested \$43,195 Overall mpg 28

OVERALL SCORE  
**86**

The 328i is a fun-to-drive sports sedan that's also easy to live with. Its turbocharged four-cylinder engine delivers strong performance and returns an impressive 28 mpg. That's better than all of its direct competitors. Ride comfort is impressive, and handling is agile and capable. Occupants are treated to a quiet, impeccably finished cabin with supportive seats, although the

rear is a bit snug. Our biggest qualm is that the steering feels less communicative than it was in the previous generation.

#### THE 3 SERIES LINE

Price range \$32,750-\$69,700

Engine choices 180-hp or 240-hp, 2.0L turbo four; 180-hp, 2.0L turbodiesel four; 300-hp, 3.0L turbo six; 335-hp, 3.0L hybrid six



### Mercedes-Benz C250

Price as tested \$40,705 Overall mpg 24

OVERALL SCORE  
**85**

The C250 is a solid, quiet, and capable sedan that does an excellent job of blending comfort and responsiveness. What it gives up in outright performance it returns in refinement. The ride is taut and steady, with enjoyable handling. We prefer the ride of the Luxury versions over that of the Sport. We found the 1.8-liter engine to be smooth and powerful, and the seven-

speed automatic transmission shifted seamlessly. The interior has supportive seats and good room up front, but the rear is snug. A redesign arrives this fall.

#### THE C-CLASS LINE

Price range \$35,800-\$62,750

Engine choices 201-hp, 1.8L turbo four; 248-hp, 3.5L V6; 302-hp, 3.5L V6; 451-hp or 507-hp, 6.3L V8

# Sedans

## MIDSIZED LUXURY



### Audi A6 3.0T

Price as tested \$56,295 Overall mpg 22

OVERALL SCORE  
**93**

It's no wonder the multi-faceted A6 is a Top Pick. Yearning for power? Its 310-hp, supercharged V6, mated to a silky-smooth, eight-speed automatic transmission, delivers potent, effortless performance. Want to tackle a winding road? The athletic A6 has agile, secure handling, yet the ride is supple and controlled. Its

all-wheel drive helps in slippery conditions. And the A6 comfortably carries five in a hushed, luxurious cabin.

#### THE A6 LINE

**Price range** \$43,100-\$73,400  
**Engine choices** 220-hp, 2.0L turbo four; 240-hp, 3.0L turbodiesel V6; 310-hp, 3.0L supercharged V6; 420-hp, 4.0L turbo V8

### Infiniti Q70 (V6)

Price as tested \$53,825 Overall mpg 21

OVERALL SCORE  
**93**

This is a luxury sedan with a muscle-car attitude, thanks to the invigorating exhaust note of its exuberant powertrain. But the Q isn't all about brawn. Handling is quite sharp, and the ride is compliant, if not exactly plush. Four adults are treated to a roomy, luxurious interior. The controls are relatively easy to use, so you don't have to fuss with a convoluted infotainment system. The hybrid version, however, suffers from abrupt transitions between electric and gas modes.

#### THE Q70 LINE

**Price range** \$49,500-\$64,500  
**Engine choices** 330-hp, 3.7L V6; 360-hp, 3.5L hybrid V6; 420-hp, 5.6L V8



## LARGE LUXURY



### Tesla Model S

Price as tested \$89,650  
Overall mpg equivalent 84

OVERALL SCORE  
**99**

No car matches the all-electric Tesla's take on performance luxury. You can savor both its Porsche-like handling and effortless, silent glide on electric power. Our top-rated car covers about 225 miles on a charge, which takes 5 hours to replenish on its proprietary charger. It can also snap off a quick 5.6-second 0-to-60-mpg sprint. Running costs are low, and the rear hatch and front trunk add practicality. The breakthrough Tesla rewrites the rules for a modern luxury sports sedan.

#### THE MODEL S LINE

**Price range** \$69,900-\$94,900  
**Powertrain choices** 302-hp, 362-hp, or 416-hp, 60 or 85 KW battery



### Lexus LS 460

Price as tested \$82,504 Overall mpg 21

OVERALL SCORE  
**92**

If you like your luxury with heaping doses of comfort, quietness, and refinement, look no further than the LS. It delivers fuss-free motoring with a serene, silky ride and an expansive interior that's impeccably dressed in leather, wood, and other high-quality, soft-touch materials. The big Lexus has an excellent reliability

record, and its respectable gas mileage is the icing on the cake. One gripe is the distracting mouse-like controller for the infotainment system.

#### THE LS LINE

**Price range** \$72,140-\$120,060  
**Engine choices** 360-hp or 386-hp, 4.6L V8; 438-hp, 5.0L hybrid V8

# Which car is right for you?



Acura TL

## ▶ Most reliable

- Lexus CT 200h
- Acura TL
- Lexus ES
- Lexus LS

The knock on luxury cars is that they're prone to needing expensive repairs, but these models prove that isn't always the case. Although the Lexus CT 200h is not much of a luxury car, it is a very reliable hybrid that gets an excellent 40 mpg overall.

The Acura TL has always been among the most reliable, if not exciting, sedans in its class. It gets replaced this summer with the TLX. The Lexus ES isn't as sporty as some competitors, but it has a rock-solid



Lexus LS

12-year reliability record in our latest survey, and the ES 300h hybrid delivers excellent fuel economy.

Among large luxury sedans, the big Lexus LS is a standout for its strong reliability record, and it should give you a headache-free ownership experience. Its refinement, comfort, and quietness are bonuses.

Lately Audi models have shown an improvement in reliability to average or better.

## Ratings Luxury sedans

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
<b>COMPACT</b>								
✓	BMW 328i	\$43,195	86	○ ●	\$0.81	28	Fuel economy, handling, ride, acceleration, transmission, fit and finish.	Engine clatter, controls.
✓	Mercedes-Benz C250	40,705	85	○ ○	0.84	24	Ride, handling, transmission, front-seat comfort, fit and finish.	Rear-seat space, some controls.
✓	Acura TSX (4-cyl.)	29,675	84	● ●	0.66	25	Powertrain, fuel economy, fit and finish, front-seat comfort.	Ride, steering feel, rear seat.
	Volkswagen CC Sport (2.0T)	32,800	81	● ○	0.72	26	Agility, ride, fit and finish, fuel economy.	Subpar reliability, visibility, access, tight rear seat.
✓	Buick Regal Premium I*	34,485	79	○ ○	0.70	23	Agility, ride, transmission, fit and finish, trunk.	Rear seat.
✓	Acura ILX (2.0L)	30,095	77	● ●	0.65	28	Fuel economy, powertrain, controls.	Road noise, choppy ride, no driver's seat lumbar support, value.
✓	Volvo S60 T5*	35,100	77	○ ○	0.76	23	Agility, acceleration, transmission, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, advanced safety systems, IIHS crash-test results.	Rear seat, trunk, engine refinement, two-step ignition.
	Audi A4 Premium Quattro	35,895	76	● ●	0.74	25	Agility, acceleration, transmission, fuel economy, fit and finish.	Poor IIHS small overlap crash-test results, controls, rear seat.
✓	Cadillac ATS Luxury (turbo)	43,295	76	○ ●	0.89	23	Handling, fun to drive, acceleration, braking, fit and finish, front-seat comfort.	CUE controls, tight interior, small trunk, turbo lacks refinement, access, fuel economy.
	Infiniti Q50 Premium (AWD)	44,855	73	new new	0.88	21	Acceleration, braking, visibility, relatively roomy cabin, IIHS crash-test results.	Unknown reliability, steering feel, ride, road noise, some controls, restrictive options packages, small trunk, turning circle.
✓	Buick Verano Leather (2.4)	27,750	73	● ○	0.63	24	Quietness, transmission, braking.	Front-seat comfort, tight rear seat, narrow driving position.
	Lexus CT 200h Premium	32,012	71	● ○	0.63	40	Fuel economy, secure handling, reliability.	Ride, noise, acceleration, snug interior, rear visibility, cargo space.
	Mercedes-Benz CLA250	36,500	63	new new	0.76	28	Braking, fuel economy, fit and finish, styling.	Ride, noise, cramped interior, uneven power delivery, visibility, access, small trunk opening.
	Lexus IS 250 (AWD)	43,823	52	● ●	0.90	21	Powertrain refinement, Lexus' reputation for reliability and customer service.	Acceleration, ride, road noise, lackluster handling, fuel economy, driving position, controls, tight quarters, access.

\*Powertrain has changed since last test.



► **Fun to drive**  
**BMW 328i**  
**Cadillac ATS**  
**Audi A6 3.0T**  
**Cadillac CTS**  
**Tesla Model S**  
**Porsche Panamera**

In addition to having the luxury features you expect, these cars are just as at home on a twisty road as they are at the valet stand. The BMW 328i and Cadillac ATS are powered by strong, turbocharged four-cylinder engines. Excellent handling lets the cars hug the road, and you're treated to a taut, composed ride. For more room, the A6 and CTS can carry four passengers in comfort while their supple suspensions soak up the

rough pavement and provide agile handling. The electric Model S delivers silent, potent performance. It's capable of 5.6-second 0-to-60 runs yet can cover more than 200 miles on a full charge. Plus, the Model S is as nimble on our track as it is comfortable on the highway. The Panamera delivers sports car performance while pampering four adults. Handling is very agile and capable thanks to great steering feel and cornering grip.



**GABRIEL SHENHAR,**  
 PROGRAM  
 MANAGER &  
 SENIOR AUTO  
 TEST ENGINEER

**Tester's notes**  
**The best luxury sedans strike a balance of comfort, luxury, sportiness, and refinement. If money were no object, I'd be torn between the Porsche Panamera and Tesla Model S, but the realistic choice is the Audi A6.**

Recommended
 
 Better ←
  → Worse

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0	100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction			
<b>MIDSIZED</b>								
	<b>Mercedes-Benz E250 BlueTec (AWD)</b>	\$62,980	<b>98</b>	new	⊖	\$1.10	30	Fuel economy, ride, handling, quietness, seat comfort, fit and finish, visibility. Unknown reliability for the diesel, pricey for a four-cylinder, backup camera is off when radio is off.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Audi A6 3.0 Premium Plus Quattro</b>	56,295	<b>93</b>	○	●	1.06	22	Powertrain, handling, ride, quietness, fuel economy, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, high-tech features. Controls, turning circle.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Infiniti Q70 (V6)</b>	53,825	<b>93</b>	⊖	⊖	1.03	21	Acceleration, transmission, agility, braking, fit and finish. Busy dashboard, overbearing electronic safety aids.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Mercedes-Benz E350</b>	57,965	<b>86</b>	●	●	1.12	21	Acceleration, quietness, ride, front-seat comfort, fit and finish. Controls, backup camera is off when radio is off.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lexus GS 350</b>	58,858	<b>84</b>	⊖	⊖	1.11	21	Quietness, ride, powertrain, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, visibility. Fussy controls.
	<b>Infiniti Q70 Hybrid</b>	58,655	<b>83</b>	NA	NA	1.06	25	Fuel economy, acceleration, fit and finish. Unknown reliability, abrupt transition between electric and gas modes, touchy brake pedal, trunk.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Acura TL (base)</b>	36,465	<b>82</b>	●	⊖	0.76	24	Acceleration, fuel economy, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, reliability, IIHS crash-test results. Steering feel, rear seat, trunk opening.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lexus ES 300h</b>	44,017	<b>82</b>	●	●	0.70	36	Fuel economy, hybrid drivetrain, quietness, front-seat comfort, reliability. Lackluster handling, controls, touchy brake pedal.
	<b>Lincoln MKZ Hybrid</b>	41,915	<b>82</b>	NA	●	0.79	34	Handling, ride, quietness, fuel economy, IIHS crash-test results. Unknown reliability, controls, visibility, snug interior, hidden exterior trunk release.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>BMW 535i</b>	58,375	<b>81</b>	○	⊖	1.08	23	Powertrain, fuel economy, acceleration, ride, quietness, fit and finish, front seat. Disappointing handling, controls.
	<b>Lincoln MKZ 2.0 EcoBoost</b>	41,365	<b>81</b>	NA	NA	0.83	23	Handling, ride, quietness, IIHS crash-test results. Unknown reliability, controls, visibility, snug interior, hidden exterior trunk release.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lexus ES 350</b>	43,702	<b>80</b>	●	⊖	0.82	25	Acceleration, fuel economy, drivetrain, quietness, front-seat comfort. Lackluster handling, controls.
	<b>Jaguar XF 3.0 (AWD)</b>	59,645	<b>79</b>	NA	●	1.18	21	Handling, steering, acceleration, braking, quietness, styling. Unknown reliability, controls, tight quarters, rear access, visibility.

**Why some models are not recommended.** We lack reliability data on the Infiniti Q70 hybrid, Lincoln MKZ, and Jaguar XF. The Infiniti Q50, Mercedes-Benz E250, and Cadillac CTS are too new for us to have reliability data. The Lexus CT, Mercedes-Benz CLA, Lexus IS, Acura RLX, Volvo S80, and Lincoln MKS scored too low in our tests. The Volkswagen CC and Cadillac XTS have below-average reliability. The Audi A4 did poorly in the IIHS small-overlap crash test.

# LUXURY SEDANS



Mercedes-Benz E250

## ► Comfort and plushness

Mercedes-Benz E250 & E350

Audi A6

Lexus LS 460

Regardless of the powertrain, the stately E-Class sedan delivers a plush ride and vault-like feel. Its interior exudes class, with wood and chrome trim, soft-touch materials, roomy and supportive seats, and imitation leather that's better than the real thing in some competitors' cars. All that's left is to decide between the frugal diesel-powered E250 and its mile-gobbling driving range, and the powerful and refined V6 E350.

The A6 also rides comfortably, with a hushed interior, sumptuous and supportive seats, and details that cater to your every need.

If you prefer comfort and quietness, look no further than the Lexus. It features a serene, silky ride and an expansive, impeccably furnished interior. The big Lexus has an excellent reliability record and provides a commendable 21 mpg overall.

## Ratings Luxury sedans

Better ← → Worse  
 ■ Recommended ● ○ ○ ○ ●

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
<b>MIDSIZED continued</b>								
	Cadillac XTS Premium	\$57,200	79	● ○	\$1.13	22	Roomy interior and trunk, seat comfort, fit and finish, quietness, braking, transmission.	Subpar reliability, frustrating CUE control interface, ride not plush enough, visibility, small trunk opening.
	Cadillac CTS Luxury (V6, AWD)	58,780	76	new new	1.11	21	Agility, fun to drive, front seats, plush interior, braking, styling.	Unknown reliability, complicated CUE controls, rear seat, trunk, drivetrain refinement.
	Acura RLX Tech	55,345	74	○ NA	1.04	23	Spacious and plush interior, seat comfort, fuel economy, braking, IIHS crash-test results.	Ride, agility, complicated controls, suspension noise.
	Volvo S80 3.2	45,305	70	NA ○	0.92	20	Innovative safety features, front-seat comfort, transmission, fit and finish, IIHS crash-test results.	Rear seat, ordinary ride, handling, acceleration.
	Lincoln MKS (base, 3.7)	50,070	60	○ ○	1.00	20	Quietness, rear-seat room, fit and finish.	Subpar reliability, frustrating controls, uncomposed ride, transmission, narrow cockpit, visibility, turning circle, small trunk opening.
<b>LARGE</b>								
✓	Tesla Model S (85 kWh)	\$89,650	99	○ ●	NA	84.1	Energy efficiency, acceleration, quietness, ride, handling, easy-to-use touch screen, luggage capacity, fit and finish, optional third seat.	Limited range, long charging times, access, visibility, controls.
	Audi A7 3.0 TDI	70,895	95	new ●	\$1.34	28	Powertrain, handling, ride, quietness, fuel economy, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, high-tech features.	Unknown reliability, controls, turning circle.
✓	Lexus LS 460L	82,504	92	● ●	1.31	21	Acceleration, ride, powertrain, fuel economy, quietness, interior room, fit and finish, seat comfort, reliability.	Agility, fussy controls.
	Audi A8 L*	91,275	91	NA ●	1.65	21	Handling, acceleration, transmission, braking, seat comfort, quietness, fit and finish, fuel economy, high-tech features.	Unknown reliability, controls, headlights, small trunk.
	Porsche Panamera S*	105,110	84	NA ●	1.76	20	Handling, steering, braking, acceleration, transmission, fit and finish, headlights, hatchback versatility.	Unknown reliability, visibility, controls, access, seats only four.
	Jaguar XJL Portfolio*	81,575	83	NA ○	1.55	19	Acceleration, transmission, handling, ride, quietness, seat comfort, fit and finish.	Unknown reliability, trunk, some controls, accessing the low cabin, rear visibility.
✓	Hyundai Equus Signature*	58,900	82	○ ●	1.14	19	Powertrain, quietness, fit and finish, seat comfort.	Agility, steering, on-limit handling, radio controls.
	BMW 750Li*	97,525	74	○ ○	1.77	18	Acceleration, powertrain, braking, ride, quietness, front seat, fit and finish, advanced safety features.	Agility, controls.

1 Miles-per-gallon equivalent (MPGe). \*Powertrain has changed since last test.

**Why some models are not recommended.** We lack reliability data on the Audi A8, Porsche Panamera, and Jaguar XJL. The Audi A7 TDI is too new for us to have reliability data. The BMW 750Li scored too low in our tests.

## ► Luxury on a budget

- Acura TSX \$29,675
- Acura TL \$36,465
- Lexus ES 350 \$43,702
- Lexus ES 300h \$44,017
- Hyundai Equus \$58,900



Hyundai Equus

Luxury doesn't mean opening your wallet and throwing away money. No matter which size category you're considering, there's a car that delivers a semi-luxurious driving experience without breaking the bank.

The Acura TSX is for the driver who doesn't want a lot of flash but values a smooth powertrain, a good 25 mpg overall, and an attractive price of about \$30,000.

There's no need to spend \$50,000 or more to get a roomy, comfortable, five-passenger luxury sedan. At just over \$36,000, the Acura TL gives you a very good 24 mpg overall, a

well-finished and luxurious interior, and excellent reliability. Or you can choose the Lexus ES. The ES 350 and ES 300h hybrid deliver everything you expect in a luxury sedan—roominess, a luxurious interior, and a comfortable ride—for just over \$40,000.

With the Equus, Hyundai extended its more-content-for-less-money concept to luxury cars. It falls short on brand cachet, but it delivers the quietness, spaciousness, features, ride quality, and comfort of an uber-luxury sedan without making you spend \$75,000 or more.

## Coming soon



Audi A3

### Audi A3, spring 2014

The new A3 sedan should be hitting dealerships this spring. Unlike the cramped hatchback it replaces, this car brings an upscale interior, updated connectivity, and turbocharged gas and diesel engines.

### Maserati Ghibli, on sale now

If you like your luxury with Italian flair rather than German efficiency, the new Ghibli may be for you. Its turbocharged V6 was developed by Ferrari and emits a glorious, distinctive sound. Based on the Chrysler 300 and starting at about \$75,000, it's a relatively affordable Maserati.

### Hyundai Genesis, spring 2014

The redesigned Genesis will include carryover powertrains, although the V6 will finally be available with all-wheel drive. Our experience with a press car indicates that it's roomy and refined, with considerably improved ride and handling.

### Kia K900, spring 2014

Kia steps up in class with the K900, its first large, rear-wheel-drive luxury sedan. If you long for the boulevard cruiser of yesteryear, the car's relaxed demeanor and cumbersome handling fit the bill. The interior is sumptuous and the cabin is enormous, but it's more old-school Buick than new-school Audi.

### Acura TLX, fall 2014

Acura is replacing the TSX and TL with the TLX. The new sedan will be offered with a turbocharged four-cylinder engine or a V6, front- or all-wheel drive, and a dual-clutch automated-manual gearbox.



Audi A7



Lincoln MKZ Hybrid

## ► Most fuel-efficient

Gas mileage is our overall mpg.

- Tesla Model S 84 MPGe
- Lexus CT 200h 40 mpg
- Lexus ES 300h 36 mpg
- Lincoln MKZ Hybrid 34 mpg
- Mercedes-Benz E250 30 mpg
- Acura ILX 28 mpg
- Audi A7 3.0 TDI 28 mpg
- BMW 328i 28 mpg
- Mercedes-Benz CLA250 28 mpg

The electric Tesla Model S delivers the equivalent of 84 mpg and can travel about 200 miles on a charge. Though the Lexus CT 200h's 40 mpg overall is the best among nonelectrics, we don't think that's enough to make up for the car's stiff ride and road noise.

Two hybrids and a diesel shine among

mid-sized sedans. The ES 300h gets a stellar 36 mpg overall and 44 mpg on the highway, and the MKZ Hybrid returned an excellent 34 mpg overall in our tests while delivering the sporty ride and handling of a high-end European sports sedan. The luxurious Mercedes-Benz E250 should excite diesel fans. Its small turbodiesel four-cylinder returned 30 mpg overall and 41 mpg on the highway, stellar numbers for a luxurious AWD sedan.

The sleek, coupe-like A7 has a smooth eight-speed automatic, and its turbodiesel V6 delivered an impressive 28 mpg overall and 41 mpg on the highway, resulting in a cruising range of almost 800 miles. The 328i, ILX, and CLA250 return 28 mpg overall from their four-cylinder engines. The BMW provides a much better driving experience than the Acura and Mercedes.

## MODELS TO AVOID

These models just don't measure up to the competition, either because of low test scores or below-average reliability.

### Lexus IS

For a sports sedan, the IS 250 falls short ... very short. Pokey performance is coupled with a subpar 21 mpg overall. The cabin is cramped, the handling isn't agile, and the ride is neither plush nor steady. Plus, the controls are cumbersome. Its likely excellent reliability is not enough to justify buying it.

### Lincoln MKS

Although it looks the part, the MKS doesn't cut it as a luxury sedan. The adjustable suspension ranges from floaty Barcalounger to spine-rattling stiff. The interior is plush, but it isn't particularly roomy: Head room is limited, the driving position is downright narrow, and the styling hurts cabin access and visibility.



### BMW 7 Series

BMW has abandoned many of the traits that made the 7 Series so enjoyable in the past. Once crisp and nimble, the sedan is now a ponderous, technology-laden vehicle with a less-than-plush ride and ungainly handling. It's luxurious and comfortable inside, but the Mercedes-Benz S-Class and Audi A8 outdo it.

## LARGE SEDANS

If you want extra room to stretch out and don't mind giving up some fuel economy, a large sedan could be the answer. They usually provide plenty of space for front- and rear-seat passengers, and a roomy, luggage-swallowing trunk.

Large sedans focus more on comfort than on agile handling, with a comfortable ride, an upscale cabin, and plenty of features. They also cost more than mid-sized sedans, with most priced in the mid- to upper-\$30,000 range when typically equipped.

**Drawbacks:** Larger sedans aren't known for being fun to drive. The best provide responsive handling that belies their size and weight, but others can feel like old-school luxu-cruisers. And you can count on more stops for gas; the thriftiest conventional models get fuel economy that's similar to the average mid-sized sedan.

# Sedans

## Best overall

### Toyota Avalon

**Price as tested** \$40,670 (Limited, V6), \$42,501 (Hybrid Limited)

**Overall mpg** 24 (V6), 36 (Hybrid)

OVERALL SCORE  
**85**

V6

OVERALL SCORE  
**86**

Hybrid

Toyota's flagship sedan has long been a model of comfort and roominess.

The 2013 redesign sharpened its handling somewhat but stiffened the ride a bit too much. Still, the Avalon boasts a spacious, well-equipped cabin with a lush, luxurious ambience. The front seats are wide and comfortable, and the rear seat leaves

plenty of room to stretch out. The lively 268-hp V6 delivers a commendable 24 mpg overall and the hybrid version gets an impressive 36 mpg. An unfortunate byproduct of the redesign, however, is that some controls got more complicated.

#### THE AVALON LINE

**Price range** \$31,340-\$41,400

**Engine choices** 268-hp, 3.5L V6; 200-hp, 2.5L hybrid four



### Chrysler 300

**Price as tested** \$38,335 (Limited, V6), \$44,730 (300C)

**Overall mpg** 22 (V6), 18 (V8)

OVERALL SCORE  
**83**

V6

OVERALL SCORE  
**82**

V8

Quiet, stately, and luxurious, this cruiser is one of the top sedans from Detroit. It provides

a very comfortable ride and responsive handling. And the interior is nicely appointed and packed with features and amenities, including a well-designed touch-screen infotainment system. We prefer the strong, refined V6 version;

it's like a bargain luxury sedan. The muscular 5.7-liter V8 is strong and punchy, but notably thirstier with fuel. Both engines are coupled with a silky-smooth, eight-speed automatic transmission.

#### THE 300 LINE

**Price range** \$30,545-\$49,900

**Engine choices** 292-hp or 300-hp, 3.6L V6; 363-hp or 370-hp, 5.7L V8; 465-hp or 470-hp 6.4L V8



# Which car is right for you?

## Best for fuel economy

**Toyota Avalon Hybrid**

36 mpg overall

**Buick LaCrosse** 26 mpg overall

You can expect about 22 to 23 mpg overall from most large sedans. The Toyota Avalon Hybrid is the clear exception in this category. It squeezes more miles from a gallon of gas than all but the most efficient mid-sized sedans. That helps make it the least expensive model to own in this class. The Buick LaCrosse comes standard with a four-cylinder engine that's mated to GM's eAssist mild-hybrid system. It costs less but is also less fuel efficient than the Avalon.



Buick LaCrosse

## Ratings Large sedans

Recommended Better ← → Worse

	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
Recommended			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
	<b>Chevrolet Impala</b> 2LTZ (3.6)	\$39,110	95	new new	\$0.80	22	Ride, handling, braking, quietness, spacious cabin and trunk, advanced electronic safety features.	Unknown reliability, rear visibility.
✓	<b>Toyota Avalon Hybrid</b> Limited	42,501	86	⊖ ⊕	0.69	36	Fuel economy, powertrain, roomy interior, seat comfort, quietness.	Ride, some controls, touchy brake pedal.
	<b>Kia Cadenza</b>	39,030	86	new new	0.84	22	Roomy interior, simple controls, fit and finish, quietness, powertrain.	Unknown reliability, lacks some features expected for this class.
✓	<b>Toyota Avalon</b> Limited (V6)	40,670	85	⊕ ⊖	0.79	24	Fuel economy, powertrain, roomy interior, seat comfort, quietness, reliability.	Ride, some controls.
✓	<b>Chrysler 300</b> (base, V6)	38,335	83	○ ⊖	0.81	22	Acceleration, transmission, ride, quietness, seat comfort, fit and finish.	Fussy shifter, headlights.
✓	<b>Nissan Maxima</b> 3.5 SV	33,700	83	⊖ ⊖	0.77	22	Acceleration, transmission, front seat.	Rear-seat room, overly light steering at low speeds, headlights.
✓	<b>Chrysler 300C*</b>	44,730	82	⊖ ⊖	0.93	18	Acceleration, ride, quietness, seat comfort, fit and finish.	Fussy shifter, fuel economy.
✓	<b>Hyundai Azera</b>	37,185	81	○ ⊕	0.79	23	Quiet and spacious interior, fit and finish, front-seat comfort, standard features.	Stiff ride, agility.
✓	<b>Buick LaCrosse</b> (Leather, eAssist)	34,935	78	○ ○	0.72	26	Fuel economy, ride, quietness, fit and finish, front-seat comfort.	Visibility, tight cockpit, small trunk.
	<b>Dodge Charger</b> SXT Plus (V6)	34,510	75	⊖ ⊖	0.78	22	Transmission, quietness, ride, interior room, feature content.	Subpar reliability, fussy shifter, rear access, awkward door handles.
	<b>Buick LaCrosse</b> Premium I (V6)	37,555	74	⊖ ○	0.80	20	Ride, quietness, powertrain, front seat, fit and finish.	Subpar reliability, visibility, tight cockpit.
	<b>Ford Taurus</b> Limited (3.5, V6)	37,885	64	● ○	0.80	21	Quietness, trunk space.	Subpar reliability, MyFord Touch controls, visibility, driving position.

\*Powertrain has changed since last test.

**Why some models are not recommended.** The Chevrolet Impala and Kia Cadenza are too new for us to have reliability data. The Dodge Charger, Buick LaCrosse (V6), and Ford Taurus have had below-average reliability. The Taurus also scored too low in our testing.

## LARGE SEDANS

### ▶ If you need all-wheel drive

**Chrysler 300**  
**Dodge Charger**  
**Buick LaCrosse**

As with mid-sized sedans, there aren't a lot of large-sedan models that offer all-wheel drive. You can get it on most versions of the Chrysler 300 and the Dodge Charger for an extra \$2,500 to \$5,000, depending on the trim level. AWD is also available on the V6 Buick LaCrosse. It's standard on the Ford Taurus SHO and optional on other V6-equipped versions, but there are better choices.



Dodge Charger



Chevrolet Impala

### ▶ Most comfortable

**Chrysler 300**  
**Chevrolet Impala**  
**Buick LaCrosse**

Most of the models in this class are geared for comfort, but the 300, Impala, and LaCrosse stand out for their inviting blend of roomy cabin, comfortable seats, and cushy and plush ride.

The 300 has a quiet, well-furnished, and luxurious interior that's packed with useful features, including the optional Uconnect 8.4 touch-screen system, one of the best available. We found the front seats to be firm and well-shaped, with generous padding. Two adults can sit very comfortably in the large, well-shaped rear seats. Highway cruising is composed and serene. We would stick with the 18-inch wheels and tires for a better ride. You feel more bumps and thumps with the optional 20-inches.

The Impala's spacious, quiet cabin sets a new standard for Chevrolet fit and finish,

with generally high-quality materials and trim. It's plush and very comfortable, and the ride provides a serene highway cruise. That's particularly impressive given the low-profile 19-inch tires on our LTZ. The cabin has a solid, almost vault-like atmosphere that isolates most ambient noise. The front seats are roomy and supportive, with generous head and leg room. Two adults will be very comfortable in the Impala's well-shaped and supportive rear seat, where there is plenty of knee, foot, and head room.

The LaCrosse is also quiet, roomy, and luxurious, with a steady and composed ride. The front seats are well-padded and comfortable. Optional leather seats are much more supportive than the standard cloth seats. The spacious rear seat is comfortable and well-shaped, but the low roof robs head room and hurts cabin access. In addition, thick windshield pillars severely block forward visibility, and the driving position is somewhat narrow.

## Cars to watch

These redesigned models aren't recommended because they're too new for us to have reliability data. But they did well in our testing, ranking at or near the top of their category.

### **Chevrolet Impala** Price as tested \$39,110

The Impala was one of the surprises of the year. In our testing, its stellar 95 score outpaced almost every other sedan, including some that cost \$20,000 more. This breakthrough car is a thoroughly modern sedan that's comfortable, quiet, and enjoyable to drive. It delivers a luxurious ride, agile handling, and capable acceleration, with a respectable 22 mpg overall. The spacious cabin is well-finished, with high-quality materials that look plush and contemporary. Rear passengers get oodles of space and comfort.



Kia Cadenza

### **Kia Cadenza** Price as tested \$39,030

This large sedan disproves any view of Kia as a builder only of cheap cars. It provides a quiet, well-equipped interior, a roomy rear seat, responsive handling, and a comfortable ride. The strong 293-hp V6 and six-speed automatic transmission are a slick combo that delivers 22 mpg overall. Controls are refreshingly easy to use, with both a simple touch screen and familiar knobs and buttons.

## MODEL TO AVOID

With so many good cars to choose from, the Taurus doesn't measure up to the competition in a number of ways.

### **Ford Taurus**

The Taurus is quiet, rides comfortably, and has lots of features. But the interior is ridiculously cramped for such a large car, and the styling significantly compromises driver visibility. Fuel economy from the 3.5-liter V6 is a mediocre 21 mpg overall. Moreover, the controls for its MyFord Touch infotainment system are complicated and distracting to use while driving. On top of that, reliability has been subpar.



## SPORTY CARS

Sports cars can transform a mundane commute into a thrill ride. No matter the price, the cars' dramatic styling, athletic handling, and spirited engines can bring out the aspiring race-car driver in anyone. With today's wide choice of sporty models and genuine sports cars, you should be able to find one that delivers the right blend of performance and practicality for you. The exhilarating Porsche Boxster, for example, is all about drop-top driving fun, thanks to its great handling. But if you need something with more room, there are plenty of sporty four-doors and hatchbacks with enough practicality for you to pick up the kids from school or a week's worth of groceries, and still enjoy the long way home.

**Drawbacks:** Sports cars force a compromise in your life. Passenger and cargo space is a secondary consideration to styling and performance. Typically, they ride more stiffly than regular cars. Access can require yoga-grade flexibility, and visibility is sometimes compromised.

# Sporty

# Best overall



## Porsche Boxster

**Price as tested** \$59,600 **Overall mpg** 23

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**89**

This mid-engined roadster was an instant hit at our test track. Its quick, direct steering gives it super-agile handling. The 2013 redesign brought a more-palatable ride, better noise isolation, a better-finished interior, and slightly better fuel economy. It's now better suited to tackle the everyday grind than ever before, with two trunks and one of the slickest-operating convertible

tops in the business. Some testers found the seats narrow, and the center console is cluttered with small buttons. Although it's more affordable than Porsche's flagship 911, the Boxster is far from entry-level: Be aware that prices climb quickly with options.

### THE BOXSTER LINE

**Price range** \$50,400-\$62,100

**Engine choices** 265-hp, 2.7L six; 315-hp, 3.4L six



## Mazda MX-5 Miata

**Price as tested** \$31,350

**Overall mpg** 28

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**89**

The MX-5 Miata defines the modern roadster, delivering a grin-inducing, open-air driving experience. It's hard to find a car that's more agile and fun to drive. The Miata's agility comes from its direct, communicative steering, light weight, and lively powertrain. Although the 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine might seem modest on paper, it provides spirited performance on the road. Stick with the crisp manual transmission for the pure driving involvement and thrill it delivers. The retractable hardtop operates easily, but it adds about \$3,000 to the car's price, compared with getting the standard cloth top. And it does little to reduce noise. A redesign will be introduced soon.

### THE MX-5 MIATA LINE

**Price range** \$23,720-\$30,550

**Engine choices** 158-hp, 2.0L four; 167-hp, 2.0L four



## Ford Mustang GT

**Price as tested** \$36,310

**Overall mpg** 22

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**83**

Celebrating 50 years as an American motoring icon, the Ford Mustang continues to offer potent and affordable, rear-wheel-drive performance. It's available as a coupe or convertible, with even the base version boasting more than 300 horsepower. But the real thrill is the GT, with its muscular 420-hp V8 engine, agile handling, invigorating engine note, and slick manual shifter. Track-ready hardware and numerous comfort amenities are available, but even a lightly optioned Mustang delivers a high fun factor while keeping the price reasonable. Its relatively easy cabin access and good visibility even make it an acceptable daily driver. Look for a redesigned Mustang in late 2014.

### THE MUSTANG LINE

**Price range** \$22,510-\$60,110

**Engine choices** 305-hp, 3.7L V6; 420-hp, 5.0L V8; 662-hp, 5.8L supercharged V8

# SPORTY CARS



Subaru BRZ

Scion FR-S

## ► Fun on a budget

- Ford Fiesta ST
- Ford Mustang V6
- Scion FR-S
- Subaru BRZ

You don't have to spend big money to buy a car that's fun to drive. In fact, several of our favorites cost thousands less than the average new car. Take the Ford Fiesta ST, a subcompact that has been given a fast-and-furious makeover. This hot hatchback delivers sports-car performance with super-crisp handling, a musical exhaust note, a terrific

shifter, and instant power from its turbo four-cylinder engine. For a more classic ride, the Mustang V6 is a tempting package, delivering rewarding power and agile handling. The Scion FR-S and Subaru BRZ twins are exhilarating rear-drive sports coupes that emphasize handling agility over outright power, although reliability has been below average.

**Skip these:** Tempting as the Chevrolet Camaro may be, styling takes precedence over livability, and its reliability is below average. The Nissan Z is long in the tooth, and the Hyundai Genesis Coupe rides too harshly.

## Coming soon

### BMW 2 Series, spring 2014

The 2 Series coupe replaces the current 1 Series, growing slightly larger and featuring BMW's newest powertrains and tech.

### Ford Mustang, fall 2014

New for the pony car is an independent rear suspension and a small, turbocharged four-cylinder engine. Expect more power from the existing V6 and V8 engines.

### Lexus RC, fall 2014

The striking four-seat, rear-wheel-drive sports coupe will offer V6, V8, and hybrid powertrains.

### Subaru WRX/STI, spring 2014

The sporty Impreza variants will feature dramatic fender flares, turbocharged engines, and rally-inspired performance.

## Ratings Sporty cars

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				

**SEDANS AND COUPES** All are equipped with manual transmission.

	Nissan 370Z Coupe Touring	\$38,565	86	NA	NA	\$0.79	23	Acceleration, handling, braking, fit, finish.	Ride, noise, visibility, access, unknown reliability.
	Scion FR-S	25,025	83	⊖	●	0.61	30	Driving fun, handling, braking, fuel economy.	Subpar reliability, ride, noise, access, radio controls, vestigial rear seating.
	Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution GSR	38,078	83	NA	NA	0.92	21	Acceleration, handling, agility, steering, braking.	Ride, noise, access, trunk, driving position, fit and finish, unknown reliability.
✓	Ford Mustang GT Premium (V8)	36,310	83	○	●	0.74	22	Acceleration, handling, braking, exhaust sound, good fuel economy for power.	Rear seat, trunk opening, no telescoping steering wheel.
	Subaru BRZ Premium	27,117	82	●	●	0.66	30	Driving fun, handling, braking, fuel economy.	Subpar reliability, ride, noise, access, radio controls, vestigial rear seating.
	Ford Fiesta ST	24,985	80	new	new	0.60	29	Handling agility, effortless power delivery, sound, fun to drive, braking, fuel economy, four-door practicality.	MyFord Touch controls, ride, snug optional Recaro seats, unknown reliability.
✓	Ford Mustang Premium (V6)	28,880	76	○	⊖	0.64	24	Handling, acceleration, fuel economy for power.	Rear seat, trunk opening, no telescoping steering wheel.
	Volkswagen Jetta GLI Autobahn	26,835	76	NA	NA	0.62	27	Handling, powertrain, fuel economy, rear seat, trunk, four-door practicality.	Long clutch travel, unknown reliability.
	Ford Focus ST	28,270	74	●	●	0.68	25	Handling, fun to drive, acceleration, braking, relatively civilized as a daily driver.	Subpar reliability, MyFord Touch controls, driving position, snug Recaro seats, some torque steer, turning circle.
	Mitsubishi Lancer Ralliart (AT)	28,344	72	NA	NA	0.80	20	Acceleration, handling, controls.	Transmission, ride, noise, fit and finish, no telescope wheel, big spoiler blocks rear view.
	Fiat 500 Abarth	26,050	71	NA	NA	0.62	28	Invigorating exhaust note, agility, braking, fuel economy, distinctive character.	Noise, ride, steering feel, driving position, controls, tiny rear seat and cargo area, visibility, turning circle, unknown reliability.
	Chevrolet Camaro 2SS (V8)	35,425	71	⊖	●	0.77	18	Acceleration, handling, braking, transmission.	Visibility, fuel economy, controls, rear seat, access, trunk, reliability.
	Hyundai Genesis Coupe Grand Touring (V6)*	28,375	70	●	⊖	0.65	23	Acceleration, handling, controls.	Shifter and clutch, ride, rear seat, trunk, reliability.
✓	Honda Civic Si	23,175	70	○	○	0.58	29	Powertrain, shifter, fuel economy, rear seat.	Ride, noise, steering feel, fit and finish, narrow front seats.
	Dodge Challenger R/T (V8)	35,015	67	⊖	●	0.81	19	Acceleration, exhaust note, quietness, controls.	Subpar reliability, fuel economy, visibility, foot operated parking brake with manual transmission.
	Chevrolet Camaro 2LT (V6)	28,195	60	⊖	⊖	0.65	21	Styling, straight-line acceleration.	Agility, shifter, visibility, controls, rear seat, trunk, reliability.

\*Powertrain has changed since last test.

## Cars to watch

### Chevrolet Corvette Stingray

The provocative-looking new Corvette Stingray touts sharper styling, more power, and a better-dressed interior than the previous generation. Under the hood is a potent 460-hp, 6.2-liter V8 that's teamed with either a seven-speed manual transmission or a six-speed automatic with paddle-shifters. The transmission is located in the rear of the car to aid weight distribution. We're testing a well-dressed Stingray 3LT, and we've been impressed not only with the extreme performance the car delivers for the money but also with the technology and interior improvements. Coming later this year is a track-ready Z06 with a 6.2-liter supercharged V8, improved aerodynamics, standard magnetic ride

control, and a host of other go-fast goodies. The power output? At least 625 hp.

### Porsche 911

Porsche's 911 has been evolving and maturing for the past 50 years, bringing race-proven technology to its customers. We bought a 911 Carrera S with seven-speed manual transmission. And we've been impressed by the Porsche's amazing balance of capability and livability. The 911 is quick, it's super agile, and it sounds terrific.

And if you need an automatic transmission, the seven-speed automated manual gives up nothing to the stick shift—in fact, it's quicker. With a slightly more supple ride and better sound deadening, the 911 is also now less taxing on a long trip.

Chevrolet Corvette



Recommended
 
 Better ←
  → Worse

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				

#### ROADSTERS All are equipped with manual transmission.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Porsche Boxster 2.7</b>	\$59,600	<b>89</b>	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	\$1.07	23	Handling, braking, fit and finish, exhaust note, top operation, two trunks.	Rear visibility, narrow seats, some controls, heavy clutch, access.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Mazda MX-5 Miata Grand Touring</b>	31,150	<b>89</b>	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	0.61	28	Handling, steering, acceleration, braking, fuel economy, top operation.	Noise, tight cabin, access, rear visibility.
	<b>Mercedes-Benz SLK250</b>	48,045	<b>81</b>	NA NA	0.91	26	Handling, steering, braking, fuel economy, civilized cruiser, neck warmer, fit, finish.	Unknown reliability, manual shifter and clutch, engine refinement, access.
	<b>Audi TT Premium Plus (DSG)</b>	45,300	<b>80</b>	NA NA	0.86	25	Handling, transmission, braking, fit and finish, AWD, top can be operated on the move.	Unknown reliability, ride, noise, rear visibility, access.
	<b>BMW Z4 sDrive28i</b>	55,225	<b>76</b>	NA NA	0.91	28	Acceleration, fuel economy, braking.	Unknown reliability, steering feel, ride, noise, tight quarters, access.

#### FOUR-SEAT CONVERTIBLES

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Volkswagen Eos Sport</b>	\$35,829	<b>78</b>	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	\$0.75	25	Transmission, fuel economy, turning circle, fit and finish, clever sunroof, calm with top down.	Wind and road noise, rear seat, slow initial throttle response.
	<b>Infiniti Q60 (base)</b>	48,715	<b>77</b>	NA <input type="radio"/>	0.96	20	Acceleration, transmission, handling, fit and finish, front-seat comfort.	Unknown reliability, ride, tire noise, rear seat, trunk space, body shake with top down.
	<b>Mini Cooper S (MT)</b>	32,850	<b>77</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	0.60	30	Agility, fun to drive, acceleration, braking, fuel economy, sunroof mode.	Subpar reliability, ride, noise, rear seat, controls, rear visibility.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ford Mustang GT Premium (V8)</b>	43,880	<b>75</b>	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	0.83	23	Acceleration, handling, braking, exhaust sound, good fuel economy for power.	Rear seat, trunk opening, no telescoping wheel, awkward top operation.
	<b>Jaguar XK Convertible*</b>	85,635	<b>74</b>	NA NA	1.56	19	Ride, powertrain, steering, quiet interior, fit and finish, front-seat comfort.	Unknown reliability, rear visibility with top up, fuel economy, controls.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Audi A5 Premium Plus (2.0T)*</b>	49,300	<b>74</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	0.95	22	Handling, steering, transmission, rear seat, top can be operated on the move, fit and finish.	Controls, engine noise.
	<b>Chevrolet Camaro 2SS (V8)</b>	43,510	<b>65</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	0.89	17	Acceleration, braking.	Body shake, top operation, visibility, controls, rear seat, fuel economy, trunk, reliability.
	<b>Fiat 500C Pop (MT)</b>	21,000	<b>59</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	0.52	34	Fuel economy, agility, shifter, front access, clever top design.	Subpar reliability, acceleration, ride, driving position, front-seat comfort, rear visibility, trunk.

**Why some models are not recommended.** We don't have sufficient reliability data for the Audi TT, BMW Z4, Fiat 500 Abarth, Ford Focus ST, Infiniti Q60, Jaguar XK, Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution GSR and Lancer Ralliart, Mercedes-Benz SLK, Nissan 370Z, and Volkswagen Jetta GLI. The Chevrolet Camaro (V6 and V8), Dodge Challenger R/T, Hyundai Genesis Coupe V6, Mini Cooper S, Subaru BRZ, and Scion FR-S have below-average reliability. Also, the Chevrolet Camaro V6 and Fiat 500C didn't score well enough in our testing. The Ford Fiesta ST is too new for us to have reliability data.

## WAGONS & MINIVANS

These people-movers are just the thing for many families on the go.

Today's wagons are few and far between, but they combine the cargo-carrying flexibility of a small or midsize SUV with the ride comfort, fuel economy, handling, and performance of a sedan.

And though minivans have lost some of their popularity in recent years, they still provide an inviting combination of roominess, versatility, and cost effectiveness. They can carry up to seven or eight people while providing more passenger and cargo space and easier cabin access than a three-row SUV.

**Drawbacks:** Wagons aren't as roomy or flexible as minivans, and they usually hold only five adults at best. Among minivans, only the Toyota Sienna offers all-wheel drive, and many midsize SUVs are catching up in fuel economy.

# Wagons & minivans

# Best overall

## Honda Odyssey

**Price as tested** \$38,055

**Overall mpg** 21

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**86**

The Odyssey provides a versatile, spacious cabin that can carry up to eight people. It returned a class-leading 21 mpg overall in our tests and is very kid-friendly, allowing three car seats to fit across the second row. In addition, driving this minivan is no chore, thanks to its supple ride, good handling, and slick powertrain. A variety of advanced safety systems are standard on higher trims.



### THE ODYSSEY LINE

**Price range** \$28,825-\$44,450

**Engine** 248-hp, 3.5L V6



## Mazda5

**Price as tested** \$24,820

**Overall mpg** 23

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**88**

This microvan is a smaller but more affordable and fuel-efficient alternative to a minivan. It seats six people and has dual sliding doors for easy access. There's ample room for second-row passengers to spread out, but the third-row seat is tight and reduces cargo space considerably when it's in use. The Mazda5 is relatively agile and fun to drive, although it can feel overtaxed on hills and is loud inside. It also has first-rate reliability.

### THE MAZDA5 LINE

**Price range** \$20,140-\$24,670

**Engine** 157-hp, 2.5L four



## Volkswagen Jetta SportWagen TDI

**Price as tested** \$28,085

**Overall mpg** 36

**OVERALL SCORE**  
**81**

This agile wagon provides performance and practicality. It has responsive handling and a composed ride, which make it fun to drive. Equipped with a manual transmission, our diesel-powered TDI version delivered an impressive 36 mpg overall and 49 on the highway, although acceleration is leisurely. The SportWagen also has a roomy interior, good reliability, and excellent resale value.

### THE JETTA SPORTWAGEN LINE

**Price range** \$20,995-\$30,265

**Engine choices** 140-hp, 2.0L turbodiesel four; 170-hp, 2.5L five

## MODEL TO AVOID

The Crosstour ranks at the bottom of our wagon Ratings. There are much better choices.

### Honda Crosstour

This car tries too hard to multitask. It's intended to combine the ride and handling of a sedan, the versatility of a wagon, and the all-weather traction of an SUV. But it doesn't add up to an inviting whole. Visibility is difficult even with a backup camera. Its ungainly handling makes the Crosstour feel less agile than larger SUVs. And for 2013 Honda added an unintuitive and complex touch-screen radio system.





## SMALL SUVs

The small-SUV category is a sweet spot in the auto market. The best models provide much of the convenience and versatility of larger SUVs, but with more agile handling, easier maneuverability and access, better fuel economy, and a more affordable price. In fact, you can get some of our top-rated models for only about \$25,000 to \$27,000 when typically equipped. And the more efficient models now deliver gas mileage that's similar to many midsize sedans. All offer all-wheel drive, which is handy in slippery conditions.

**Drawbacks:** Don't expect sedanlike ride comfort or cabin quietness in a small SUV. Also, the few models that can carry more than five people have third-row seats that are cramped and difficult to access.



Go to [ConsumerReports.org/april](http://ConsumerReports.org/april) for a free video highlighting the best SUVs.

# SUVs

# Best overall

## Subaru Forester

**Price as tested** \$26,814 **Overall mpg** 26

OVERALL SCORE  
**88**

After a 2014 redesign, the Forester is now our top-rated small SUV. Its large windows and doors make it particularly user-friendly, offering the easiest access and best visibility in the category. With the 2.5-liter engine, the Forester delivers best-in-class fuel economy, and even midtrim versions provide a lot of features for the money. It also has a spacious rear

seat, an excellent driving position, and simple controls. But its firm ride isn't as comfortable as the Honda CR-V's, and infotainment and connectivity features are a bit behind the competition.

### THE FORESTER LINE

**Price range** \$21,995-\$32,995

**Engine choices** 170-hp, 2.5L four; 250-hp, 2.0L turbo four



## Honda CR-V

**Price as tested** \$26,455 **Overall mpg** 23

OVERALL SCORE  
**77**

The CR-V is a sensible, family-friendly SUV that's easy to live with, rides well, and is very reliable and competitively priced. It treats you to a roomy rear seat, lots of cargo space, easy access, and a comfortable ride. The quick, responsive four-cylinder engine and super-smooth five-speed automatic transmission deliver 23 mpg overall, which is decent though

not as thrifty as some others in this class. The CR-V's braking is excellent, and a backup camera is standard. Demerits include pronounced road noise, large blind spots in the rear corners, and sloppy handling when pushed to its limits.

### THE CR-V LINE

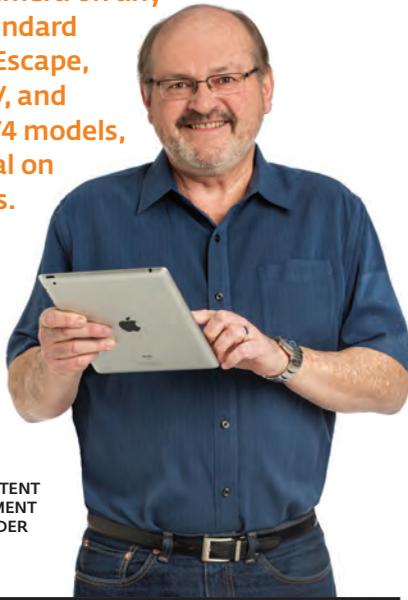
**Price range** \$22,945-\$30,445

**Engine** 185-hp, 2.4L four



## Tester's notes

We recommend getting a backup camera on any SUV. It's standard on all Ford Escape, Honda CR-V, and Toyota RAV4 models, and optional on most others.



RIK PAUL,  
CARS CONTENT  
DEVELOPMENT  
TEAM LEADER

## Where's the Toyota RAV4?

In most ways, the fuel-efficient, reliable RAV4 would easily qualify as one of the best small SUVs overall. But it scored poorly in the relatively new small-overlap crash test, conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Poor performance in any government or insurance-industry crash test prevents us from recommending a vehicle. If the RAV4 performs better in the test in the future, we will reinstate its recommendation, as we recently did with the Toyota Camry. For more information on crash tests, see page 79.



## Mazda CX-5 (Touring 2.5L)

Price as tested \$28,090 Overall mpg 25

OVERALL  
SCORE  
**76**

The CX-5 is one of the more fun-to-drive SUVs we've tested, thanks to its taut handling and the spirited 2.5-liter, four-cylinder engine in mid- and top-trim versions. Its impressive fuel economy also places it among the most efficient models in the class. Inside, the CX-5 has a surprisingly roomy interior and comfortable seats. But interior ambience is rather austere, and you'll have to put up with a noisy cabin. In addition, the

trade-off for the CX-5's sporty attitude is a stiff ride.

### THE CX-5 LINE

Price range \$21,395-\$29,070

Engine choices 155-hp, 2.0L four; 184-hp, 2.5L four



# Which is right for you?



Volkswagen Tiguan

## ► Fun to drive

Ford Escape

Mazda CX-5

Toyota RAV4

Volkswagen Tiguan

The Escape is arguably the most nimble model in the class. Its 2.0-liter turbo engine delivers effortless power. But its reliability has been much worse than average. The premium-priced Tiguan comes close to the Escape in its fun-to-drive quotient. The more reliable but less sophisticated CX-5 and RAV4 are not far behind, with agile handling.

## Ratings Small SUVs

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
✓	Subaru Forester 2.5i Premium	\$26,814	88	● ●	\$0.59	26	Fuel economy, visibility, braking, roomy interior, access, controls, reliability, IIHS crash-test results.	Unsettled ride, noise, antiquated connectivity.
	Ford Escape Titanium (2.0T)	36,600	79	● ○	0.76	22	Agility, ride, quietness, solid feel, access.	Subpar reliability, poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, narrow driving position, MyFord Touch controls.
✓	Honda CR-V EX	26,455	77	● ●	0.59	23	Powertrain, braking, rear seat, access.	Road noise, low cornering limits, rear visibility.
✓	Volkswagen Tiguan SEL	37,020	76	○ ○	0.80	21	Agility, transmission, access, fit and finish, rear seat.	Ride, noise, touch-screen controls.
✓	Mazda CX-5 Touring (2.5L)	28,090	76	● ●	0.63	25	Fuel economy, agility, rear-seat, blind-spot detection, IIHS crash-test results.	Ride, noise, low dash vents.
	Toyota RAV4 XLE	26,802	75	● ●	0.58	24	Fuel economy, agility, transmission, access, roominess, standard backup camera, reliability.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, ride, noise, driver's seat lumbar support.
	Ford Escape SE (1.6T)	28,040	75	● ○	0.64	22	Agility, ride, quietness, solid feel, access.	Subpar reliability, poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, front-seat comfort, narrow driving position, radio controls.
✓	Subaru XV Crosstrek Premium	24,215	75	○ ●	0.57	26	Fuel economy, controls, rear seat, visibility, IIHS crash-test results.	Noise, ride, unrefined CVT, antiquated connectivity.
	Mazda CX-5 Sport (2.0L)	25,300	74	● ●	0.62	25	Fuel economy, handling, rear seat, blind-spot detection, IIHS crash-test results.	Ride, noise, acceleration, low dash vents.
	Nissan Rogue Select SV	25,850	73	● ●	0.63	22	Transmission, secure handling, controls, rear seat.	Rear visibility, cargo area.
	Kia Sportage SX (2.0T)	31,440	72	○ ●	0.74	21	Acceleration, handling, transmission, controls.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, ride, noise, rear visibility, complicated radio controls.

\*Powertrain has changed since last test.



Subaru XV Crosstrek

## ▶ Most fuel efficient

**Subaru Forester** 26 mpg overall

**Subaru XV Crosstrek** 26 mpg overall

**Mazda CX-5** 25 mpg overall

You can expect about 23 to 24 mpg overall from most small SUVs. The champs at squeezing the most from a gallon of gas are the Forester and XV Crosstrek, with 26 mpg each. We're currently testing the XV Hybrid, which should provide marginally better fuel economy. The CX-5 comes in just below them at 25 mpg, with either of its four-cylinder engines. Their excellent gas mileage also contributes to these models having some of the lowest owner-cost estimates in this category. The lowest mpg figures we measured in this class—21—were turned in by the V6 Jeep Cherokee; the Kia Sportage, with a 2.0-liter turbo Four; and the Volkswagen Tiguan.

DID YOU KNOW?

**AWD**  
helps in slippery conditions, but it usually costs you about 1 mpg.



Volkswagen Tiguan

■ Recommended
 ● Better
 ○
◐
◑
● Worse

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
	<b>Jeep Cherokee Limited (V6)</b>	37,525	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">70</span>	new new	0.80	21	Quietness, rear seat, access, lots of high-end options.	Transmission, choppy ride, confusing price structure, visibility, unknown reliability.
	<b>Kia Sportage LX</b>	\$24,400	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">70</span>	○ ●	\$0.62	22	Handling, transmission, controls.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, ride, noise, rear visibility, fit and finish.
	<b>Hyundai Tucson GLS</b>	24,920	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">70</span>	○ ●	0.60	22	Braking, handling, transmission, controls.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, ride, noise, low rear seat, rear visibility.
	<b>Mitsubishi Outlander Sport SE</b>	24,520	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">65</span>	● ●	0.61	23	Versatility, controls, front access, reliability, IIHS crash-test results.	Noise, ride, agility, acceleration, fit and finish.
	<b>Nissan Juke SV</b>	24,840	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">65</span>	○ ○	0.59	24	Handling, powertrain, fuel economy.	Ride, noise, rear visibility, rear seat, cargo area, no telescoping steering wheel, premium fuel.
	<b>Mitsubishi Outlander SE (4-cyl.)</b>	27,180	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">57</span>	● new	0.63	23	Standard third-row seat, strong air conditioning, IIHS crash-test results.	Noise, ride, agility, acceleration, front-seat comfort, fit and finish.
	<b>Jeep Cherokee Latitude (4-cyl.)</b>	27,490	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">56</span>	new new	0.65	22	Rear seat, access, lots of high-end options.	Transmission, acceleration, choppy ride, front-seat comfort, confusing price structure, visibility, unknown reliability.
	<b>Jeep Patriot Latitude*</b>	24,440	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">52</span>	● ●	0.62	21	Compliant ride.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, engine noise, acceleration, driving position, front-seat comfort, complicated optional radio controls.
	<b>Jeep Compass Latitude*</b>	24,985	<span style="background-color: red; color: white;">49</span>	● ●	0.62	22	Simple controls.	Engine noise, acceleration, braking, driving position, front-seat comfort, rear visibility, cornering limits.

**Why some models are not recommended.** The Mazda CX-5 Sport (2.0L), Kia Sportage, Hyundai Tucson, Mitsubishi Outlander and Outlander Sport, Nissan Rogue Select and Juke, and Jeep Cherokee, Patriot, and Compass scored too low in our testing. The Ford Escape had below-average reliability. The Jeep Cherokee is also too new for us to have reliability data. The Ford Escape, Hyundai Tucson, Jeep Patriot, Kia Sportage, and Toyota RAV4 scored poorly in an IIHS crash test.

# Which fits you best?

## ▶ Most kid-friendly

**Ford Escape**

**Honda CR-V**

**Kia Sportage**

As a rule, small SUVs work very well for families with children. They offer plenty of passenger space as well as room for kid stuff. Adults and older children can easily climb into and out of them, and it's easy to put babies into child seats without having to bend over too much. The Escape, CR-V, and Sportage stand out as the best. Each one makes child-seat installation a breeze, with easily accessible belts, and LATCH and top tether anchors. Ford allows

parents to install child seats in the center position, if the child-seat manufacturer allows it, by using the two inboard lower LATCH anchors. The Honda CR-V has a super-flexible arrangement with five lower LATCH anchors across the rear seat, allowing for installation of child seats in any position. In the Sportage, child seats should be secure in any rear-seat position, although the vehicle performed poorly in the IIHS small-overlap crash test.



**Kia Sportage**



**Honda CR-V**

## ▶ Best for ride comfort

**Ford Escape**

**Honda CR-V**

If you value an absorbent, comfortable ride above all, the CR-V is your choice. If you want a good balance between a steady ride and agile handling, the Escape has the edge. After those two, the Subaru Forester is an OK choice. On the other hand, you might get annoyed by the Toyota RAV4's overly firm ride, and the Mazda CX-5's stiff, choppy ride won't endear itself over the long haul. A smaller but more expensive alternative is the Buick Encore (see page 70).

## MODELS TO AVOID

These models just don't measure up to the competition. They received low scores in our testing.

### Jeep Compass

For 2014, most versions received a six-speed automatic transmission in place of the annoying CVT. But the Compass still comes up short. The 2.4-liter engine is rough and sluggish, the front seats aren't supportive, the cabin is cramped and cheaply trimmed, and visibility is limited.



### Jeep Patriot

The Patriot has a compliant ride and mostly simple controls. But little else stands out. Its 2.4-liter engine is underpowered, handling lacks agility, and the cargo area is small. In addition, its narrow cabin, wide center console, and small windows give the vehicle a closed-in feeling.



## ▶ **Tops for towing**

**Ford Escape**

**Jeep Cherokee**

Most small SUVs can tow only 1,500 to 2,000 pounds. If you need more, you might want to check out the new Cherokee. Four-cylinder Cherokees max out at 2,000 pounds, but opting for a V6 and the \$495 Trailer Tow Group boosts capability to a hefty 4,500 pounds. Another option is the Escape; when equipped with the optional 2.0-liter EcoBoost Four, it can tow up to 3,500 pounds.



**Ford Escape**

## ▶ **Best for off-roading**

**Jeep Cherokee**

Most small SUVs can handle moderate off-road conditions, but they're not designed to tackle more serious terrain. The Cherokee is an exception. It offers three four-wheel-drive systems, tailored to different needs. True off-roaders will opt for the "Trail Rated" Trailhawk model, which has off-road-oriented tires and suspension, extra ground clearance, and Jeep's Active Drive Lock 4x4 system with a low range for more difficult conditions, hill-descent control, and a

locking rear differential. It also has protective underbody skid plates and electronic features designed to help a driver in off-road terrain. But the Trailhawk's all-terrain tires and added height make on-road handling more ponderous and less agile than other Cherokees. Jeep's Active Drive II system includes the off-road suspension, low-range gearing, and hill-descent control. But our Cherokee didn't score well enough in our tests to be recommended (see below).



**Jeep Cherokee**

## **Small SUV to watch**



### **Nissan Rogue**

The Rogue, which was redesigned for 2014, has just entered our test program. We can already tell that it's a major upgrade over the outgoing model, which will remain on sale for now as the Rogue Select. Based on our initial experience, this is the nicest redesign Nissan has done in years. The new Rogue is larger, with a comfortable and spacious rear seat, and an available third-row seat for kids—a rarity in a small SUV. In addition, it provides improved ride comfort, noise isolation, responsive handling, and an efficient drivetrain. But opting for the third row displaces the spare tire, forcing you to use run-flat tires. Prices start at about \$23,000 and go up to the low \$30,000s for a fully loaded model.

### **Mitsubishi Outlander**

The Outlander is one of the few small SUVs that seats up to seven people, though its third-row seat is for kids only. Otherwise, the Outlander offers little reason to choose it over stronger competitors. It handles clumsily, the ride is fairly stiff, and the interior feels cheap. Plus the sluggish acceleration is accompanied by raucous engine noise.



### **Jeep Cherokee (2.4L engine)**

Although it's a fresh redesign, the new Cherokee feels half-baked. The four-cylinder engine is underpowered and not very fuel-efficient, and the nine-speed automatic transmission is unrefined and unresponsive. A better choice is the 3.2-liter V6.

## MIDSIZED & LARGE SUVs

SUVs are like the Swiss army knives of the automotive world. They provide plenty of room for passengers and gear, a comfortable interior that's often loaded with amenities, reasonable trailer-towing capability, and the added security of all-wheel drive. All of that has made them the all-purpose vehicle of choice for many families. Mid-sized models are generally more fuel efficient, and easier to maneuver and fit in a garage than large SUVs. Some three-row models can carry up to seven or eight passengers.

**Drawbacks:** Fuel economy is often their Achilles' heel, with V6 models averaging 17 to 19 mpg overall, although a few can break 20. Expect about 14 to 16 mpg overall from most large SUVs, though you might get 20 mpg on the highway. And though many offer third-row seats, they're often small, tight, and best suited for kids.



Go to [ConsumerReports.org/april](http://ConsumerReports.org/april) for videos highlighting the best SUVs.

# SUVs

# Best overall

## Hyundai Santa Fe

**Price as tested** \$36,290 **Overall mpg** 20

OVERALL SCORE  
**83**

Roomy, stylish, and well-equipped for the price, the Santa Fe delivers the kind of value and functionality that families are looking for. It has room for up to seven passengers in three rows of seats, and everyone will appreciate the quiet and comfortable ride and well-finished interior. The smooth and lively 3.3-liter V6 packs ample punch, and fuel economy is very good for the category. Handling is responsive and secure. And the standard backup camera provides extra safety and convenience. Don't confuse this model with the Santa Fe Sport, a less-expensive two-row version that is less capable.

### THE SANTA FE LINE

**Price range** \$29,900-\$35,550 **Engine** 290-hp, 3.3L V6



GMC Acadia

## Chevrolet Traverse/GMC Acadia

**Price as tested** \$39,920/\$41,315 **Overall mpg** 16

OVERALL SCORE  
**80**

The Traverse and Acadia are similar vehicles with different badges. And if you need the interior room of a large SUV but want the comfortable ride and more responsive handling of a car-based design, you can't do better. (The upscale Buick Enclave, on page 71, is also similar.) The decision comes down to styling and available trim; the Acadia offers a tad more luxury. Both seat up to eight people in a

spacious, quiet interior with a third-row seat that's roomy enough for adults. The V6 is smooth and refined, and a recent freshening brought improvements to the ride and interior quality and connectivity.

### THE TRAVERSE/ACADIA LINES

**Price ranges** \$30,795-\$43,255 (Traverse); \$34,335-\$48,675 (Acadia)

**Engine choices** 281-hp, 3.6L V6 (Traverse only); 288-hp, 3.6L V6



Chevrolet Traverse

## Where's the Toyota Highlander?

The Highlander has long been one of our top-rated SUVs. But it has received a redesign for 2014, and though we're currently testing the new model, we don't yet have final results. So you won't find it in our Ratings. The new version is larger, which translates into a roomy interior and a more spacious third-row seat. Seven- and eight-passenger versions are available. So far we've found that the new model provides more responsive handling, a steady ride, a slick and punchy V6 powertrain, and easy-to-use controls. A hybrid version arrives later, but only in top trim lines, which approach \$50,000. Look for a full test report soon in *CONSUMER REPORTS* and at [ConsumerReports.org](http://ConsumerReports.org).



# What's right for you?

## ▶ For hauling the whole brood

- Chevrolet Traverse
- GMC Acadia
- Dodge Durango
- Mazda CX-9
- Ford Flex
- Honda Pilot

For large families or group outings, three rows of seats are a must. The Traverse and

Acadia are the crowd pleasers, with room for up to eight adults and their gear. The CX-9 offers lots of space in each row, and the Dodge Durango can carry up to seven in its roomy cabin. The boxy Ford Flex makes the most of its shape, with limolike room in the second row and a usable third row. The Honda Pilot can hold eight in a pinch, but that leaves little room for gear.



Honda Pilot



2013 Toyota Highlander Hybrid

## ▶ Frugal with fuel

- Hyundai Santa Fe Sport 23 mpg overall
- Toyota Highlander Hybrid 27 mpg overall

Although less functional and not as polished as the Santa Fe, the two-row Sport uses a 190-hp, 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine that provides a commendable 23 mpg overall. Inside you'll find a similarly well-finished and comfortable cabin, with a lot of features for the money. A turbo

four-cylinder is also available. If you can find a leftover 2013 Highlander Hybrid at the dealer, expect to get a stellar 27 mpg overall. We also expect that the new diesel-powered Jeep Grand Cherokee will deliver decent fuel economy and readily available power.



Ford Flex

## ▶ Keep the kids happy

- Ford Flex
- Chevrolet Traverse
- GMC Acadia
- Honda Pilot

Plenty of room, easy access, and windows that are easy for kids to see out of are all things that growing families are looking for. The three-row Flex delivers all of that and more. The boxy shape and large glass area make for an airy feel and good visibility, and a lower step-in height helps with access. But the Flex is beginning to show its age in terms of handling and powertrain refinement. Other good choices include the spacious Traverse and Acadia twins, and the Pilot.

## Coming soon

### Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban, spring 2014

GM promises that these large, redesigned models will have best-in-class fuel economy, along with roomier, quieter, and more upscale interiors, and plenty of electronic conveniences. They will use the 355-hp, 5.3-liter V8 found in the Silverado.

### Cadillac Escalade, spring 2014

The redesigned Escalade gets the same upgrades as the similar Suburban and Yukon, but with added power, bling, and luxury. Power comes from a 420-hp, 6.2-liter V8 that's claimed to deliver improved power and fuel economy.



### Lincoln Navigator, fall 2014

The aging Navigator gets a freshening later this year, including a new front fascia and other styling changes, interior and dashboard updates, and LED lighting. A 370-hp, 3.5-liter, twin-turbo six-cylinder engine replaces the old V8, with claimed fuel-economy improvements.



Mazda CX-9

## ▶ Big, comfortable cruisers

- Hyundai Santa Fe
- Chevrolet Traverse
- GMC Acadia
- Dodge Durango
- Mazda CX-9

Several road-trip-worthy choices are good for carrying people and their gear. The three-row Santa Fe offers a spacious, quiet, and nicely finished cabin, and a comfortable ride that does a good job of masking road imperfections. The Traverse, Acadia, and Durango are other notably passenger-friendly choices with roomier third-row seats. The sportier CX-9 is spacious and well-finished but has so-so fuel economy.

## Ratings Midsized and large SUVs

✔ Recommended
 ● Better
 ○
◐
◑
● Worse

Recommended	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results		Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
				Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction				
			0	100					
<b>MIDSIZED</b>									
✔	Hyundai Santa Fe GLS (V6)	\$36,290	83	○	○	\$0.71	20	Powertrain, fuel economy, roomy and versatile cabin, access, controls, value.	Tight third row with difficult access.
✔	Nissan Murano SL	36,330	78	◐	○	0.76	19	Powertrain, quietness, roomy interior, fit and finish, access.	Rear visibility.
	Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited (V6)	41,375	77	●	◐	0.95	18	Quietness, ride, off-road and towing capability, seat comfort, fit and finish, easy-to-use Uconnect system.	Subpar reliability, fussy shifter.
✔	Kia Sorento EX (V6)	37,950	76	○	◐	0.84	20	Powertrain, fuel economy, optional third-row seat, access, controls, lots of features.	Ride, agility.
✔	Mazda CX-9 Grand Touring	38,615	76	◐	○	0.85	16	Agility, steering, quietness, transmission, interior flexibility.	Cargo capacity, fuel economy.
✔	Hyundai Santa Fe Sport (4-cyl.)	28,370	74	○	◐	0.61	23	Roomy interior, fuel economy, transmission, controls, feature content.	Steering feel, visibility.
✔	Honda Pilot EX-L	36,980	73	◐	◐	0.77	18	Powertrain, seats eight, interior accommodations, storage and flexibility.	Road noise, so-so braking and acceleration, low cornering limits, fit and finish, busy center dashboard.
	Subaru Tribeca Limited	34,270	70	NA	NA	0.77	16	Agility, steering, transmission, ride.	Unknown reliability, cramped driving position and second- and third-row seats, short cruising range, fuel economy.
	Nissan Pathfinder SL	40,470	69	●	○	0.88	18	Roominess, controls, access.	Subpar reliability, handling, rear visibility, second-row thigh support.
	Ford Edge SEL (FWD, 2.0 EcoBoost)	36,910	69	●	○	0.77	21	Fuel economy, access.	Subpar reliability, noise, rear visibility, no AWD with EcoBoost engine.
	Chevrolet Equinox LTZ (V6)	36,925	66	○	○	0.75	18	Acceleration, ride, roomy rear seat, access.	Visibility, sluggish feel.
	GMC Terrain SLT2 (V6)	36,675	66	○	○	0.75	18	Acceleration, ride, roomy rear seat, access.	Visibility, sluggish feel.
	Chevrolet Equinox 1LT (4-cyl.)	26,350	66	○	◐	0.64	21	Rear seat, ride, handling, fuel economy.	Acceleration, transmission, visibility, turning circle.
	GMC Terrain SLE1 (4-cyl.)	26,745	66	○	◐	0.64	21	Rear seat, ride, handling, fuel economy, standard rear-view camera.	Acceleration, transmission, visibility, turning circle.
	Ford Explorer XLT (V6)	39,275	65	●	◐	0.91	18	Interior room and flexibility, usable third row, cabin storage.	Subpar reliability, agility, driving position, MyFord Touch controls, unrefined transmission.
	Ford Edge SEL (3.5)	37,625	63	●	○	0.81	18	Access.	Subpar reliability, noise, unrefined transmission, MyFord Touch controls, rear visibility.

# Pick the right SUV

## ▶ Off-road capability

Jeep Grand Cherokee  
Toyota 4Runner  
Jeep Wrangler  
Toyota FJ Cruiser  
Nissan Xterra

The Grand Cherokee combines good off-road capability with a pleasant driving experience on the road, although reliability has been below average. For even more serious off-roading, some of the best choices are the Wrangler, FJ Cruiser, 4Runner, and Xterra. The problem with them is that the fun stops where the pavement begins. With their rough rides and clumsy handling they're not as enjoyable for everyday driving. That's part of why none is recommended. The Wrangler has also had below-average reliability.



Jeep Grand Cherokee

## ▶ Easy on the wallet

Hyundai Santa Fe Sport

If you want an SUV that'll be best for your budget over the long haul, take a look at the Santa Fe Sport. In our owner-cost estimates, it was the least expensive midsize SUV to own over the first five years. Our estimates include fuel costs, depreciation, insurance premiums, interest on financing, sales tax, and maintenance and repair.



## MODELS TO AVOID

These three models just don't measure up to the competition, because of low test scores and below-average reliability.

### Ford Edge

The Edge has an unrefined powertrain, with a six-speed automatic transmission that isn't smooth. The ride is jittery, and road noise invades the cabin. And the MyFord Touch system is convoluted to use and has had poor reliability in our owner survey.



### Nissan Armada

The Armada has the room and power to carry eight people and their stuff, but it comes at a cost. Overall fuel economy of 13 mpg is abysmal, reliability is poor, and ownership costs are the worst in the category. Interior quality is so-so for a \$50,000-plus vehicle, and the ride is quite stiff.

### Dodge Journey

In addition to the Journey's below-average reliability, its V6 engine returned an unimpressive 16 mpg overall. If that weren't bad enough, the SUV's lack of agility makes it feel far larger than it really is, the transmission is reluctant to downshift, and the optional third-row seat is tiny even for kids.

## ▶ Best for towing

Dodge Durango

Jeep Grand Cherokee

Toyota Sequoia

Ford Expedition

The Dodge and Jeep can easily tow large camping trailers or good-sized boats. Models with the V8 engine can pull up to 7,400 pounds, and the V6 can tow 6,200. Large, truck-based SUVs such as the Sequoia and Expedition can tow more weight, but they are ponderous to drive every day. Unless you really need the extra towing capability and plan to use it often, you should opt for the Durango or Grand Cherokee.



Dodge Durango

## Ratings Midsize and large SUVs

Recommended
 
 Better ←
  →
  Worse

	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results		Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
				Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction				
Recommended			0	100					
<b>MIDSIZE</b> continued									
	Dodge Journey Limited (V6)	\$36,975	61	○	○	\$0.87	16	Ride, quietness, cabin storage.	Subpar reliability, handling, unresponsive transmission, fuel economy, rear visibility, tiny third row.
	Nissan Xterra S	28,000	60	○	○	0.70	17	Powertrain, acceleration, quietness, off-road ability.	Ride, access, high rear door handle.
	Toyota 4Runner SR5 (V6)	37,425	55	●	○	0.77	18	Off-road ability, power-retractable rear window, reliability.	Handling, ride, driving position, fit and finish, access, turning circle.
	Toyota FJ Cruiser	30,881	36	○	○	0.73	17	Off-road ability, powertrain.	Visibility, ride, handling, noise, fit and finish, access.
	Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Sahara	36,340	20	○	○	0.79	17	Powertrain, off-road ability.	Subpar reliability, ride, handling, braking, wind noise, access, driving position, seat comfort, visibility, fit and finish.
<b>LARGE</b>									
	Dodge Durango Limited (V6)	\$43,525	83	new	○	\$0.97	18	Ride, quietness, transmission, interior space, access, front-seat comfort, usable third-row seat, towing capacity.	Unknown reliability, rear visibility, maneuverability.
✓	Chevrolet Traverse LT	39,920	80	○	○	0.85	16	Ride, handling, quietness, interior room and flexibility, usable third-row seat, blind-spot mirrors.	Rear visibility, fuel economy, wet braking.
✓	GMC Acadia SLT2	41,315	80	○	○	0.87	16	Ride, handling, quietness, interior room and flexibility, usable third-row seat.	Rear visibility, fuel economy, wet braking.
✓	Ford Flex SEL	42,155	69	○	○	0.88	18	Ride, quietness, interior room and flexibility.	MyFord Touch controls, lackluster handling, turning circle, rear visibility.
✓	Toyota Sequoia Limited (5.7)	54,005	66	○	○	1.07	15	Powertrain, accommodations, towing and off-road capability, cabin storage, power-retractable rear window.	Agility, braking, unsettled ride, high step-in, long reach to some controls.
✓	Ford Expedition EL Eddie Bauer	48,730	65	○	○	1.12	13	Roomy rear and third-row seats, cargo and towing capacity.	Driving position, braking, noisy and strained engine, fuel economy, turning circle, fit and finish, instrument legibility.
	Nissan Armada Platinum	55,400	61	●	○	1.20	13	Acceleration, transmission, spacious interior.	Subpar reliability, fuel economy, handling, ride, high step-in.

**Why some models are not recommended.** We lack reliability data on the Subaru Tribeca. The freshened Dodge Durango is too new for us to have reliability data. The Nissan Pathfinder, Xterra, and Armada; Ford Edge and Explorer; Chevrolet Equinox; GMC Terrain; Dodge Journey; Toyota 4Runner and FJ Cruiser; and Jeep Wrangler score too low. The Jeep Grand Cherokee has below-average reliability.

## LUXURY SUVs

Luxury SUVs package the versatility and all-wheel-drive capability of a mainstream SUV with the creature comforts and well-appointed cabin of a luxury car. Sure, buying one is often based as much on emotion as on finances, but there are some exceptional models here that more than justify the rationale.

These SUVs typically come loaded with plenty of comfort and convenience features, and offer the latest electronic safety and infotainment systems. They are generally quieter and ride more comfortably than non-luxury SUVs. Some even deliver greater performance.

More manufacturers are now offering luxury compact SUVs to meet consumer demand for greater amenities in a more fuel-efficient and easier-to-manuever size.

Drawbacks: Fuel economy is a low point with the largest models, reliability is spotty with some, and ownership costs are often very high.

# SUVs

# Best overall

## COMPACT LUXURY

### BMW X3

Price as tested \$44,595 Overall mpg 23

OVERALL SCORE  
**80**

Our top-rated compact luxury model delivers it all. The interior is well-appointed and features comfortable seats. We enjoyed the spirited driving experience, with its agile and secure handling and lively powertrains that deliver good fuel economy. The base four-cylinder engine returned a very good 23 mpg overall in our tests, but it's not as refined as

the turbocharged six-cylinder. The ride is taut and composed, but not quite on the level of some BMW sedans. Our main gripe is that some controls are needlessly complicated.

#### THE X3 LINE

Price range \$39,800-\$44,900

Engine choices 240-hp, 2.0L turbo four; 300-hp, 3.0L turbo six



### Acura RDX

Price as tested \$36,605 Overall mpg 22

OVERALL SCORE  
**79**

The upscale RDX, which has its roots in the thrifty Honda CR-V, is well-equipped for the price and easy to live with. Though the cabin is not overly luxurious, it is roomy and nicely finished, with comfortable seats and simpler controls than some competing models. A flat floor helps with rear-seat leg room. The V6 engine is quick and silky

smooth, and it returns fuel economy that's comparable to some four-cylinder models. Handling is sound but not particularly agile, and the ride is a little stiff.

#### THE RDX LINE

Price range \$34,520-\$39,620

Engine 273-hp, 3.5L V6



### SUVs to watch



Range Rover Sport

#### BMW X5 and Land Rover Range Rover

We're now testing these redesigned models as well as the Range Rover Sport (left). So far we've found the X5 to be luxurious and refined but not as sporty as its predecessor. The Range Rovers couple an opulent interior and a comfortable ride with serious off-road capability.

## MIDSIZED LUXURY

OVERALL SCORE  
**88**  
RX 450h

OVERALL SCORE  
**79**  
RX 350



### Lexus RX

**Price as tested** \$53,576 (450h), \$47,381 (350)

**Overall mpg** 26 (450h), 21 (350)

A comfortable ride and a luxurious, very quiet interior help vault the RX 450h hybrid to the top of the class. Its super-frugal 26 mpg overall is among the best we've recorded with any SUV. The conventional RX 350 impresses with its smooth and refined six-cylinder engine. Either way, expect excellent reliability and sound, if not sporty, handling. Overall, the RX is about comfort and refinement rather than driving excitement.

#### THE RX LINE

**Price range** \$39,760-\$47,810

**Engine choices** 270-hp, 3.5L V6; 295-hp, 3.5L hybrid V6

## Acura MDX

**Price as tested** \$49,460 **Overall mpg** 20

OVERALL SCORE  
**79**

The stylish MDX is a functional and luxurious family hauler. We found it to be a roomy, comfortable SUV and appreciate the second-row seat's clever folding mechanism, which makes it a snap to access the third row. Cabin noise is hushed, and the ride is supple. The engine is very refined and has plenty of zip, and it returns decent mileage for a midsize all-wheel-drive SUV. But we're not fans of the multiscreen infotainment system, which has some complicated controls. A front-wheel-drive version of the MDX is new and should provide better fuel economy at a slightly lower price.

#### THE MDX LINE

**Price range** \$42,290-\$56,505

**Engine** 290-hp, 3.5L V6



## LARGE LUXURY



## Buick Enclave

**Price as tested** \$43,260 **Overall mpg** 15

OVERALL SCORE  
**77**

With a luxurious and well-finished cabin and room for up to eight people, the Enclave is a very comfortable luxury SUV with a better ride than most of its competitors. It has agile and secure handling, excellent fit and finish, and a third-row seat that's roomy enough for adults. A recent freshening included updates to the controls and the addition of the Buick IntelliLink infotainment system. Forward-collision and lane-departure warning systems are also new. It's worth noting that the Enclave's siblings, the Chevrolet Traverse and the GMC Acadia (see page 64), offer many of the same attributes for less money.

#### THE ENCLAVE LINE

**Price range** \$38,740-\$48,315

**Engine** 288-hp, 3.6L V6

# Which is right for you?

## ▶ Most reliable

- Lexus RX
- Lexus GX
- Acura RDX
- BMW X1

The hands-down reliability champ among luxury SUVs is the Lexus RX. Both the hybrid and the conventional RX 350 beat out all other contenders for trouble-free driving. The GX 460 has years of above-average reliability, but its truck-based design isn't for everyone. If you're looking for something smaller, the redesigned Acura RDX and new BMW X1 have held up well in their first year on the market.



BMW X1

## Ratings Luxury SUVs

Recommended
 
 Better ←
  →
  Worse

	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
Recommended			0 ————— 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
<b>COMPACT LUXURY</b>								
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>BMW X3</b> xDrive28i (2.0T)	\$44,595	<b>80</b>	○ —●	\$0.84	23	Agility, powertrain, braking, fuel economy, fit and finish.	Controls, low rear seat.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Acura RDX</b>	36,605	<b>79</b>	● —●	0.79	22	Acceleration, fuel economy, access, controls, front-seat comfort.	Ride, steering feel, at-the-limit handling, rear visibility.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Mercedes-Benz GLK350</b>	44,995	<b>77</b>	● —●	0.95	21	Acceleration, agility, visibility, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, quietness.	Tight rear seat, ride can be rocky, some controls, rear access.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Audi Q5</b> Premium Plus (2.0T)	41,075	<b>77</b>	○ —●	0.84	21	Handling, transmission, braking, fit and finish.	Controls.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>BMW X1</b> xDrive28i (2.0T)	38,795	<b>74</b>	● —●	0.80	23	Acceleration, agility, steering feedback, transmission, fuel economy.	Ride, heavy steering effort, rear visibility, modest interior room.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Volvo XC60</b> T6*	42,245	<b>70</b>	○ —●	0.92	17	Transmission, fit and finish, advanced safety features, IIHS crash-test results.	Ride, fuel economy, awkward electronic ignition key, rear visibility.
	<b>Mini Cooper Countryman</b> S	32,500	<b>66</b>	● —○	0.63	26	Handling, transmission, acceleration, fuel economy.	Subpar reliability, ride, noise, controls, cargo space, premium fuel, flimsy interior details.
	<b>Buick Encore</b> Leather	30,555	<b>64</b>	● —○	0.65	23	Ride, quietness, braking, maneuverability, fuel economy.	Poor IIHS small-overlap crash-test results, acceleration, driving position, narrow cabin, rear visibility, value.
	<b>Cadillac SRX</b> Luxury	43,085	<b>62</b>	○ —○	0.95	18	Agility, fit and finish, front-seat comfort.	CUE controls, visibility, engine needs to rev to deliver power.
	<b>Land Rover Range Rover Evoque</b> Pure*	45,745	<b>58</b>	NA —NA	0.94	21	Acceleration, transmission, fit and finish.	Unknown reliability, emergency handling, steering feel, ride, noise, visibility, driving position, cargo space.
<b>MIDSIZED LUXURY</b>								
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lexus RX</b> 450h	\$53,576	<b>88</b>	● —●	\$0.96	26	Fuel economy, ride, quietness, fit and finish, reliability.	Lackluster handling, some controls, rear visibility.
	<b>Volkswagen Touareg</b> TDI Sport	49,505	<b>82</b>	● —●	1.00	24	Fuel economy, handling, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, towing capacity.	Subpar reliability, ride, shift quality at low speeds.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lexus RX</b> 350	47,381	<b>79</b>	● —●	0.92	21	Powertrain, fuel economy, fit and finish, ride, quietness, reliability.	Lackluster handling, some controls, rear visibility.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Acura MDX</b> Tech	49,460	<b>79</b>	● —●	0.96	20	Fuel economy, fit and finish, third-row access mechanism, rear seat, electronic safety features, headlights, IIHS crash-test results.	Controls, agility, suspension noise, rear visibility, lack of flexibility in ordering options.

\*Powertrain has changed since last test.



Mini Cooper Countryman

## Best for mpg

Gas mileage is our overall mpg.

**Lexus RX 450h** 26 mpg

**Mini Cooper Countryman** 26 mpg

**Volkswagen Touareg TDI** 24 mpg

**BMW X3** 23 mpg

**BMW X1** 23 mpg

The Lexus is the quietest in the group, and the Countryman is more fun to drive than your average SUV. Both get 26 mpg

overall, but the Mini has a stiff ride. Considering its size and weight, the diesel-powered Touareg's 24 mpg is pretty good. It also tows well but is unreliable. We recorded 23 mpg overall with both the BMW X3 and the smaller X1, which are powered by the same 240-hp turbocharged four-cylinder engine.

## Tester's notes

You don't need to buy a bulky SUV just to get luxury. The compact segment is growing every year, and these models can give you luxury, sportiness, comfort, and great mileage.



JON LINKOV,  
CARS DEPUTY  
CONTENT  
EDITOR

	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
Recommended			0	100	Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction		

### MID-SIZED LUXURY continued

✓	<b>Infiniti QX60</b> (JX)	\$51,920	78	○	●	\$1.00	19	Plush interior, roomy cabin, quietness, fit and finish, access, front-seat comfort, controls, surround-view camera.	Agility, rear visibility.
✓	<b>Porsche Cayenne</b> (base, V6)	63,805	76	○	●	1.25	19	Handling, transmission, fit and finish, towing capacity, headlights.	Controls, slow start-stop feature, low-speed ride, pricey options.
✓	<b>Mercedes-Benz ML350</b>	56,960	76	○	●	1.16	18	Quietness, transmission, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, towing capacity, IIHS crash-test results.	Steering feel, some controls, backup camera works only with radio on.
✓	<b>Infiniti QX70</b> V6 (FX)*	51,635	71	○	○	1.00	18	Acceleration, transmission, handling, fit and finish, front seat.	Ride, rear visibility, cargo area.
✓	<b>Lexus GX</b> 460	58,428	69	●	●	1.14	17	Powertrain, quietness, ride, fit and finish, front-seat comfort, off-road ability, towing.	Agility, third-row seat, side-hinged tailgate.
	<b>Lincoln MKX</b> (3.7)	50,235	64	●	○	0.99	18	Fit and finish, access.	Subpar reliability, controls, rear visibility, low rear seat.
	<b>Volvo XC90</b> 3.2	49,850	58	NA	○	1.00	17	Interior versatility, fit and finish, IIHS crash-test results.	Unknown reliability, acceleration, ride, agility, slow rear-view camera, controls.

### LARGE LUXURY

	<b>Mercedes-Benz GL350</b> BlueTec	\$73,020	81	○	●	\$1.30	20	Fuel economy, quietness, ride, plush interior, front-seat comfort, roomy rear and third-row seats, towing capacity.	Clumsy emergency handling, some controls, backup camera works only with radio on.
✓	<b>Buick Enclave</b> CXL	43,260	77	○	●	0.91	15	Ride, handling, interior room and flexibility, quietness, fit and finish, easy access to usable third seat.	Fuel economy, rear visibility, some controls.
	<b>Toyota Land Cruiser</b>	67,707	69	NA	NA	1.29	14	Ride, quietness, powertrain, acceleration, fit and finish, front- and second-row seats, off-road, towing capacity.	Unknown reliability, fuel economy, agility, third-row seat.
✓	<b>Infiniti QX80</b> (QX56)	63,395	67	●	●	1.26	15	Powertrain, quietness, rear seat, fit and finish, cargo capacity, towing, off-road, headlights.	Handling, access.
	<b>Lincoln Navigator</b> Ultimate	59,015	65	NA	○	1.28	13	Ride, roomy cabin, comfortable second- and third-row seats, cargo and towing capacity.	Unknown reliability, fuel economy, handling, braking, difficult-to-read gauges and controls, driving position.

**Why some models are not recommended.** We lack reliability data on the Land Rover Range Rover Evoque, Volvo XC90, Toyota Land Cruiser, and Lincoln Navigator. The Buick Encore, Cadillac SRX, and Lincoln MKX scored too low in our testing. The Mini Cooper Countryman, Volkswagen Touareg TDI, and Lincoln MKX have had below-average reliability.

# Standouts in key areas

## ► Fun to drive

**Mini Cooper Countryman**  
**BMW X1**  
**BMW X3**  
**Mercedes-Benz GLK**  
**Porsche Cayenne**

These spirited models are every bit as agile and fun to drive as some sports sedans. The Countryman, X1, X3, and GLK are reasonably sized packages that deliver responsive handling and a sporty driving experience. Drivers who are looking for a larger, plusher, and roomier vehicle don't have to be left out of the fun. The mid-sized Porsche Cayenne is almost like a sports car in SUV clothing, with sharp handling and powerful engines. Picking up the kids and groceries has never been such a kick.



Porsche Cayenne

## ► High on comfort

**Mercedes-Benz GL**  
**Infiniti QX80**  
**Toyota Land Cruiser**

If you want an SUV that coddles you and your passengers, these three fit the bill. Each has a comfortable ride, an opulent interior with room for up to seven people, and all of the latest electronic conveniences and safety features. Agility isn't the strong suit of the Toyota or Infiniti, however. The GL is responsive in everyday driving, but it was especially clumsy in our avoidance maneuver and, as a result, we don't recommend it. At 14 to 15 mpg, the Toyota and Infiniti get wallet-draining fuel economy, but the diesel-powered GL got a very good 20 mpg overall.



Infiniti QX80



Toyota Land Cruiser

## ► Best for towing

**Volkswagen Touareg**  
**Mercedes-Benz ML and GL**  
**Porsche Cayenne**  
**Infiniti QX80**

Diesel power makes towing easy, and many of the German automakers offer it.

The Touareg TDI is the least expensive, but reliability is poor. Other options are the Mercedes ML and GL, and the Porsche Cayenne. The Infiniti pulls more (8,500 pounds), but handling is ungainly. The diesel-powered Jeep Grand Cherokee offers luxury amenities for less money.



Mercedes-Benz GL

## ▶ Roomiest overall

**Infiniti QX80**  
**Mercedes-Benz GL**  
**Buick Enclave**

Whether it's room for passengers or cargo you need, these SUVs are large and in charge. With the third-row seat folded,

there is plenty of room for five adults and all of their gear. Fold down both rear rows and you're ready to haul the bulkiest of cargo. Raise all of the seats and you can get seven people into the Infiniti and Mercedes-Benz; the Enclave even has room for an eighth.

## ▶ Stylish off-roaders

**Toyota Land Cruiser**  
**Infiniti QX80**  
**Lexus GX**

Non-luxury versions of each of these three operate in rugged conditions worldwide. All of them are extremely capable off-road, whether it's in mud, dirt, or sand, or for scaling hills. Their V8 engines have ample power, and the luxurious interiors let you enjoy a civilized environment while in the wild. The Lexus and Infiniti have very good reliability; we lack data on the low-volume Land Cruiser.



Lexus GX

## Coming soon

**Audi Q3**  
**Porsche Macan**  
**Lincoln MKC**  
**Mercedes-Benz GLA**  
**Cadillac Escalade**  
**Tesla Model X**

It's going to be a big year for compact luxury SUVs when the Q3, Macan, MKC, and GLA join this growing category. At the other end of the size scale, a new Cadillac Escalade is also on the way. And the Tesla Model X will be the first all-electric luxury SUV when it arrives in 2015. Watch for our tests of all these new models.



Porsche Macan

## MODELS TO AVOID

These models just don't measure up, either because they are outclassed or unreliable.

### Volvo XC90

The XC90 is an old design that wasn't that competitive when new. It's underpowered, its fuel economy of 17 mpg overall isn't impressive, handling lacks agility, and the ride is stiff. Fortunately, a redesigned model is expected to debut this fall.



### Lincoln MKX

The Lincoln MKX has a luxurious interior but handling is clumsy, the MyLincoln Touch control system is frustrating, and it has been unreliable.

### Land Rover Range Rover Evoque

It's long on style but short on interior room. Acceleration and fuel economy are commendable. But with a choppy ride, a noisy cabin, and disconcerting emergency handling, it scored at the bottom of our Ratings.

## PICKUP TRUCKS

Pickups are like blue jeans: They're durable, rugged, and versatile. Full-sized trucks make towing and carrying heavy cargo a breeze. And compared with trucks of yore, modern pickups offer an improved ride, quieter cabins, and the same convenience features found in cars.

Most trucks come in endless combinations of engine size, bed length, and cabin configuration.

Full-sized trucks are the most widely sold, but compact pickups cost less, have cargo beds that are easier to access, and are still handy.

**Drawbacks:** Full-sized trucks can be big, bulky gas-guzzlers with a high step-up and clumsy handling, and anything left in the open bed is exposed to the elements. Compact pickups usually have mediocre fuel economy, and given big incentives on full-sized trucks, they often don't cost much less.

 [Go to ConsumerReports.org/april](http://ConsumerReports.org/april) for a free video highlighting the best trucks.

# TRUCKS

## Best overall



### Ram 1500 (5.7L V8)

Price as tested \$42,810 Overall mpg 15

OVERALL SCORE  
**78**

It trails the Silverado in our Ratings, but for daily use we would all choose the more comfortable and refined Ram 1500. The 5.7-liter V8 delivers effortless power and returned 15 mpg overall with the smooth eight-speed automatic transmission. The roomy cabin is luxurious, with plenty of connectivity features, but the Ram is fully capable of hard work. Its

coil-spring rear suspension smooths the ride without hurting towing and hauling abilities. The diesel engine, unique among half-ton trucks, promises to improve fuel economy.

#### THE RAM LINE

Price range \$24,385-\$49,405

Engines 240-hp, 3.0L diesel V6; 305-hp, 3.6L V6; 395-hp, 5.7L V8



### Honda Ridgeline

Price as tested \$30,825 Overall mpg 15

OVERALL SCORE  
**79**

If you don't need the heft of a full-sized truck, consider the agile and carlike Ridgeline. It has a supple, steady ride and several unique features, including a weatherproof, lockable storage compartment below the composite bed and a tailgate that can swing out or drop down. The V6 provides ample power and a towing capacity of

5,000 pounds. The standard backup camera not only improves rear visibility but also helps when hooking up a trailer. But the Ridgeline's fuel economy isn't any better than that of more capable full-sized trucks.

#### THE RIDGELINE LINE

Price range \$29,575-\$37,505

Engine 250-hp, 3.5L V6

### Trucks to watch

#### Chevrolet Silverado 1500 and GMC Sierra 1500

The redesigned 2014 Silverado and the similar Sierra are the top-scoring full-sized trucks in our Ratings. But because they are too new for us to have reliability data, we can't yet recommend them. Still, they are worth keeping an eye on. Our four-wheel-drive Silverado Crew Cab returned a best-in-class



Chevrolet Silverado

16 mpg overall from its 5.3-liter V8. Handling is responsive for a full-sized truck. The super-quiet cabin is spacious and comfortable. Plus, both have generous towing and payload capacities. Among their few shortcomings are a jittery ride and unsupportive cloth seats.



Toyota Tacoma

## ▶ Top workhorses

**Chevrolet Silverado 1500 (V8)/GMC Sierra 1500 (V8)**

**Ford F-150 (V8)**

**Toyota Tacoma (V6)**

Any full-sized pickup can be set up to maximize its cargo and towing capabilities, but we were impressed with our Silverado's native abilities when we tested it. The easy-lift tailgate is a plus, and toeholds integrated into the back bumper make it easy to climb into the cargo bed. The F-150 offers

many work-truck features and generous towing and payload capacities, and it offers a unique and handy pull-out step in the tailgate, as well as side-bed steps.

The compact Tacoma has impeccable towing and hauling credentials and is a great off-roader. Unfortunately, it has a dreadful ride and handles clumsily.

## Coming soon

### Ford F-150

The redesigned 2015 F-150 arrives this fall, featuring an aluminum body to reduce weight and help fuel economy. It can't come soon enough, because the newer Chevrolet Silverado and Ram have eclipsed the current F-150 in ride, handling, and quietness.

### Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon

GM's all-new Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon compact trucks promise to be more refined and capable than in the past, and they will later offer a diesel engine for better fuel economy.



Ford F-150

# Ratings Pickup trucks

Recommended
 
 Better ←
  → Worse

Rec.	Make & model	Price as tested	Overall road-test score	Survey results	Cost per mile	Overall mpg	Highs	Lows
			0 100	Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction				
<b>FULL-SIZED</b>								
	<b>Chevrolet Silverado 1500 LT</b> (5.3L V8)	\$42,070	81	new new	\$0.93	16	Fuel economy, quietness, relatively good agility and access, payload and towing capacity, low-effort tailgate.	Unknown reliability; ride; long, wet braking stops; seat comfort.
	<b>GMC Sierra 1500 SLT</b> (5.3L V8)	43,200	81	new new	0.90	16	Fuel economy, quietness, relatively good agility and access, payload and towing capacity, low-effort tailgate.	Unknown reliability; ride; long, wet braking stops; seat comfort.
✓	<b>Ram 1500 Big Horn</b> (5.7L V8)	42,810	78	○ ●	0.94	15	Powertrain, ride, quietness, cabin space, Uconnect infotainment system.	Access, heavy rear tailgate.
✓	<b>Ford F-150 XLT</b> (5.0L V8)	39,355	70	○ ●	0.88	15	Quietness, acceleration, rear seat, tailgate step.	Handling, ride, step-in height, no full-time 4WD.
	<b>Ford F-150 XLT</b> (3.5L EcoBoost V6)	40,410	70	● ●	0.90	15	Quietness, acceleration, rear seat, tailgate step, towing ability.	Subpar reliability, handling, ride, step-in height, no full-time 4WD.
✓	<b>Toyota Tundra SR5</b> (5.7L V8)	34,738	69	● ●	0.83	15	Powertrain, telescoping steering wheel, towing, damped tailgate.	Ride, visibility, braking, long reach to some controls, no full-time 4WD.
	<b>Nissan Titan SV</b> (5.6L V8)	36,905	66	● ●	0.89	14	Powertrain, acceleration, relatively responsive handling, rear seat, damped tailgate.	Subpar reliability, braking, access, fit and finish, no full-time 4WD.
<b>COMPACT</b>								
✓	<b>Honda Ridgeline RTS</b>	\$30,825	79	● ●	0.76	15	Ride, handling, powertrain, rear seat, access, in-bed trunk.	Road noise, turning circle, towing capacity.
✓	<b>Nissan Frontier SV</b> (V6)	30,110	67	● ○	0.75	15	Powertrain, acceleration, agility.	Rear-seat room, heavy tailgate, turning circle, no full-time 4WD.
	<b>Toyota Tacoma</b> (V6)	33,119	50	● ●	0.79	17	Powertrain, handling, controls, off-road ability, composite rust-free bed.	Ride, handling, driving position, high step-in, low rear seat, no full-time 4WD.

**Why some models are not recommended.** The Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra are too new for us to have reliability data. The Ford F-150 (3.5L EcoBoost V6) and Nissan Titan have below-average reliability. The Toyota Tacoma didn't score well enough in our tests.

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# Safety

## IIHS test proves challenging



Ford Focus

**M**ANY FACTORS affect how safe a vehicle is, from advanced safety systems to something as basic as driver visibility. But the best indicators of how well a car will protect its occupants in a collision are the independent crash tests conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), an independent group supported by insurers, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Each performs different types of front- and side-impact tests that measure the results of different crash scenarios. That's why it's important to look at all of the crash ratings in the charts here.

Usually when one of those organizations introduces a new test, it raises the bar, forcing automakers to improve their designs. That's now the case with the IIHS front small-overlap test.

That replicates a 40-mph crash in which 25 percent of the driver-side front of a car hits a rigid barrier such as a tree or utility pole. According to a 2009 IIHS study, that

happens in about a quarter of frontal collisions involving serious or fatal injury to front-seat occupants, even in cars with otherwise good crash protection. The test supplements the institute's "moderate overlap" frontal test, which engages 40 percent of the car's front.

Many cars that had done well in the moderate-overlap test fared worse in the new test. Among those were several we had recommended, including the Audi A4 and Toyota Camry, Prius V, and RAV4. Because they scored poorly CONSUMER REPORTS removed the recommendations for them last October. Since then, Toyota updated the Camry, and it performed acceptably when the IIHS retested it. Because of that we now recommend the 2014 Camry. That recommendation applies to cars built after November 2013.

This past January, the IIHS announced that six of 11 small cars also performed poorly in the test. As a result, we've removed the recommendations for the Honda Fit and Hyundai Accent, which are

otherwise highly rated subcompacts. The Fiat 500, Mitsubishi Mirage, Nissan Versa Sedan, and Toyota Prius C weren't recommended already for other reasons.

To check the IIHS' latest crash-test results, go to [iihs.org](http://iihs.org). NHTSA results can be found at [safercar.gov](http://safercar.gov).

Keep in mind that a vehicle's overall crashworthiness is frequently influenced by its weight. Other things being equal, in a crash between a large, heavy vehicle and a small, lighter one, the small car will fare worse.

Also included in the following charts are our accident-avoidance ratings, which reflect how well a car can help you avoid a crash. Those are based on a vehicle's results in emergency handling, braking, and, to a lesser extent, acceleration, driving position, visibility, and seat comfort.

All new cars now come with standard electronic stability control, a proven lifesaver. If you're buying a used car, look for that and other critical safety features, such as head-protecting side-curtain air bags.

## Crash-test and CR accident-avoidance ratings

	Make & model	CR tests		IIHS safety tests				NHTSA safety tests		
		Accident avoidance	Front small-overlap crash	Offset-frontal crash	Side crash	Rear crash	Roof crush	Combined overall crash protection	Overall crash protection front/side	Rollover 2WD/4WD
CARS SUBCOMPACT	Chevrolet Spark	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Fiat 500 hatchback	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Ford Fiesta	●-●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	●/—	●/—
	Honda CR-Z	○	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/○	●/—
	Honda Fit	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Hyundai Accent	●	Poor	Good	Accept.	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Kia Rio	●	Marg.	Good	Accept.	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Mazda2	●	Marg.	Good	Accept.	Accept.	Good	—	—	—
	Mitsubishi i-MiEV	○	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/○	●/—
	Mitsubishi Mirage	—	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Nissan Versa	○	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/●	●/—
	Nissan Versa Note	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	○/●	●/—
	Scion iQ	○	—	Good	Good	Accept.	Good	●	●/○	●/—
	Smart ForTwo	○	—	Good	Good	Accept.	Good	—	—	○/—
Toyota Prius C	○	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
Toyota Yaris	○	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	

Models are grouped by vehicle category of similar weight except for sporty cars, where there are few crash-test results. Some current models, such as the BMW X5 and Chevrolet SS, are not included because they have not been crash-tested or tested by CR.

### Key

#### CR ACCIDENT-AVOIDANCE RATINGS

Score is for tested model; a range of scores is given if multiple versions are tested.

#### NHTSA SAFETY TESTS

Ratings are for overall crash protection and front- and side-crash protection.

Better ← → Worse



#### IIHS CRASH RATINGS

Good  
Acceptable  
Marginal  
Poor

#### NHTSA ROLLOVER RATINGS

● Risk is less than 10%  
● Risk is between 10 and 20%  
○ Risk is between 20 and 30%  
● Risk is between 30 and 40%  
● Risk is greater than 40%

## Top performers



Chevrolet Spark



Mazda3



Honda Accord



Subaru Legacy



Acura TL

	Make & model	CR tests		IIHS safety tests				NHTSA safety tests		
		Accident avoidance	Front small-overlap crash	Offset-frontal crash	Side crash	Rear crash	Roof crush	Combined overall crash protection	Overall crash protection front/side	Rollover 2WD/4WD
CARS COMPACT	Acura ILX	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Buick Verano	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Chevrolet Cruze	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Chevrolet Sonic	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Chevrolet Volt	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Dodge Dart	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Fiat 500L	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Ford Focus	●●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Ford Focus Electric	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/●	●/—
	Honda Civic	○●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Honda Insight	○	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	●/—
	Hyundai Elantra sedan	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Hyundai Elantra hatchback	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/●	●/—
	Hyundai Veloster	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Kia Forte	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/●	●/—
	Kia Soul	—	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Mazda3	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Mitsubishi Lancer	○	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Nissan Cube	○	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	●/—
	Nissan Leaf	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
Nissan Sentra	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
Scion tC	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
Scion xB	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	●/—	
Scion xD	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—	
Subaru Impreza	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—/●	—/●	
Toyota Corolla	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
Toyota Prius	○●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
Volkswagen Beetle	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
Volkswagen Jetta	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
CARS MIDSIZE	Chevrolet Malibu	●●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Ford C-Max	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/●	●/—
	Ford Fusion	●●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Honda Accord	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Hyundai Sonata	○●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Kia Optima	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Mazda6	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Nissan Altima	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Nissan Maxima	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Marg.	Accept.	●	○/●	●/—
	Subaru Legacy	●●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	—/●
	Subaru Outback	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	—/●
	Toyota Camry	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Toyota Prius V	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
Volkswagen Jetta SportWagen	○●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	●/—	
Volkswagen Passat	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
CARS LUXURY MIDSIZE	Acura TL	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Acura TSX	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	●/—
	Audi A4	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Audi Allroad	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	●/●	—
	BMW 3 Series	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Buick Regal	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Cadillac ATS	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/●	●/●
	Infiniti Q50	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●

	Make & model	CR tests		IIHS safety tests				NHTSA safety tests		
		Accident avoidance	Front small-overlap crash	Offset-frontal crash	Side crash	Rear crash	Roof crush	Combined overall crash protection	Overall crash protection front/side	Rollover 2WD/4WD
CARS LUXURY MID-SIZED continued	Lexus CT 200h	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Lexus ES	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—
	Lexus IS	●	—	Good	Good	—	—	●	●/●	●/●
	Lincoln MKZ	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Mercedes-Benz C-Class	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Mercedes-Benz CLA	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Volkswagen CC	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	●/●
	Volvo S60	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Acura RLX	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
CARS LARGE/LUXURY	Audi A6	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Audi A7	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Audi A8	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	BMW 5 Series	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	BMW 7 Series	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Buick LaCrosse	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	●/●	●/●
	Cadillac CTS	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Cadillac XTS	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Chevrolet Impala	●	—	Good	Good	—	—	●	●/●	●/—
	Chrysler 300	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Dodge Charger	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Ford Taurus	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Hyundai Azera	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Hyundai Equus	○	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Infiniti Q70	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●
	Infiniti Q70 hybrid	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Accept.	●	●/●	●/—
	Jaguar XF	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Jaguar XJ	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Kia Cadenza	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
	Lexus GS	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—
Lexus LS	●	—	Good	—	Good	—	—	—	—	
Lincoln MKS	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
Maserati Ghibli	—	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—	
Mercedes-Benz E-Class	●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
Porsche Panamera	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Tesla Model S	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/●	●/—	
Toyota Avalon	●-●	—	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/—	
Volvo S80	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—	
Volvo XC70	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
CARS SPORTY/CONVERTIBLE	Audi A5	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Audi TT	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	BMW Z4	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Chevrolet Camaro convertible	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	●/—
	Chevrolet Camaro coupe	●-●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/●	●/—
	Dodge Challenger	●	—	—	—	—	—	●	●/●	●/—
	Fiat 500c convertible/Abarth	●-●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Ford Mustang convertible	●	—	Good	Good	Good	—	—	—	●/—
	Ford Mustang coupe	●	—	Good	Accept.	Good	—	●	●/●	●/—
	Honda Civic Si	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	●/—
	Hyundai Genesis Coupe	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	●/—
	Infiniti Q60 convertible	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Jaguar XK	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Mazda MX-5 Miata	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mercedes-Benz SLK	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

## It's 2014. Where are the backup cameras?

Every year about 200 people—about half of whom are small children—are killed by a passenger vehicle backing up. Many times, a driver backing out of his or her driveway runs over an unseen child who has wandered behind the car into its blind zone. Often it's the child's parent or caregiver who inadvertently causes the tragedy.

In some larger vehicles, such as pickup trucks, that blind zone can extend 20 feet or more behind the rear bumper. And even



many of today's smaller, mainstream cars severely limit the driver's rear visibility.

Backup cameras are an effective way of preventing those types of accidents. They let a driver see the area immediately behind the vehicle, with the image displayed on an in-dash screen or rear-view mirror. In addition to being a critical safety aid, backup cameras are convenient for parking and even hitching up a trailer.

In 2008, President George W. Bush signed a law directing the Department of Transportation to develop rules that would require automakers to install devices, such as backup cameras, to help prevent back-over accidents. The initial proposal envisioned cameras being phased in by 2014. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration was given until 2010 to write the rules. Instead it has extended the deadline four times; the latest putting off action until January 2015.

Backup cameras are widely available in today's cars and standard on a variety, including all Hondas. But other manufacturers often bundle them into a high-priced options package, which many drivers can't afford. We don't appreciate automakers holding vital safety systems hostage to a bunch of luxury frills.

Last September, Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of CONSUMER REPORTS, joined with other safety advocates in a lawsuit demanding that the government pick up the pace on requiring backup cameras as a standard feature in all cars. After all, if a small car such as the Honda Civic can come with one at no extra cost, why shouldn't every car?

## Top performers



Scion FR-S



Honda Odyssey



Mazda CX-5



Subaru Forester



Volvo XC60

	Make & model	IIHS safety tests					NHTSA safety tests				
		CR tests	Accident avoidance	Front small-overlap crash	Offset-frontal crash	Side crash	Rear crash	Roof crush	Combined overall crash protection	Overall crash protection front/side	Rollover 2WD/4WD
CARS SPORTY/CONVERTIBLE continued	Mini Cooper convertible	●	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	●/–
	Mitsubishi Lancer Ralliart/Evo	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Accept.	–	–	–	
	Nissan Z	●	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
	Porsche Boxster	●	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
	Scion FR-S	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/–	
	Subaru BRZ	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/–	
	Volkswagen Eos	●	–	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	–	
	Volkswagen Jetta GLI	●	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
MINIVANS	Chrysler Town & Country	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/–	
	Dodge Grand Caravan	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/–	
	Honda Odyssey	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/–	
	Kia Sedona	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Poor	●	●/●	●/–	
	Mazda5	●	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
	Nissan Quest	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Accept.	–	–	–	
	Toyota Sienna	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	BMW X1	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	
SUVs SMALL	Buick Encore	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Ford Escape	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Honda CR-V	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Hyundai Tucson	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Jeep Cherokee	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	
	Jeep Compass	○	–	–	Good	Good	–	●	○/●	●/●	
	Jeep Patriot	○	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/●	○/○	
	Kia Sportage	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Mazda CX-5	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Mini Cooper Countryman	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	
	Mitsubishi Outlander	○	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	
	Mitsubishi Outlander Sport	●	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Nissan Juke	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/●	●/●	
	Nissan Rogue Select	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Accept.	●	●/●	●/●	
	Subaru Forester	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	–/●	
	Subaru XV Crosstrek	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	
Toyota RAV4	●	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●		
Volkswagen Tiguan	●	Marg.	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/●	●/●		
SUVs MID-SIZED/LUXURY	Volvo XC60	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Acura MDX	●	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Acura RDX	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Audi Q5	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–/●	
	Audi Q7	–	–	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	–/●	
	BMW X3	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–	
	Cadillac SRX	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Chevrolet Equinox	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Dodge Durango	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/○	
	Dodge Journey	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Ford Edge	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/●	●/●	
	Ford Explorer	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Ford Flex	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	●/●	
	GMC Terrain	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
	Honda Crosstour	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	●/●	
	Honda Pilot	○	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●	
Hyundai Santa Fe	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	–	–	–		
Hyundai Santa Fe Sport	●	–	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	●/●	●/●		

	Make & model	CR tests		IIHS safety tests				NHTSA safety tests		
		Accident avoidance	Front small-overlap crash	Offset-frontal crash	Side crash	Rear crash	Roof crush	Combined overall crash protection	Overall crash protection front/side	Rollover 2WD/4WD
SUVs MID-SIZED/LUXURY continued	Infiniti QX50 (EX)	-	-	Good	-	Good	Good	-	-	○/○
	Infiniti QX60 (JX)	○	-	Good	Good	-	-	●	○/○	○/○
	Infiniti QX70 (FX)	●	-	Good	-	Good	-	-	-	-
	Jeep Grand Cherokee	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Jeep Wrangler	●	-	Good	Marg.*	Marg.	-	-	-	-/○
	Kia Sorento	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Land Rover Range Rover Evoque	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lexus GX	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lexus RX	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Lincoln MKT	-	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	○/○
	Lincoln MKX	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Mazda CX-9	●	-	Good	Good	Marg.	Marg.	●	○/○	○/○
	Mercedes-Benz GLK-Class	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	-
	Mercedes-Benz M-Class	○	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Nissan Murano	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Marg.	●	○/○	○/○
	Nissan Pathfinder	○	-	Good	Good	-	-	●	○/○	○/○
	Nissan Xterra	○	-	Good	Good	Marg.	Accept.	-	-	○/○
	Porsche Cayenne	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Subaru Tribeca	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	-/○
	Toyota 4Runner	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	-
Toyota FJ Cruiser	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Accept.	-	-	○/○	
Toyota Highlander	-	Accept.	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	-	
Toyota Venza	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○	
Volkswagen Touareg	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	-	
Volvo XC90	○	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	○/○	
SUVs LARGE/LUXURY	Buick Enclave	●	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Chevrolet Traverse	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Ford Expedition	○	-	-	-	-	-	●	○/○	○/○
	GMC Acadia	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	Infiniti QX80	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lincoln Navigator	○	-	-	-	-	-	●	○/○	○/○
	Mercedes-Benz GL-Class	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Nissan Armada	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○/○
	Toyota Land Cruiser	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Toyota Sequoia	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○/○
PICKUPS COMPACT	Honda Ridgeline	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	-/○
	Nissan Frontier	○	-	Good	Good	Accept.	Good	-	-	○/○
	Toyota Tacoma	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Marg.	●	○/○	○/○
PICKUPS FULL-SIZED	Chevrolet Silverado 1500	○	-	Good	-	-	-	●	○/○	○/○
	Ford F-150	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	●	○/○	○/○
	GMC Sierra 1500	○	-	Good	-	-	-	●	○/○	○/○
	Nissan Titan	○	-	Good	-	Good	Accept.	-	-	○/○
	Ram 1500	○	-	Good	-	Good	Marg.	●	○/○	○/○
Toyota Tundra	○	-	Good	Good	Good	Good	-	-	-	

\*Tested without optional side air bags.



Honda Ridgeline



Ford F-150



Chevrolet Silverado

## Top performers



Acura MDX



BMW X3



Jeep Grand Cherokee



Buick Enclave

# Used cars

Great choices for every budget—and models to avoid



Toyota Prius

**E**VERY YEAR IT becomes more difficult to shop for a used car. Prices have been at historic highs, even for models with high mileage and seemingly excessive wear. And with so many vehicles from which to choose, it can feel overwhelming to find a car that drives well and will hold up down the road.

That's why we've created this handy guide, which shows you the best small cars, sedans, and SUVs in four price ranges. Every car on this list performed well in our tests when it was new and has had above-average reliability for the model years shown, based on our latest Annual Auto Survey. Each vehicle also came standard with electronic stability control (ESC), a proven lifesaver, during the years indicated, unless otherwise noted. Consider these the used cars we would recommend to our family and friends.

Hyundai Sonata



Scion xB

## LESS THAN \$10,000

### ■ SMALL CARS

**Toyota Prius** (2004-07), **Scion xB** (2004-06), **Pontiac Vibe** (2005-08), **Toyota Matrix** (2005-07)

With its 44 mpg overall, the Prius is the most efficient non-plug-in five-passenger car you can buy, plus it has plenty of room and a nice ride. Reliability has been first-rate. The Scion xB has standard ESC and is a great city car, with compact dimensions and easy access, and the Vibe and Matrix twins are quite versatile. For the Prius, Matrix, and Vibe, look for one with the optional ESC.

### ■ SEDANS

**Hyundai Sonata** (2007-08), **Acura TSX** (2004) The economical, efficient, and comfortable Sonata has a nice ride, secure handling, and a peppy four-cylinder engine that gets a good 23 mpg overall. For something sportier, the Acura TSX is responsive, quiet, well-finished, and enjoyable to drive.

### ■ SUVs

**Toyota Highlander V6** (2004), **Mitsubishi Outlander** (2007)

The Highlander has a nicely finished, quiet, and comfortable interior, along with a strong V6 engine. Handling is secure, but it leans more toward comfort than sportiness. The smaller Mitsubishi Outlander has sportier handling and can be found with a third-row seat.

## \$10,000-\$15,000

### ■ SMALL CARS

**Honda Fit** (2011-13), **Kia Soul** (2010-11)

The Fit's forte is its amazing cargo-carrying versatility. Yet it's also fun to drive, with great



Chevrolet Impala

## Steer clear of these troublesome vehicles

These models, listed alphabetically, are the worst of the worst. They have multiple years of much-worse-than-average overall reliability, based on 2004 through 2013 models, according to our Annual Auto Survey. Each one has at least three model years of reliability data.

<b>BMW</b> X5 (6-cyl.)	<b>Dodge</b> Grand Caravan	<b>Mercedes-Benz</b> GL-Class
<b>Chevrolet</b> Cruze (1.8)	<b>Dodge</b> Journey	<b>Mini</b> Cooper S
<b>Chevrolet</b> Impala	<b>Ford</b> Explorer (V6)	<b>Mini</b> Countryman
<b>Chevrolet</b> Uplander	<b>Ford</b> F-250 & F-350 (diesel)	<b>Saturn</b> Outlook
<b>Chrysler</b> PT Cruiser (nonturbo)	<b>Ford</b> Fiesta	<b>Saturn</b> Relay
<b>Chrysler</b> Town & Country	<b>Ford</b> Flex (3.5L EcoBoost)	<b>Volkswagen</b> Beetle, New Beetle
<b>Dodge</b> Caravan	<b>GMC</b> Acadia	<b>Volkswagen</b> Touareg
	<b>Lincoln</b> MKT (EcoBoost)	

fuel economy and excellent reliability. For a little more passenger room and almost every creature comfort, check out the Kia Soul.

### ▣ SEDANS

**Mazda3** (2009-12), **Infiniti G35** (2006-07)

The Mazda3 has precise and responsive handling, refined engines, and a comfortable ride, although it can be loud on the highway. The Skyactiv 2.0-liter engine, which arrived for 2012, provides an impressive 32 mpg overall. For something more luxurious, try the Infiniti G35, one of our favorite sports sedans, with its super handling, potent V6, and easy controls.

### ▣ SUVs

**Acura MDX** (2004-06), **Toyota RAV4** (2006, 2008), **Honda CR-V** (2005-08)

The upscale MDX offers seating for seven, a strong and refined powertrain, a pleasant ride, and agile routine handling. The smaller RAV4 has an optional but snug third-row seat, and both the four- and six-cylinder engines get impressive fuel economy. For a more refined alternative to the Toyota, the CR-V has a strong four-cylinder and a nicer interior.

## \$15,000-\$20,000

### ▣ SMALL CARS

**Hyundai Elantra** (2012-13), **Subaru Impreza** (2011-13)

These are as roomy and comfortable as larger, more expensive cars. The Elantra combines nimble and secure handling with a fairly



Acura TL

comfortable ride. The Impreza sedan and hatchback both offer standard all-wheel drive along with sporty handling and a great ride.

### ▣ SEDANS

**Toyota Camry** (2011-12), **Toyota Camry Hybrid** (2010-11), **Acura TL** (2008)

Both the four- and six-cylinder Camry deliver impressive fuel economy (26 and 27 mpg, respectively) along with a comfortable ride, a roomy cabin, and superb reliability. For even better gas mileage, the Camry Hybrid gets 34 mpg overall and 41 on the highway. A sportier alternative is the Acura TL, which has long been one of our favorite sedans to drive.

### ▣ SUVs

**Lexus RX** (2006-07), **Subaru Forester** (2009-10, nonturbo)

The Lexus RX is comfortable, nicely finished, and extremely reliable. The hybrid version gets good fuel economy. The Forester is more utilitarian but handles well and has an excellent ride. Access is easy, and the view out is the best among SUVs.

## \$20,000-\$25,000

### ▣ SEDANS

**Toyota Avalon** (2011), **Lexus LS** (2006), **Lincoln MKZ** (2011-12), **Ford Fusion Hybrid** (2012)

The Avalon is one of our favorite cars for a long trip; it has a quiet interior with limo-like rear leg room. The Lexus LS is even more posh, with a superb ride and top-notch reliability. For more driving excitement, the Lincoln MKZ handles responsively, rides well, and has generous power, but it has a somewhat low-rent interior. It's based on the Ford Fusion, which in hybrid form returns an impressive 34 mpg overall.

### ▣ SUVs

**Toyota Highlander Hybrid** (2008-09), **Honda Pilot** (2009-10)

If you want a midsize, three-row SUV with the best fuel economy possible, look no further than the Highlander Hybrid. At 24 mpg overall, it matches the fuel economy of many smaller SUVs and even some midsize sedans. It has a sumptuous interior and a smooth ride. The Pilot delivers sharper handling, and its comfortable third row brings the seating to eight.



Honda Pilot

# Reliable used cars for every budget

For people who want to get the most for their money, used cars are often better overall values than new models. They cost less to buy and don't depreciate as quickly.

These lists show you the best 2004 through 2013 models in four price ranges. All of these cars did well in our tests when they were new and have had

above-average reliability.

Try to buy the newest vehicle that your budget will allow so that you get the most up-to-date safety features. To help, we show the first year, within 10 model years, that each model offered electronic stability control, a critical lifesaving safety feature, as standard or optional equipment.



Ford Fusion



Lincoln MKZ

Make & model	Under \$10,000	\$10,000-\$15,000	\$15,000-\$20,000	\$20,000-\$25,000	ESC ('04-'13)	
					Opt. from	Std. from

## CARS: SUBCOMPACT AND COMPACT

Ford Focus Sedan	'05-06, '08-09	'10-11	–	–	'09	'10
Honda Civic Sedan	'04-07	'08-11	'12-13	–	'09	'12
Honda Fit	'07-08	'09-13	–	–	'09	'11
Hyundai Accent	'09	'13	–	–	–	'12
Hyundai Elantra Sedan	'07-09	–	'12-13	–	'08	'11
Kia Forte	–	'12-13	–	–	–	all
Kia Soul	–	'10-11	'13	–	–	all
Mazda3	'08	'09-12	–	–	'07	'11
Mazda3 (Skyactiv 2.0-liter)	–	'12	'13	–	–	all
Nissan Leaf	–	–	'11-12	'13	–	all
Pontiac Vibe	'04-08	'09-10	–	–	'05	'09
Scion tC	'05-06	–	–	–	–	'11
Scion xB	'04-06	'09-11	'12	–	–	all
Scion xD	–	'08-10	–	–	'08	'10
Subaru Impreza (sedan, nonturbo)	–	'10	'11-13	–	'08	'09
Subaru Impreza (wagon, nonturbo)	'05	'08, '10	'11-13	–	'08	'09
Suzuki SX4	'08	–	–	–	'07	'12
Toyota Corolla	'04-08	'10-12	'13	–	'05	'10
Toyota Matrix	'04-07	'08, '10	–	–	'05	'10
Toyota Prius	'04-07	'08-10	'11-12	'13	'04	'10
Toyota Yaris Hatchback	'07-10	–	–	–	–	'10
Volkswagen Golf	–	–	'11-12	–	'04	'10
Volkswagen Jetta Sedan (5-cyl.)	'08	'09-10	–	–	'04	'09
Volkswagen Rabbit	'07	'09	–	–	'07	'09



Mazda3

Make & model	Under \$10,000	\$10,000-\$15,000	\$15,000-\$20,000	\$20,000-\$25,000	ESC ('04-'13)	
					Opt. from	Std. from

## CARS: MIDSIZED AND LARGE

Acura RL	'04	'05-06	'07-08	–	–	all
Acura TL	'04	'05-07	'08	'09-10	–	all
Acura TSX (4-cyl.)	'04-05	'06-08	'10	'11-12	–	all
Audi A6 (V6)	–	'06	'08	–	–	all
BMW 328i Sedan	–	–	'09	'10	–	all
Cadillac CTS (RWD)	–	–	'09	'11	'04	'08
Ford Fusion (4-cyl.)	'08	'09	'12	–	'09	'10
Ford Fusion (V6, FWD)	'06-08	'09	'12	–	'09	'10
Ford Fusion Hybrid	–	–	'10-11	'12	–	all
Honda Accord (4-cyl.)	'04-05	'06-09	'10-12	–	–	'08
Honda Accord Sedan (V6)	'04	'05-07	–	'11-12	–	'06
Hyundai Azera	'06	'07	–	–	–	all
Hyundai Sonata (4-cyl.)	'07-08	'09	–	–	–	'06
Hyundai Sonata (V6)	'04, '07	'09	–	–	–	'06
Infiniti G Sedan	'04	'06-07	'08	'09-11	–	all
Infiniti M (V6)	–	–	'06-08	–	–	all
Lexus ES	–	'04-06	'07-08	'09-10	'04	'07
Lexus GS	–	'04	'06-07	'08	–	all
Lexus IS Sedan	–	'04-05	'06, '08	'09-10	'04	'06
Lexus LS	–	–	'04-05	'06	–	all
Lincoln MKZ (V6)	–	'08	'09-10	'11-12	–	'09
Mazda6	'08	'09	'11-12	–	'05	'09
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (V6)	'04	'07	'08	'09	–	all
Mercedes-Benz E-Class (V6, RWD)	–	'05	'07-08	'09	–	all
Mercury Milan (4-cyl.)	'08-09	–	–	–	'09	'10
Mercury Milan (V6, FWD)	'06-08	'09	–	–	'09	'10
Mercury Milan Hybrid	–	–	'10-11	–	–	all
Nissan Altima Hybrid	–	'08-09	–	–	–	all



Honda Accord

Make & model	Under \$10,000	\$10,000-\$15,000	\$15,000-\$20,000	\$20,000-\$25,000	ESC ('04-13)	
					Opt. from	Std. from

### SUVs: SMALL

Acura RDX	–	–	'07-08	'09-10	–	all
Ford Escape Hybrid	'05	'09	'10	–	–	'09
Honda CR-V	'04	'05-08	'09-11	'12	–	'05
Hyundai Tucson	'06-07	–	–	–	–	all
Kia Sportage	–	'07	–	'12	–	'05
Mazda CX-5	–	–	–	'13	–	all
Mercury Mariner Hybrid	–	'09	'10	–	–	'09
Mitsubishi Outlander	'07	'08, '10	'11-12	–	–	'07
Mitsubishi Outlander Sport	–	'11	'12	–	–	all
Nissan Juke	–	–	'12	–	–	all
Nissan Rogue	–	'10	'11-13	–	–	all
Subaru Forester (nonturbo)	–	'08	'09-10	'11-13	'07	'09
Toyota RAV4 (4-cyl.)	'04-05	'06, '08	'09-12	'13	–	all
Toyota RAV4 (V6)	–	'06, '08	'09-11	'12	–	all

### SUVs: MIDSIZED AND LARGE

Acura MDX	–	'04-06	–	'07	–	all
Ford Edge	–	'07	'09	–	–	all
Honda Pilot	'04-05	'06-07	'08	'09-10	'05	'06
Infiniti FX (V6)	–	'04-05	'06	'08	–	all
Lexus GX	–	–	'04-05	'06-07	–	all
Lexus RX	–	'04-05	'06-07	'08-09	–	all
Lexus RX Hybrid	–	–	'06-07	'08	–	all
Lincoln MKX	–	–	'07-08	'09-10	–	all
Mazda CX-9	–	–	'10	'11-12	–	all
Nissan Murano	–	–	–	'11-12	'04	'09
Toyota 4Runner (V6)	–	'04-06	'07-08	'09	–	all
Toyota Highlander (V6)	'04	'05-08	'09	'10	–	all
Toyota Highlander Hybrid	–	'06	'07	'08-09	–	all
Toyota Sequoia	–	'06	'07	–	–	all

### PICKUP TRUCKS

Honda Ridgeline	–	'06	'07-09	'10	–	all
Nissan Frontier	–	–	'08	'11-12	'04	'12
Toyota Tacoma (V6, 4WD)	–	'04-05	'06-07	'08-09	'04	'09
Toyota Tundra (V8, 4WD)	–	'04-05	'06	'07-08	'04	'09



Nissan Rogue

Make & model	Under \$10,000	\$10,000-\$15,000	\$15,000-\$20,000	\$20,000-\$25,000	ESC ('04-13)	
					Opt. from	Std. from

### CARS: MIDSIZED AND LARGE continued

Nissan Altima Sedan (4-cyl.)	'06	'09, '11-12	–	–	–	'10
Nissan Altima Sedan (V6)	–	'07	'11	–	'07	'10
Nissan Maxima	–	'08	–	'11-12	'04	'09
Subaru Legacy (4-cyl.)	–	'09-10	'11-13	–	'07	'09
Toyota Avalon	'04	'05-08	'09-10	'11	'04	'09
Toyota Camry (4-cyl.)	'04-06	'07, '10	'11-13	–	'05	'10
Toyota Camry (V6)	'04-05	'06-10	'11	'12	'04	'10
Toyota Camry Hybrid	–	'07-09	'10-11	'12-13	–	all
Volvo S60	'04-05	'07-08	–	–	'04	'07

### SPORTS CARS/CONVERTIBLES

BMW Z4	–	'05	'06-07	–	–	all
Ford Mustang (V8)	–	'05-06	'07-08	–	–	'10
Honda Civic Si	–	'06-08	–	–	–	'07
Honda S2000	–	'04	'05-06	–	–	'06
Lexus SC	–	–	'04	'05-06	–	all
Mazda MX-5 Miata	'04	'06-08	'09-10	'12	'06	'12
Nissan 350Z	–	'04	'06	–	'04	'10

### WAGONS AND MINIVANS

Honda Crosstour	–	–	'10-11	'12	–	all
Honda Odyssey	'04	'06	–	–	–	'05
Mazda5	–	–	'12-13	–	–	'10
Subaru Outback (4-cyl.)	–	–	'09-10	'11-12	'07	'09
Toyota Prius V	–	–	–	'12-13	–	all
Toyota Sienna (FWD)	'04	'05-06, '08	'09	'10-11	'04	'08
Toyota Venza (V6)	–	–	–	'09-12	–	all
Volvo XC70 (Cross Country)	'04	–	'08	'09	'04	'07



Ford Mustang

# Used-car buying tips

Shopping for a used car isn't like buying new. No two vehicles are alike; even ones that rolled off the same assembly line at the same time will have different mileage, different degrees of maintenance, and led far different lives. Though that can work to your advantage, it can also hurt you. You may have less bargaining power when you find a car in great condition because you may not find another one just like it.

Still, it pays to be picky when shopping. And you should always negotiate the price. Most cars at used-car dealers have \$1,500 to \$2,000 of profit built in, so there's room for bargaining. Here are some tips to point you in the right direction:

Choose a reliable model to minimize the risk that the car will need expensive repairs down the road.

Buy the newest car you can afford because it's more likely to have all of the latest safety features and technology.

Have any car you're seriously considering inspected by a professional mechanic who has experience with the brand. He will be familiar with common problem areas. Cars with full maintenance records are also worth a premium.

Close the deal on the nicest example you can find, even if you have to stretch your budget. If it checks out with the mechanic, it will be cheaper than having trouble down the road.

## Where to look

Generally the freshest used cars are the ones that are found on the lot at a new-car dealership. They are often lease returns. Many of those cars carry higher prices because they're sold as "certified" used cars. They generally have been inspected and have met certain standards set by the manufacturer or dealer. But in reality, the certified designation is no guarantee that a vehicle will be a cream puff; you should still arrange your own inspection.

Trade-ins that don't meet franchised-dealer standards are auctioned off and wind up at independent used-car lots. Most get some reconditioning, but even a trained dealer can't know the history of a car he buys at auction, so big problems can get missed.

You can find good cars at bargain prices buying from a private party, and you may be able to get a better sense of the car's history



if it's bought from the original owner. But private sellers don't usually recondition their cars prior to sale. Plus, they are sold as-is, without any implied legal warranty.

Optimally, buying a used car lets the original owner absorb the huge depreciation inherent in new cars, while you get a good vehicle at an

## Used cars to avoid

**These 2004-2013 models have a record of below-average overall reliability. They're listed alphabetically by make and model.**

**Audi** A3 '06; A4 (4-cyl.) '04-06, '09; A5/S5 '10; A6 (V6) '04, '10

**BMW** 325Ci '06; 325i '04-06; 328i '12; 330i '06; 335i '07-09, '13; 335Ci '08-09; 5 Series (6-cyl.) '06-08; 535i (AWD) '08, '10, '13; 535i (RWD) '08, '11; 7 Series '06; X3 (6-cyl.) '04-07; X3 (6-cyl., turbo) '11-13; X5 (6-cyl.) '08-09, '11-12; X5 (diesel) '12

**Buick** Enclave '08-10; LaCrosse (V6) '07-08, '10-13; Lucerne '08-10; Regal '11

**Cadillac** ATS (V6) '13; CTS (RWD) '05; DeVille '04; DTS '09; Escalade '07-08; SRX '04-06, '10-11; STS '05, '07; XTS '13

**Chevrolet** Avalanche '04-09; Blazer '04; Camaro (V6) '12-13; Camaro (V8) '11-12; Cobalt '06-08; Colorado '09-10; Corvette '12-13; Cruze (1.4T) '11; Cruze (1.8) '11, '13; Equinox (4-cyl.) '10; Equinox (V6) '05-08; HHR '08-10; Impala '04-10; Malibu Sedan (4-cyl.) '07-08; Malibu Sedan (V6) '07-08; Silverado 1500 (V6) '06; Silverado 1500 (V8, 2WD) '09-10; Silverado 1500 (V8, 4WD) '04, '06, '09; Silverado 2500 & 3500 (diesel) '11; Sonic '12; Suburban '05-09, '13; Tahoe '07-10; TrailBlazer '05-08; Traverse '09-10; Uplander '05-08

**Chrysler** 200 Sedan '13; 300 (V6) '12; Crossfire '05; Pacifica '06-07; PT Cruiser (nonturbo)

'04-08; PT Cruiser (turbo) '04-05; Sebring Convertible '04-06; Sebring Sedan '04-05; Town & Country '04-12

**Dodge** Caliber '07-08; Caravan '04-07; Challenger '10-11; Charger '06-08, '11; Dakota '05-06, '08; Dart (1.4T) '13; Durango (V6) '11-12; Durango (V8) '12; Grand Caravan '04-12; Journey '09-12; Ram 1500 (V8, 4WD) '09-11; Ram 2500 & 3500 (diesel) '07-11; Stratus '04-05

**Fiat** 500 '12-13

**Ford** C-Max Energi (Plug-in Hybrid) '13; C-Max Hybrid '13; Edge (2.0L EcoBoost) '12-13; Edge (V6) '11-13; Escape (1.6L EcoBoost) '13; Escape (2.0L EcoBoost) '13; Escape (4-cyl.) '13; Escape (V6) '07, '09-10; Expedition '06, '09, '10; Explorer (3.5L EcoBoost) '13; Explorer (V6, 2WD) '04, '06, '11-13; Explorer (V6, 4WD) '04-07, '10-13; Explorer (V8) '04, '07-08; Explorer SportTrac '07; F-150 (3.5L EcoBoost) '11-12; F-150 (V8, 2WD) '11; F-150 (V8, 4WD) '10-11; F-250 & F-350 (diesel) '04-11; F-250 & F-350 (gas) '06, '11; Fiesta '11-12; Flex '09, '11; Flex (3.5L EcoBoost) '10-13; Focus Hatchback '12-13; Focus Sedan '12-13; Focus ST '13; Freestar '04-05; Fusion (1.6L EcoBoost) '13; Fusion (V6, AWD) '10; Fusion Hybrid '13; Mustang (V6) '06; Mustang (V8) '12; Taurus Sedan (turbo) '10, '13; Taurus Sedan (V6) '12-13; Taurus Wagon '04

**GMC** Acadia '07-11; Canyon '09-10; Envoy '05-08; Sierra 1500 (V6) '06; Sierra 1500 (V8,

2WD) '09-10; Sierra 1500 (V8, 4WD) '04, '06, '09; Sierra 2500 & 3500 (diesel) '11; Terrain (4-cyl.) '10; Yukon '07-10; Yukon XL '05-09, '13

**Honda** Accord Sedan (V6) '13; Accord Coupe '13; Civic Hybrid '04-10

**Hyundai** Accent '10; Elantra Touring '10, '12; Entourage '07; Genesis Coupe '10, '13; Genesis Sedan (V6) '12; Genesis Sedan (V8) '10, '12; Santa Fe (V6) '10; Sonata (4-cyl.) '04; Sonata (turbo) '11-12; Sonata (V6) '10; Sonata Hybrid '12; Tucson '13; Veloster '12-13

**Infiniti** M (V6) '09

**Jaguar** XF '10

**Jeep** Commander '06-07; Compass '07; Grand Cherokee (V6) '04, '06, '11-12; Grand Cherokee (V8) '04-07, '11; Liberty '06-08; Patriot '08, '10; Wrangler (2-door) '08, '12; Wrangler (4-door) '07-12

**Kia** Optima (turbo) '11-13; Rondo '08; Sedona '04-08, '10, '12; Sorento (4-cyl.) '11; Sorento (V6) '08, '11-13

**Lincoln** LS '04-05; MKS '10, '13; MKT (EcoBoost) '10-13; MKX '11-13

**Mazda** CX-7 '07; RX-8 '04; Tribute (V6) '09-10; 5 '06-08

**Mercedes-Benz** E-Class (V6, AWD) '10; E-Class (V8) '10; GL-Class '07-08, '10-12; M-Class (diesel) '12; M-Class (V6) '06, '08, '12; S-Class '07

**Mercury** Mariner (V6) '07, '09-10; Milan (V6, AWD) '10; Monterey '04-05; Mountaineer (V6,



attractive price. But buying used isn't always as affordable as it sounds. If you're borrowing money, interest rates are higher; the older the car, the higher the rate and the shorter the loan term that will be available. As with a new car, it's best if you can put down as much cash as possible when you buy the car.

4WD) '04-'07, '10; Mountaineer (V8) '04, '07-'08; Sable Wagon '04  
**Mini** Cooper '04-'09, '11-'12; Cooper S '05-'12; Countryman '11-'13  
**Nissan** Altima Sedan (4-cyl.) '13; Altima Sedan (V6) '09, '13; Armada '11; Frontier '05; Maxima '05-'06; Murano '05-'07; Pathfinder '05-'07, '13; Quest '04, '07; Sentra '10; Titan '08, '12; Versa Hatchback '10; Xterra '05-'07, '12  
**Pontiac** G6 Coupe & Convertible '07; G6 Sedan '06-'08; Grand Prix '04, '07; Montana SV6 '05-'06; Solstice '08; Torrent '06-'08  
**Porsche** 911 '07, '13; Cayenne '11  
**Saab** 9-3 '04; 9-5 '04  
**Saturn** Aura '07-'08; Outlook '07-'09; Relay '05-'07; Sky '08; Vue '08  
**Scion** FR-S '13  
**Smart** ForTwo '09  
**Subaru** BRZ '13; Forester (turbo) '05; Impreza WRX/STi '08, '11, '13; Legacy (4-cyl.) '04, '06-'08; Legacy (turbo) '05, '08; Outback (4-cyl.) '04-'07; Outback (6-cyl.) '05, '07; Outback (turbo) '05, '08  
**Tesla** Model S '13  
**Toyota** Prius Plug-in Hybrid '13  
**Volkswagen** Beetle '12-'13; New Beetle '04-'07, '09-'10; CC '10, '12-'13; Eos '07-'09; Golf TDI '10; GTI '10-'13; Jetta Sedan (4-cyl., 5-cyl.) '05; Passat (4-cyl.) '04-'07, '09; Passat (V6) '04; Passat TDI '05, '13; Tiguan '09-'10; Touareg '04, '11-'12  
**Volvo** C70 '11-'12; S40 '05; V50 '05; XC90 '04-'05

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# Reliability

## Beware of common problems with top-selling models

**I F YOU ARE LOOKING** for a used car, you're in good company. More than 40 million Americans are expected to buy used cars this year—more than twice as many as will purchase new cars. Shoppers are seeking to get the most for their money and avoid rapid initial depreciation that comes with a new car. But by purchasing used, you take greater risks. And as our data shows, even top-selling models can have their share of problems.

Each year, CONSUMER REPORTS tracks reliability problems by surveying its subscribers. Data from our latest Annual Auto Survey come from experiences with 1.1 million vehicles, giving us deep insights into what goes wrong. What we found is that even reliable cars can have troubles, and some cars should be avoided altogether.

In this issue we're presenting our reliability data a little differently from years past. Although the survey gathers information on 17 potential trouble spots, from brakes to transmissions, we've boiled them all down to a single verdict for each model year. At a glance, you can tell how a model measures up among 360 models (including their variants) you might be considering and see how reliability has changed with age.

For the first time we've extended the timeline for those verdicts from six years, as presented in last April's issue, to 12 years, spanning 2002 through 2013 models. Subscribers to ConsumerReports.org can view the 17 individual trouble spots for each model for each of its latest 10 model years. All visitors can learn more about car reliability.

To highlight the kinds of problems captured in the latest survey, we've singled out top-selling models to draw attention to their detailed problems. The problems noted in these summaries are those that occurred at a higher rate compared with other vehicles of the same age.



**CHEVROLET EQUINOX** Be wary of 2005 to 2010 models.

### ▣ Chevrolet Equinox

This widely sold domestic SUV has been fraught with reliability concerns. The V6 Equinox has been around longer and had many more problems than the four-cylinder version that was introduced for 2010. Owners of 2005 through 2008 V6s cite many problems with check-engine lights, brake wear, rotors, and other parts; and suspension problems such as with struts, shocks, and wheel bearings on 2005 and 2006 versions. V6 models from 2005 are prone to A/C compressor and refrigerant leakage, and 2006 models have heating-system problems. Some head-gasket problems are common on 2005 and 2006 models. The V6s also develop many squeaks and rattles from 2005 through 2009, power window or lock problems on 2008, and some electrical (mostly battery and spark-plug) woes on 2007 and 2008 models. The 2010 four-cylinder has far-worse-than-average frequency of engine problems, particularly with the timing chain. For those who didn't replace the chain in time, an engine rebuild has been necessary. That is troublesome for a model that's relatively new.

### ▣ Chevrolet Malibu

The four-cylinder and V6 sedans have far-higher-than-average problem rates in several areas. Models from 2005 through 2008 have various fuel-system problems such as check-engine light and fuel-gauge trouble. The two oldest model years have problems with power windows, and 2004 through 2009

models have locks and latches problems, with 2008 being the worst year. A high incidence of brake and suspension problems crop up among 2004s through 2010s, with 2007 being the worst for brakes and 2006 the worst for suspension. Squeaks and rattles are especially prevalent in most years before 2009. The 2002 and 2003 versions have frequent A/C and cooling-system problems. Keyless entry is conking out especially in 2004 to 2008 models.

### ▣ Chevrolet Silverado 1500 and GMC Sierra 1500

Relative to other vehicles, the Silverado and Sierra twins tend to vacillate from average to below-average overall reliability from year to year. Common problems include misbehaving dash gauges, water pumps, and



**DODGE GRAND CARAVAN**  
This minivan has more problems than most vehicles of any kind.



**FORD F-150** These pickups tend to age gracefully.

4WD systems from 2003 to 2005. The owners of 2007 and earlier V8s have frequently reported on wheel-bearing and steering-linkage problems. Audio (such as CD player and speakers) problems were mentioned on older models. Power windows and tailgates were problems on the oldest years, locks go out on some 2008 and 2009 models, and the climate system's fan motor acts up in various 2006 and earlier models.

### ▶ Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country

The Grand Caravan and its twin, the Town & Country, have worse-than-average problems—small and large—almost every year. Troublesome power windows, locks, latches, liftgate, and sliding doors are predominant. Check-engine lights come on frequently on 2010 and all earlier models. The 2004 model is also affected by stalling or hesitation and sensor problems. Brake problems span all years up to 2011. A/C, body rust, power steering, shocks, and tie-rod problems emerge on 2006 and all earlier models. Squeaks, rattles, and wind noise are prominent in almost all years.

### ▶ Ford Escape

Despite its complexity, the Escape Hybrid has proved more reliable than the regular four-cylinder and V6 models. Yet hybrid-related components are a concern in 2005 to 2008 models. Owners of the redesigned 2013 Escape had lots of grievances with the MyFord Touch infotainment system. Gripes on 2009 and earlier Escapes included squeaks and rattles, body rust, oil leaks, and brake-system problems. The 2002, 2006, and 2007 V6 models had somewhat elevated transmission replacements.

### ▶ Ford F-150

Overall, the Ford pickups aged quite well, with mostly average or better reliability, when compared with other vehicles. The 2002 to 2008 V8 and 2002 to 2007 V6 models are prone to brake problems. Trouble with the 4WD system haunt 2003 to 2006 models. Rust plagues some 2005 and older trucks, and power windows falter on many 2008 and

## What goes wrong as cars age

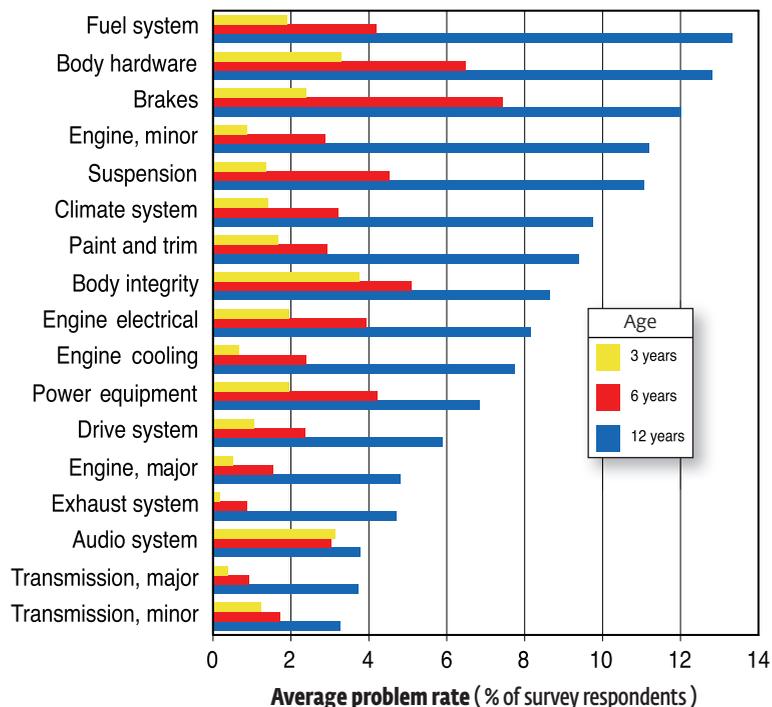
Even the best cars develop problems as they rack up the miles. Parts wear, break down, and ultimately need replacement, following the natural order for cars. But components wear at different rates, as highlighted in the chart below.

Drilling deeper into the massive amount of information collected in our Annual Auto Survey reveals trends among the 17 potential

trouble areas. Breaking the data out into average problem rates at 3, 6, and 12 years, we can see the prevalence of some problems and how they increase over time.

Most categories cover multiple subsystems. For example, "Fuel system," the most frequently cited problem in older cars, includes check-engine lights, oxygen sensors, fuel-injection system, and other items.

### Trouble spots



## Honda Civic Hybrid battery reliability gets worse

Most hybrid gas/electric cars have proved reliable, with a notable exception: the Honda Civic Hybrid. Last year we blasted the 2009 Civic Hybrid after almost one in five owners told us the hybrid battery had needed replacement. In this year's survey, the results were much worse.

The failure rate of the 2009 Civic Hybrids' batteries has risen to 30 percent, and the 2010s' failure rate jumped from 12 to 32 percent, the worst among any model year. For 2009s and 2010s, that's almost one in three owners experiencing a failure—an astonishing replacement rate for any part on any car. The equivalent for the Toyota Prius? A fraction of 1 percent.

Most of those Civic Hybrid batteries were probably replaced under warranty, which in most states runs for eight years and 80,000 miles. Out-of-warranty Civic Hybrid batteries



cost about \$3,000, plus installation. But regardless of whether someone is dinged for the replacement cost, any car with a trouble rate that high, especially on a major component, is one to avoid.

For the first time we're getting a sense of the lifespan of a Prius hybrid battery. Our latest survey sees 12- and 11-year-old Prius batteries (2002s and 2003s) with a replacement rate of 5 and 4 percent, respectively. Overall, the Toyota Prius remains among the most reliable of all cars.

earlier models. Older trucks have problems with door seals or weather stripping.

### ▶ Ford Focus

In its early years the Focus developed many problems. Reliability improved with subsequent model years—until the recent 2012 redesign. The 2002s to 2004s have numerous cooling-system problems. Some transmission and engine-failure problems were reported on 2002s. Power windows and locks are troublesome in 2002 models as well. The air conditioning is failing in 2002 and 2003 models, and shocks or struts too frequently need work on 2002, 2003, and 2007 models. Paint or rust problems are emerging among 2002 to 2007 models. The 2012s and 2013s have notable transmission problems, such as slipping and rough shifting, and a lot of infotainment-system woes.

### ▶ Ford Fusion

The first-generation Fusion has been one of Ford's most reliable cars, but problems have appeared over time. Hybrid models from 2011 and 2013 have experienced some infotainment-system problems—more so than the nonhybrids. Regular Fusions from 2006 to 2008 had spotty CD-player problems. Battery problems occur in 2010 V6s. The 2007 four-cylinders are having paint and rust concerns, and some 2007 and 2008 all-wheel drives are having driveshaft or axle trouble. Brake-system problems appear on 2010 and earlier models, especially those with all-wheel drive, including abnormal brake wear and rotor problems. The 2006 and 2007 models have power-lock problems. The redesigned 2013 models have been affected by MyFord Touch problems.

### ▶ Honda Accord

The Accord has few problems overall, but the V6 version's transmission-replacement concerns on 2004 and earlier models remain. Timing belts are a problem in 2006 and earlier



**HYUNDAI SONATA** The 2005 to 2009 sedans look better than most.

V6s. Brake problems are especially high in 2008s and 2009s. Owners complain about radio problems in 2013 models and CD-player trouble in 2003 and 2004 versions. Owners of 2005 Hybrid models complain of hybrid-battery-related problems. Accord coupes fare worse than the sedans across all years.

### ▶ Honda CR-V

The CR-V has been one of the most dependable SUVs, but even the most reliable vehicles can experience problems as they age. For example, power locks can malfunction in 2002 to 2005 CR-Vs. By age 10 the oxygen sensors are troublesome, and by age 11 the keyless entry and the shocks, struts, and brakes might need attention.

### ▶ Honda Odyssey

Despite Honda's quality reputation, the Odyssey is not always trouble-free. Wind noise is routine on 2010 and earlier models. The 2008 and earlier versions might develop power-steering and sliding-door problems. The 2006 and earlier ones might need timing-belt and engine-mount replacement. The 2004 and 2005 have some CD- or DVD-player problems. The A/C compressor might give out in 2005 and 2007 models. The 2002 to 2004 models have had transmission-replacement problems and continue to be troublesome.

### ▶ Hyundai Elantra

For most model years, the Elantra is a good choice. From about age 7, an oxygen sensor can give trouble. Power windows are problematic in 2009 models. Beginning around age 8 (2006) the brakes, cooling system, and paint might develop problems. The 2010 Touring wagon suffers from squeaks and rattles, and brake and wheel-alignment problems. The 2011's transmission might shift roughly. The 2013 GT Hatchback can have communications-system problems.

### ▶ Hyundai Sonata

Except for the Hybrid and turbo model, Sonatas have been fairly reliable overall. Power windows and locks can cause problems on 2006 and 2007 models. Brake wear is a common complaint for 2010 and older models. A/C, paint, and rust problems appear in 2005 and older V6 Sonatas. Hybrid battery systems are giving some problems on 2011s, and communications-system problems have arisen in 2012 models.

### ▶ Mazda3

The compact and sporty Mazda3 has been reliable overall, but some lingering concerns remain. The brakes are troublesome in the 2006. Check-engine lights often activate on the 2004 model. Squeaks and rattles and shock or strut problems are worse than average in 2004 to 2008 models. The 2004 to 2007 Mazda3 is more prone to rust than competitors. The A/C compressor and engine mounts are bringing higher-than-average complaints in the 2004 to 2007 models.

### ▶ Nissan Altima

The Altima has been a good sedan with decent reliability in most years, but it does receive notable complaints. For instance, brake and battery problems are common for all model years from 2010 and earlier. Oil leaks can occur over time in V6 Altimas. The oldest models also have pronounced A/C compressor problems and refrigerant leakage. Quite a few 2002 to 2005 four-cylinders have needed a new catalytic converter. The 2002 model needs an engine rebuild and has head-gasket problems. The 2009 and earlier models might have shock or strut trouble.



**HONDA ODYSSEY** With mostly average reliability, this is not one of Honda's best efforts.

## ▣ Nissan Rogue

The Rogue has had somewhat elevated squeaks and rattles since its first year, 2008. The 2008 has some brake problems and check-engine-light reports. The 2009 has slight problems with the power locks.

## ▣ Toyota Camry

Generally considered a reliability champ, even the Camry has problems at times. For example, the 2008 and some earlier models might need work on shocks or struts. The 2007 to 2012 V6 is prone to squeaks and rattles. The 2002 has oil leaks, plus starter and catalytic-converter problems. Water pumps can fizzle early in four-cylinder 2008 and earlier models.

## ▣ Toyota RAV4

The 2002 and 2003 RAV4s have some transmission-replacement problems and some glitches with the power locks. Faulty water pumps and squeaks and rattles are commonplace in 2006 to 2008 models. The steering linkage is a sore spot on some 2006 and 2007 models.

## ▣ Volkswagen Jetta

The Jetta has an enthusiastic fan base, but this compact can be frustrating to own. Overactive check-engine lights crop up in most models and years from 2002 to 2011. The four- and five-cylinder versions might need a new catalytic converter (2002 and 2006); CV joints (2006); transmission (2005 and 2007); and power locks (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009). The 2002 and 2007 have paint and A/C problems. The TDI diesel's problems include timing belt, clutch, and power locks (2002 and 2006); water pump, paint, and rust (2002); squeaks and rattles (2002, 2011, and 2012); A/C compressor (2002 and 2006); and power locks (2002, 2006, and 2009).

# What you can expect from luxury models

It can be tempting to buy a used luxury vehicle for the same money as a new mainstream model. Given that new cars tend to lose more than 40 percent of their value in the first three years, you can save significantly by buying a used luxury car, putting a fancy model in reach that you'd never consider buying new.

But the complex systems designed to entertain, pamper, and protect mean more stuff can go wrong. New-car buyers benefit from the longer warranty protection commonly offered by premium brands, but once that warranty expires, the repairs are on you. And they won't be cheap.

The problems cited below were reported at higher-than-average rates.

## SEDANS

### Audi A4

Problems get numerous around age 5 (2009). Common maladies involve power windows and locks, water pump, coolant leaks, premature brake wear, oil leaks, and timing belts. About 4 percent of 2009s have needed an engine rebuild. A/C compressors and power-steering units are failing in 2002s and 2003s.

### BMW 3 Series

Although it's wonderful to drive, the 3 Series can cause a lot of costly heartache. Fuel pumps remain a problem, especially in the 2007 to 2009 335i, despite a recall. Oil leaks are common in 2008 and older versions. Power windows are problematic for 2007 and earlier. Most versions from 2002 through 2008 have worse-than-average rates of water-pump failures. Emission-control complaints dog the 2011 335d diesel.

### BMW 5 Series

The 2007 and 2008 six-cylinder 5 Series cars require battery replacements at an especially high rate. The 2009s and older are having lots of brake problems, oil leaks, and suspension trouble. Cooling-system faults and squeaks and rattles are common in 2007 and older models. The 2005s need head gaskets, and the 2004s experience A/C compressor troubles.

### Infiniti G

The most common complaint is premature brake wear (2003 through 2011). The 2004 through 2006 models have started developing problems with squeaks and rattles, the exhaust system, and the CD player.

### Lexus LS

Not much out of the ordinary goes wrong with the Lexus LS. Pulsing or squeaky brakes are a problem in 2007 to 2010 models. Wind



noise is a complaint for 2007s, and the 2002s and 2003s have audio problems, mostly with the speakers.

### Mercedes-Benz C-Class

The C suffers from somewhat elevated audio problems all the way along, especially model years 2003 through 2005. Suspension woes occur at a higher-than-average rate in 2005s and 2011s. Climate-system and engine problems, including oil leaks and engine mounts, are particularly frequent for the 2002 models.

### Mercedes-Benz E-Class

Audio problems are common, especially in the 2006 to 2009 models. Battery problems occurred relatively frequently, especially in the 2006s and 2010s. The 2005 V6 rear-drive cars have had notable cooling-system problems. The 2006 and 2009 V6 needs a major engine overhaul at above-average rates. The 2006 V6 also has a high rate of fuel leaks, as does the 2004 V8. In addition, the 2004 V8 has ball-joint and other suspension problems.

## SUVs

### Acura MDX

The MDX is dependable until age 7 or 8, when owners report power-steering-system problems. At age 10, body rust starts showing up. Many 2002 and 2003 models have transmissions that need replacement. MDXs from 2007 and earlier often have some GPS or communications-system woes.

### Lexus RX

Despite complex audio electronic systems, problems are notable only in 2004 models, mostly with the CD player. The 2005 to 2007 RXs are developing slight steering-linkage problems. For 2007, the RX Hybrid exhibits some water-pump problems.

### Mercedes-Benz ML-Class

Owners of 2006s through 2011s report a lot of squeaks and rattles. The 2006s have CV-joint and audio problems. Among 2006 through 2008 models, some common problems are check-engine lights, power windows, and the paint and trim.



**VOLKSWAGEN JETTA** Many problems have been reported in older models, although reliability is average most years.

# Reliability Ratings on hundreds of new and used cars

**WHEN YOU'RE** shopping for a new or used car, it's impossible to know for sure how well it will hold up. But past performance can be an important indicator. There are no guarantees, but choosing a car with a history of outstanding reliability at least puts the odds on your side.

The reliability Ratings on these pages are gleaned from the experiences of own-

ers of 1.1 million cars spanning 12 model years, from 2002 through 2013.

For each model and model year we give two types of scores: a used-car verdict, essentially an assessment of how reliable that car was relative to others of the same age, and a new-car prediction, which is our projection of how well the current version will hold up in the future.

Our Annual Auto Survey respondents report on problems they've experienced with

their own cars in the preceding 12 months. They chose from a list of 17 trouble areas, noting only problems they considered serious, due to cost, failure, safety, or down time. We then calculated a score to turn those individual problem-area tallies into a single overall assessment, the verdict.

More miles on the road result in more chances for trouble to develop, so we also standardized the data to minimize differences due to mileage.

## Ratings Car reliability

Make & model	Used-car verdicts												New-car prediction	
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
Acura ILX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●
Acura MDX	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Acura RDX	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Acura RL, RLX	●	*	●	●	●	●	●	*	*	*	*	*	-	●
Acura RSX	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Acura TL	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Acura TSX (4-cyl.)	-	-	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	○	●
Audi A4 (4-cyl.)	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Audi A5/S5	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*	●	○	○	○	○	○
Audi Allroad	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●
Audi A6 (V6)	*	*	●	○	○	○	○	*	●	○	○	○	○	○
Audi A7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○
Audi Q5 (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○
Audi Q5 (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Audi Q7	-	-	-	-	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	●	●
BMW 1 Series	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	*	○
BMW 325Ci, 328Ci Coupe & Conv.	○	*	○	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*	New
BMW 330Ci, 335Ci Coupe & Conv.	○	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*	New
BMW 325i, 328i Sedan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BMW 330i, 335i Sedan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BMW 5 Series (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW 5 Series (6-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BMW 535i (AWD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW 535i (RWD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW 7 Series	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW X1 (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW X3 (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW X3 (6-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW X3 (6-cyl., turbo)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW X5 (6-cyl.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
BMW X5 (diesel)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BMW Z3, Z4	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Buick Enclave	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buick Encore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buick LaCrosse (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buick LaCrosse (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buick LeSabre	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Make & model	Used-car verdicts												New-car prediction	
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
Buick Lucerne	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-
Buick Park Avenue	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buick Regal	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buick Rendezvous	○	○	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buick Verano	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cadillac ATS (2.0T)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cadillac ATS (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cadillac CTS (AWD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cadillac CTS (RWD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cadillac DeVille, DTS	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cadillac Escalade	*	*	○	○	*	○	○	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cadillac SRX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cadillac STS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cadillac XTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Avalanche	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Camaro (V6)	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Camaro (V8)	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Cobalt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Colorado	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Corvette	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Cruze (1.8)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Cruze (1.4T)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Equinox (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Equinox (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet HHR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Impala	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Malibu Sedan (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Malibu Sedan (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Silverado 1500 (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Silverado 1500 (V8, 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Silverado 1500 (V8, 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Silverado 2500 & 3500 (gas)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Silverado 2500 & 3500 (diesel)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chevrolet Sonic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chevrolet Suburban	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

## Guide to the charts

**What the scores mean.** Scores are presented on a five-point scale, from much better than average to much worse than average. A ● doesn't necessarily mean that a car is problem-free but that it had few problems reported relative to other models. Similarly, models that score a ● are not necessarily unreliable, but they have a much higher problem rate than the average model. Because older cars can be expected to have many more problems than almost new ones, a trouble rate good enough to earn ● for a 10-year-old car would be likely to garner a ● or ● for a 2-year-old. An asterisk (\*) means we had insufficient data. A dash (–) means the model wasn't made that year.

means the model wasn't made that year.

**Used-car verdicts.** The used-car verdicts show, year by year, whether a model had more or fewer problems overall than the average model of the same vintage had. Those scores are calculated from the total number of problems reported from the 17 trouble areas in the survey. Because problems with major engine and transmission components, engine cooling, and drive systems can be more serious and more expensive to repair, our calculations give extra weight to them.

**New-car prediction.** To arrive at the prediction we average the used-car verdicts for the most recent three years, provided the vehicle didn't change significantly in that time and was not redesigned for 2014 or 2015.

We might rely on only one or two years' data if the model was redesigned in 2013 or 2012, or if we lacked data for some years. Occasionally, we might predict a new or redesigned model if the automaker has an outstanding track record.

Detailed, model-specific reliability data can be found on the car model pages online, available to ConsumerReports.org subscribers.



Make & model	Used-car verdicts													New-car prediction
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
Chevrolet Tahoe	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	New	
Chevrolet TrailBlazer	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Chevrolet Traverse	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Chevrolet Volt	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	○	
Chrysler 300 (V6)	–	–	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Chrysler 300 (V8)	–	–	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Chrysler Pacifica	–	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Chrysler PT Cruiser (nonturbo)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Chrysler PT Cruiser (turbo)	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Chrysler Sebring/200 Sedan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	New	
Chrysler Town & Country	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Dodge Challenger	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Dodge Charger	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Dodge Dakota	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Dodge Dart (2.0L)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Dodge Dart (1.4T)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Dodge Durango (V6)	–	–	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	New	
Dodge Durango (V8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	New	
Dodge Grand Caravan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Dodge Journey	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Dodge Ram 1500 (V8, 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Dodge Ram 1500 (V8, 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Dodge Ram 2500 & 3500 (diesel)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Fiat 500	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford C-Max	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	
Ford Crown Victoria	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Edge (2.0L EcoBoost)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford Edge (V6)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford Escape (1.6L, 2.0L EcoBoost)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford Escape (2.3L, 2.5L)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Escape (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Escape Hybrid	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Expedition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Explorer (V6, 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Explorer (V6, 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	

Make & model	Used-car verdicts													New-car prediction
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
Ford Explorer (3.5L EcoBoost)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford Explorer (V8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Explorer Sport Trac	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford F-150 (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford F-150 (3.5L EcoBoost)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford F-150 (V8, 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford F-150 (V8, 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford F-250 & F-350 (gas)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford F-250 & F-350 (diesel)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Fiesta	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford Five Hundred	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Flex	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford Flex (3.5L EcoBoost)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	○	○	
Ford Focus Hatchback, Coupe	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Focus ST	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Focus Sedan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Freestar	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Freestyle, Taurus X	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Fusion Hybrid	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Fusion (1.6L EcoBoost)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Fusion (2.0L EcoBoost, FWD)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Fusion (2.3L, 2.5L)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Fusion (V6, AWD)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Fusion (V6, FWD)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
Ford Mustang (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Mustang (V8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Ranger	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Taurus Sedan (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Ford Taurus Sedan (turbo)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
GMC Acadia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
GMC Canyon	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	
GMC Envoy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
GMC Sierra 1500 (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
GMC Sierra 1500 (V8, 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
GMC Sierra 1500 (V8, 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
GMC Sierra 2500 & 3500	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	

# Ratings Car reliability

Make & model	Used-car verdicts													New-car prediction
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
GMC Sierra 2500 & 3500 (diesel)	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*	⊖	○	⊖	New	
GMC Terrain (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	○	○	○	
GMC Terrain (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	⊖	○	○	
GMC Yukon	⊖	○	○	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	New	
GMC Yukon XL	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	New	
Honda Accord Sedan (4-cyl.)	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	
Honda Accord Sedan (V6)	⊖	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	
Honda Accord Coupe (4-cyl.)	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	●	●	
Honda Accord Coupe (V6)	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	○	●	●	
Honda Civic Hatchback & Coupe	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	*	⊖	
Honda Civic Hybrid	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	⊖	*	⊖	*	⊖	
Honda Civic Sedan	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Honda Civic Si	○	*	*	*	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	*	*	○	*	○	
Honda Crosstour, Accord Crosstour	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	
Honda CR-V	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Honda Element	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	-	-	-	
Honda Fit	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Honda Insight	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	*	*	⊖	
Honda Odyssey	⊖	○	⊖	○	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	⊖	○	
Honda Pilot	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Honda Ridgeline	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Honda S2000	*	*	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	
Hyundai Accent	*	*	*	*	*	○	○	⊖	⊖	*	○	⊖	⊖	
Hyundai Azera	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	○	○	*	○	○	⊖	○	
Hyundai Elantra Sedan	⊖	○	○	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	○	
Hyundai Elantra GT Hatchback	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	
Hyundai Elantra Touring	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	●	○	⊖	-	-	
Hyundai Equus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	○	*	○	○	
Hyundai Genesis Sedan (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	⊖	⊖	New	
Hyundai Genesis Sedan (V8)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	⊖	○	⊖	*	New	
Hyundai Genesis Coupe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	*	*	●	●	●	
Hyundai Santa Fe (4-cyl.)	*	*	○	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	⊖	○	○	
Hyundai Santa Fe (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Hyundai Sonata Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	⊖	*	○	
Hyundai Sonata (4-cyl.)	*	*	⊖	*	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	○	○	
Hyundai Sonata (turbo)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	⊖	⊖	
Hyundai Sonata (V6)	○	○	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	-	-	-	-	-	
Hyundai Tucson	-	-	-	○	⊖	⊖	○	*	○	○	○	⊖	○	
Hyundai Veloster (nonturbo)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Hyundai Veracruz	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	*	○	○	○	-	-	
Infiniti EX	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	*	○	⊖	*	*	⊖	
Infiniti FX (V6)	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	*	○	○	
Infiniti G Sedan (AWD)	-	-	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Infiniti G Sedan (RWD)	-	○	⊖	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Infiniti G Coupe	-	○	○	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	
Infiniti JX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	
Infiniti M (V6)	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Infiniti QX56	-	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	⊖	○	*	⊖	
Jeep Compass	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	*	*	*	○	⊖	*	⊖	
Jeep Grand Cherokee (V6)	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	*	*	○	○	○	●	
Jeep Grand Cherokee (V8)	●	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	*	*	○	○	○	New	
Jeep Liberty	○	○	○	○	⊖	●	⊖	*	○	○	○	-	-	
Jeep Patriot	-	-	-	-	-	*	●	*	⊖	⊖	○	*	⊖	
Jeep Wrangler (2-door)	○	⊖	○	○	○	*	●	○	⊖	⊖	○	○	○	

Make & model	Used-car verdicts													New-car prediction
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
Jeep Wrangler (4-door)	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	●	●	●	○	○	⊖	○	
Kia Forte	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	⊖	⊖	New
Kia Optima Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	○	*	○	
Kia Optima (4-cyl.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	○	○	*	○	○	⊖	○	
Kia Optima (turbo)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Kia Rio	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	○	○	
Kia Rondo	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	○	-	-	-	-	
Kia Sedona	*	*	●	●	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	●	○	●	-	⊖	
Kia Sorento (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	○	○	New	
Kia Sorento (V6)	-	*	*	○	*	*	⊖	*	-	⊖	●	●	○	
Kia Soul	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	○	New	
Kia Sportage	*	-	-	*	○	⊖	⊖	○	*	○	⊖	○	○	
Lexus CT 200h	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lexus ES 300h Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	
Lexus ES (V6)	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lexus GS	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	○	⊖	-	⊖	⊖	
Lexus GX	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lexus IS Sedan	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lexus LS	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lexus RX Hybrid	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lexus RX	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lexus SC	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	
Lincoln MKS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	⊖	○	⊖	⊖	
Lincoln MKT (EcoBoost)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	
Lincoln MKX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Lincoln MKZ Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	*	*	
Lincoln MKZ, Zephyr (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Lincoln Town Car	⊖	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	*	-	-	
Mazda B-Series	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	-	-	-	-	
Mazda CX-5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	
Mazda CX-7	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	*	*	○	⊖	*	-	
Mazda CX-9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Mazda MX-5 Miata	⊖	⊖	⊖	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	○	
Mazda Tribute (4-cyl.)	*	*	*	⊖	○	-	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	
Mazda Tribute (V6)	○	○	○	⊖	○	-	○	●	⊖	○	-	-	-	
Mazda2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	*	*	
Mazda3 (Skyactiv 2.0-liter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	
Mazda3	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	
Mazda5	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	-	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Mazda6	-	○	○	○	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	*	⊖	
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (4-cyl.)	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	○	○	
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (V6)	⊖	○	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	○	○	
Mercedes-Benz CLK	*	*	*	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	-	-	-	-	-	
Mercedes-Benz E-Class (V6, AWD)	*	*	*	*	○	○	⊖	⊖	○	⊖	○	⊖	○	
Mercedes-Benz E-Class (V6, RWD)	*	○	*	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	⊖	⊖	
Mercedes-Benz GL-Class	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	●	*	●	⊖	●	○	
Mercedes-Benz GLK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	⊖	⊖	⊖	
Mercedes-Benz M-Class (V6)	*	*	*	*	*	●	●	●	*	⊖	⊖	⊖	○	
Mercedes-Benz S-Class	*	*	*	*	*	⊖	○	*	⊖	*	*	*	New	
Mercury Grand Marquis	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	
Mercury Mariner Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	⊖	⊖	*	-	
Mercury Mariner (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-	-	
Mercury Mariner (V6)	-	-	-	⊖	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-	-	
Mercury Milan (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	○	○	⊖	⊖	○	○	-	-	-	

● ● ● ● ●

Better ← → Worse

Make & model	Used-car verdicts													New-car prediction
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
Mercury Milan (V6, AWD)	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	*	●	○	-	-	-	
Mercury Milan (V6, FWD)	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	○	○	-	-	-	
Mercury Mountaineer (V6, 4WD)	●	○	●	●	●	○	*	○	-	-	-	-	-	
Mercury Mountaineer (V8)	○	●	●	○	○	●	●	*	○	-	-	-	-	
Mini Cooper	*	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	New	
Mini Cooper S	*	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	New	
Mini Countryman	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	
Mitsubishi Outlander	-	*	*	*	*	●	●	*	●	●	●	*	●	
Mitsubishi Outlander Sport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	*	*	●	
Nissan 350Z, 370Z	-	●	●	○	●	-	-	-	●	*	*	*	*	
Nissan Altima Sedan (4-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	
Nissan Altima Sedan (V6)	○	○	-	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	●	●	
Nissan Altima Coupe	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	○	○	●	●	*	-	
Nissan Cube	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	*	*	*	-	
Nissan Frontier	○	●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	●	●	○	●	
Nissan Juke	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	●	*	*	○	
Nissan Leaf	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	●	
Nissan Maxima	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	
Nissan Murano	-	●	○	●	●	○	-	○	○	●	●	●	●	
Nissan Pathfinder	○	○	●	●	●	○	*	*	○	○	●	●	●	
Nissan Quest	*	-	●	*	*	●	*	*	-	*	●	*	●	
Nissan Rogue	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	
Nissan Sentra	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Nissan Titan	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	*	○	*	●	*	●	
Nissan Versa Hatchback	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	-	New	
Nissan Versa Sedan	-	-	-	-	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	○	
Nissan Xterra	●	*	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Pontiac Grand Prix	○	*	●	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Pontiac Vibe	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	
Porsche 911	*	*	*	*	○	●	*	●	*	*	*	○	○	
Porsche Boxster	○	*	*	*	○	*	*	*	*	*	*	○	○	
Porsche Cayenne	-	*	*	*	○	-	*	*	*	●	○	○	○	
Saab 9-3	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	*	*	*	-	-	-	
Saab 9-5	○	○	●	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	
Saturn Ion	-	○	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Saturn Outlook	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	
Saturn Relay	-	-	-	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Saturn Vue	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	
Scion FR-S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	
Scion tC	-	-	-	●	●	○	○	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Scion xB	-	-	●	●	●	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Scion xD	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Subaru B9 Tribeca, Tribeca	-	-	-	-	●	○	○	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Subaru BRZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	
Subaru Forester (nonturbo)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Subaru Forester (turbo)	-	-	○	○	*	*	*	○	○	○	○	○	New	
Subaru Impreza Sedan	*	*	*	*	*	*	○	*	○	○	○	○	○	
Subaru Impreza Wagon & Hatchback	○	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Subaru Impreza WRX/STi	○	*	○	*	*	*	●	*	*	○	○	○	New	
Subaru Legacy (4-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Subaru Legacy (turbo)	-	-	-	●	○	*	○	*	*	*	*	-	-	
Subaru Legacy (6-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*	○	○	○	*	○	
Subaru Outback (4-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Subaru Outback (turbo)	-	-	-	●	○	*	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Subaru Outback (6-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*	○	○	○	○	○	

Make & model	Used-car verdicts													New-car prediction
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13		
Subaru XV Crosstrek	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	
Tesla Model S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	
Toyota 4Runner (V6)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota 4Runner (V8)	-	●	●	●	●	●	○	*	-	-	-	-	-	
Toyota Avalon Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	
Toyota Avalon (V6)	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Camry Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Camry (4-cyl.)	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Camry (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Camry Solara	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Toyota Corolla	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota FJ Cruiser	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	*	*	*	○	*	○	
Toyota Highlander Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Highlander (4-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Highlander (V6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Matrix	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*	*	*	-	
Toyota Prius	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Prius C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	
Toyota Prius Plug-in Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	
Toyota Prius V	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	
Toyota RAV4 (4-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota RAV4 (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Toyota Sequoia	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Sienna (AWD)	-	-	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Sienna (FWD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Tacoma (4-cyl., 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Tacoma (4-cyl., 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Tacoma (V6, 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Tacoma (V6, 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Tundra (V8, 4WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Tundra (V8, 2WD)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Toyota Venza (4-cyl.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Toyota Venza (V6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Toyota Yaris Hatchback	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen Beetle, New Beetle	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Volkswagen CC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen Eos	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen Golf, Rabbit	*	*	*	*	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Volkswagen Golf TDI	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen GTI	*	*	*	*	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Volkswagen Jetta Sedan (4-cyl., 5-cyl.)	○	*	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Volkswagen Jetta Sedan TDI	○	*	○	*	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen Jetta Wagon TDI	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen Passat (4-cyl., 5-cyl.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Volkswagen Passat TDI	-	-	*	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen Tiguan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volkswagen Touareg	-	-	○	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Volvo C70	*	*	*	-	*	*	○	*	*	○	○	○	○	
Volvo S40/V40, V50	*	*	○	○	○	○	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	
Volvo S60	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Volvo S80	*	*	○	○	-	○	○	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Volvo XC60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Volvo XC70 (Cross Country)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Volvo XC90	-	*	○	○	○	○	○	*	*	*	*	*	*	

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81	7.0
90	9.0

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83/80	6.0

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# Auto ads-travaganza

Dear Shmuel,  
 I'm writing to let you know about a great opportunity. As you know, the **CURRENT VEHICLE** is an amazing vehicle. More and more people are discovering that, and it's becoming one of our most popular pre-owned models. In fact, we're having a hard time keeping it in stock



## An empty lot

"A perk for the deceased," writes the reader who snapped this shot.

## Catchy name!

The letter goes on to suggest that the recipient sell CURRENT VEHICLE to the dealer and, presumably, buy NEXTVEHICLE.



## Truth in advertising?

The pictured car is pale yellow, after all.



## Well, that's clear

Drivers must be paralyzed by this stack of signs in Braintree, Mass.

**HONDA 2012 ACCORD LX**  
 4 door, 4 cylinder, Automatic. Power windows, power door locks, Air-conditioning, CD/ Cur~~se~~ Control. Alloy wheels. Beautiful black Beauty with Tan Cloth Interior. Only 12,000 miles. Excellent condition. \$14,995.

## Now if there were only eye-roll control

Perfect for when a #^+\*\* driver cuts you off.



## Generals are out of luck

Wondering where that "5" leads? We'll spare you the eyestrain. The footnote says this: 0%. Not all buyers will qualify. Military admirals only ...



## Affordable indeed

As in you'll pay people to take them?

# Find out how much to pay for a new car with our expanded local pricing information

The **Consumer Reports New Car Price Report** shows you what others really paid, regional dealer marketing fees, and other information to help you get a great deal on a new car.

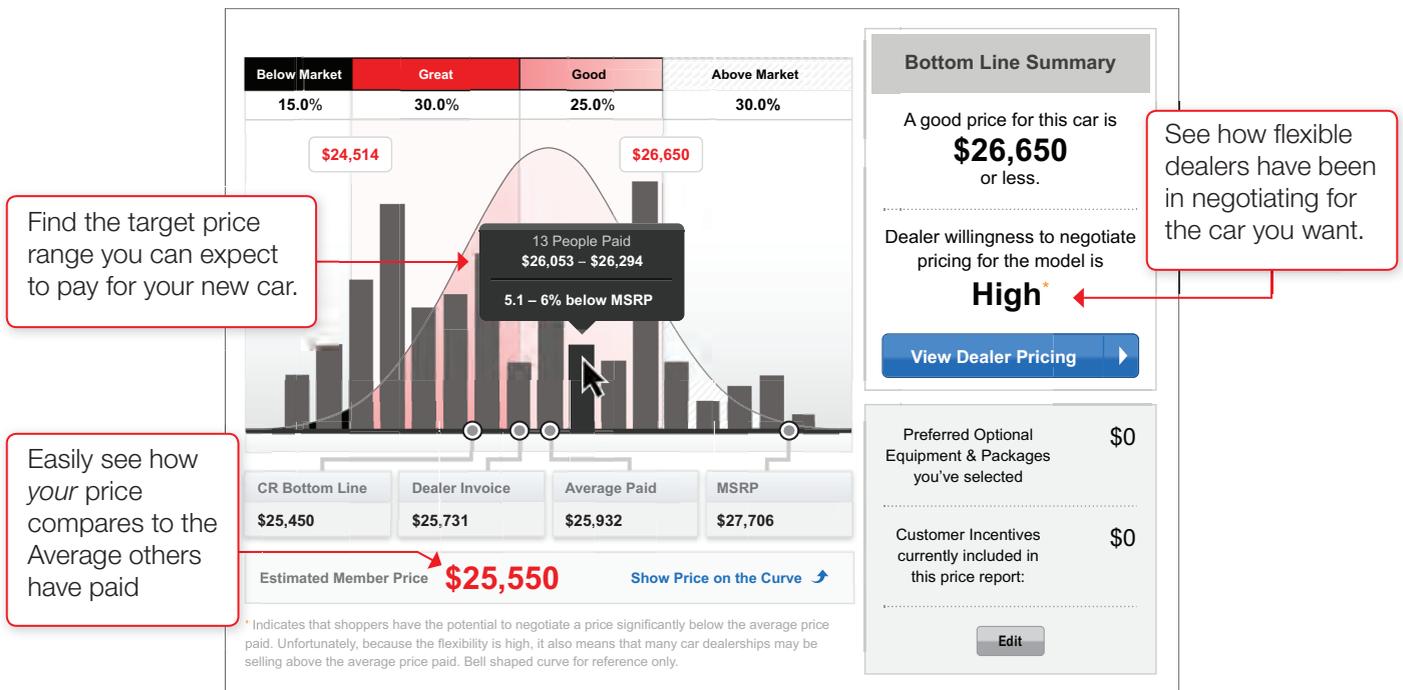
The enhanced Report now features an easy-to-read price curve that includes:

- Great, Good, and Above Market price ranges for your area
- The average price others paid for the same car
- The Build & Buy Service, providing a transparent car-buying experience through a network of pre-qualified dealers
- A rating of a dealer's willingness to negotiate on the model you've chosen



**Arm yourself with the New Car Price Report. Save Time. Save Money.**

**ConsumerReports<sup>®</sup>  
New Car Price Service**



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NCPS0414B

# Canada **Extra**

Information from CONSUMER REPORTS® for Canadian readers

## In this special section

The 2014 cars 50A

For more information 50D

## How to use the Canada Extra section

Every month, Canada Extra provides Canadian pricing and availability information about products tested for that issue. For the Annual Auto Issue of CONSUMER REPORTS, the section features prices for new cars in Canada. It also includes Canadian contact information for auto manufacturers.

## The 2014 cars

The prices below are for the models in this issue. They are the manufacturers' suggested retail prices in Canadian dollars.

For most models, the price range covers several trim lines (which differ mainly in their features) and body styles but doesn't include options or a destination charge.

Where only one price is listed, the vehicle is offered in only one version. "NA" indicates that the price was not announced in time to be included in this list.

For most vehicles, trim lines and specifications for the models sold in Canada closely resemble the U.S. information in the vehicle

profiles that begin on page 28 of this issue.

For some models, trim lines might be added or omitted for Canada, or the features offered for a trim line might differ somewhat from those for the U.S. version. For more information, contact the manufacturer.

Make & model	Range
Acura ILX	\$27,990 - \$35,190
Acura MDX	49,990 - 65,990
Acura RDX	41,190 - 44,190
Acura RLX	49,990 - 62,190
Acura TL	39,990 - 49,590
Acura TSX (2013)	34,050 - 36,550
Audi A3	31,100 - 47,700
Audi A4	37,811 - 59,400
Audi A5	44,100 - 89,900
Audi A6	53,600 - 85,500
Audi A7	70,400 - 115,000
Audi A8	90,700 - 131,400
Audi Allroad	46,500 - 52,700
Audi Q5	40,900 - 59,600
Audi Q7	58,200 - 69,000
Audi TT	49,500 - 63,600
BMW 2 Series	NA
BMW 3 Series	35,999 - 82,300
BMW 4 Series	44,900

Make & model	Range
BMW 5 Series	\$54,600 - \$101,500
BMW 6 Series	98,800 - 127,900
BMW 7 Series	107,000 - 140,600
BMW i3	NA
BMW X1	36,900 - 39,900
BMW X3	42,800 - 47,750
BMW X5	62,900 - 98,500
BMW X6	67,300 - 102,900
BMW Z4	54,300 - 77,900
Buick Enclave	41,795 - 54,045
Buick Encore	27,835 - 35,295
Buick LaCrosse	35,795 - 43,655
Buick Regal	33,095 - 42,925
Buick Verano	23,005 - 32,250
Cadillac ATS	35,195 - 50,980
Cadillac CTS	43,045 - 74,495
Cadillac ELR	78,250
Cadillac Escalade	86,145 - 113,375
Cadillac SRX	40,285 - 55,640

Make & model	Range
Cadillac XTS	\$48,940 - \$73,745
Chevrolet Camaro	28,495 - 65,050
Chevrolet Corvette (2015)	52,745 - 70,475
Chevrolet Cruze	15,995 - 26,745
Chevrolet Equinox	26,375 - 37,175
Chevrolet Impala	28,445 - 39,645
Chevrolet Malibu	24,995 - 34,175
Chevrolet Silverado 1500	26,290 - 50,370
Chevrolet Sonic	13,995 - 22,620
Chevrolet Spark	11,945 - 19,045
Chevrolet SS	not sold
Chevrolet Suburban (2015)	54,275 - 74,010
Chevrolet Tahoe (2015)	51,580 - 70,865
Chevrolet Traverse	33,295 - 49,545
Chevrolet Volt	36,895
Chrysler 200	17,395 - 40,195
Chrysler 300	34,595 - 49,695
Chrysler Town & Country	33,495 - 39,495
Dodge Challenger	26,995 - 50,195
Dodge Charger	29,995 - 48,695
Dodge Dart	15,995 - 23,995
Dodge Durango	39,995 - 52,295
Dodge Grand Caravan	19,985 - 33,995
Dodge Journey	19,495 - 31,895
Dodge SRT Viper	not sold
Fiat 500	13,495 - 27,995
Fiat 500L	19,995 - 25,995
Ford C-Max	35,956 - 43,691
Ford Edge	34,707 - 48,945
Ford Escape	24,499 - 35,699
Ford Expedition	45,979 - 62,499
Ford Explorer	29,999 - 48,499
Ford F-150	19,999 - 65,299
Ford Fiesta	14,499 - 24,999
Ford Flex	30,499 - 44,399
Ford Focus	15,999 - 36,199
Ford Fusion	22,499 - 41,399
Ford Mustang	24,499 - 45,099
Ford Taurus	28,999 - 47,299
Ford Transit Connect	32,108 - 40,018
GMC Acadia	36,495 - 55,995
GMC Sierra 1500	26,905 - 58,890
GMC Terrain	28,295 - 40,995
GMC Yukon	51,580 - 74,120
GMC Yukon XL	54,275 - 77,850
Honda Accord	23,990 - 35,690
Honda Civic	18,840 - 26,990
Honda Crosstour	37,490 - 39,490
Honda CR-V	25,990 - 35,390
Honda CR-Z	22,700 - 26,500
Honda Fit	14,635 - 20,195
Honda Insight	not sold
Honda Odyssey	29,990 - 47,990
Honda Pilot	34,990 - 48,750
Honda Ridgeline	34,990 - 42,390
Hyundai Accent	13,449 - 19,049

Make & model	Range
Hyundai Azera	not sold
Hyundai Elantra	\$15,999 - \$26,699
Hyundai Equus	64,799 - 72,299
Hyundai Genesis (2013)	39,999 - 53,499
Hyundai Genesis Coupe	26,499 - 38,799
Hyundai Santa Fe	29,999 - 43,399
Hyundai Santa Fe Sport	26,599 - 38,999
Hyundai Sonata	23,999 - 34,199
Hyundai Tucson	21,499 - 33,599
Hyundai Veloster	19,849 - 29,049
Infiniti Q50 (G)	37,500 - 56,450
Infiniti Q60 (G37 convertible)	46,800 - 67,300
Infiniti Q70 (M)	68,500 - 77,100
Infiniti QX50 (EX)	37,900 - 47,500
Infiniti QX60 (JX)	42,450 - 62,950
Infiniti QX70 (FX)	53,350 - 71,950
Infiniti QX80 (QX)	73,200 - 81,350
Jaguar F-Type	72,900 - 100,900
Jaguar XF	53,500 - 104,500
Jaguar XJ	89,490 - 122,990
Jaguar XK	98,625 - 179,000
Jeep Cherokee	23,495 - 32,195
Jeep Compass	17,745 - 24,645
Jeep Grand Cherokee	39,995 - 62,995
Jeep Patriot	16,745 - 24,290
Jeep Wrangler	23,195 - 37,095
Kia Cadenza	35,100 - 42,400
Kia Forte	15,900 - 21,900
Kia K900 (2015)	NA
Kia Optima	21,500 - 35,300
Kia Rio	13,900 - 18,090
Kia Sedona	25,900 - 30,900
Kia Sorento	24,100 - 41,700
Kia Soul	14,900 - 20,500
Kia Sportage	21,600 - 28,400
Land Rover Evoque	47,695 - 62,395
Land Rover LR2	39,990 - 48,190
Land Rover LR4	59,900 - 70,990
Land Rover Range Rover	98,290 - 148,990
Land Rover Range Rover Sport	73,990 - 104,990
Lexus CT200h	30,950 - 39,350
Lexus ES	39,750 - 53,350
Lexus GS	52,200 - 75,200
Lexus GX	58,900 - 74,800
Lexus IS	37,300 - 61,250
Lexus LS	84,650 - 151,850
Lexus LX	95,450
Lexus RX	46,150 - 71,800
Lincoln MKC	39,940
Lincoln MKS	48,110 - 57,110
Lincoln MKT	47,160 - 50,660
Lincoln MKX	44,390
Lincoln MKZ	38,460 - 44,560
Lincoln Navigator	75,110 - 78,110
Maserati Ghibli	66,900 - NA
Mazda2	14,450 - 18,300

Make & model	Range
Mazda3	\$15,995 - \$26,855
Mazda5 (2013)	21,995 - 24,085
Mazda6	24,495 - 32,195
Mazda CX-5	22,995 - 33,250
Mazda CX-9 (2013)	33,995 - 44,750
Mazda MX-5 Miata (2013)	29,250 - 40,250
Mercedes-Benz C-Class	40,850 - 65,470
Mercedes-Benz CLA	39,900 - 49,800
Mercedes-Benz CLS	85,000 - 122,250
Mercedes-Benz E-Class	57,800 - 112,900
Mercedes-Benz GL-Class	74,900 - 126,400
Mercedes-Benz GLK	43,500 - 45,500
Mercedes-Benz M-Class	59,000 - 103,200
Mercedes-Benz S-Class	106,600 - 151,600
Mercedes-Benz SL	123,400 - 242,500
Mercedes-Benz SLK	52,200 - 80,700
Mini Cooper	25,950 - 44,900
Mini Countryman	25,500 - 38,500
Mini Paceman	26,800 - 39,600
Mitsubishi i-MiEV (2013)	33,998
Mitsubishi Lancer	14,998 - 42,245
Mitsubishi Mirage	12,498 - 15,398
Mitsubishi Outlander	25,998 - 35,998
Mitsubishi Outlander Sport	19,998 - 28,498
Nissan Altima	23,698 - 32,998
Nissan Armada	59,178 - 61,278
Nissan Cube	not sold
Nissan Frontier	20,998 - 37,598
Nissan Juke	19,998 - 28,478
Nissan Leaf	31,698 - 38,498
Nissan Maxima (2013)	37,800
Nissan Murano	34,498 - 45,598
Nissan Pathfinder	29,998 - 49,198
Nissan Quest	not sold
Nissan Rogue	23,498 - 33,098
Nissan Rogue Select	not sold
Nissan Sentra	14,848 - 23,198
Nissan Titan	33,898 - 51,648
Nissan Versa Sedan	11,898 - 17,998
Nissan Versa Note	13,348 - 19,018
Nissan Xterra	33,448 - 36,798
Nissan Z	38,428 - 55,008
Porsche 911	96,200 - 221,200
Porsche Boxster	57,500 - 70,900
Porsche Cayenne	57,500 - 166,600
Porsche Cayman	59,500 - 72,900
Porsche Macan	54,300 - 82,200
Porsche Panamera	89,500 - 229,100
Ram 1500	19,995 - 57,995

Make & model	Range
Scion FR-S	\$26,450 - \$30,275
Scion iQ	17,115 - 17,655
Scion tC	21,490 - 22,540
Scion xB	18,940 - 19,980
Scion xD	17,785 - 19,225
Smart ForTwo	14,400 - 23,900
Subaru BRZ	27,295 - 31,490
Subaru Forester	25,995 - 37,995
Subaru Impreza	19,995 - 27,795
Subaru Impreza WRX/STI	32,495 - 42,595
Subaru Legacy	23,495 - 36,195
Subaru Outback	28,495 - 39,995
Subaru Tribeca	38,995 - 45,495
Subaru XV Crosstrek	24,495 - 29,995
Tesla Model S (U.S. dollars)	83,820 - 104,470
Toyota 4Runner	37,900 - 48,445
Toyota Avalon	36,995 - 42,000
Toyota Camry	23,700 - 34,860
Toyota Corolla	15,995 - 22,200
Toyota FJ Cruiser	33,540 - 39,540
Toyota Highlander	31,680 - 45,100
Toyota Land Cruiser	not sold
Toyota Prius	26,105 - 40,940
Toyota Prius C	20,440 - 25,655
Toyota Prius V	27,480 - 37,175
Toyota RAV4	23,870 - 34,995
Toyota Sequoia	52,785 - 67,675
Toyota Sienna	29,120 - 50,620
Toyota Tacoma	22,350 - 38,875
Toyota Tundra	26,750 - 54,000
Toyota Venza	28,695 - 40,075
Toyota Yaris	14,255 - 20,255
Volkswagen Beetle	22,675 - 33,635
Volkswagen CC	36,050 - 49,690
Volkswagen Eos	39,975 - 47,550
Volkswagen Golf	23,575 - 31,795
Volkswagen GTI	NA
Volkswagen Jetta	14,990 - 28,290
Volkswagen Jetta Sportwagen	23,575 - 31,785
Volkswagen Passat	23,975 - 33,475
Volkswagen Tiguan	24,990 - 37,440
Volkswagen Touareg	50,975 - 65,275
Volvo S60	39,750 - 56,600
Volvo S80	48,300 - 60,400
Volvo V60 (2015)	41,800 - 54,850
Volvo XC60	39,800 - 54,850
Volvo XC70	43,450 - 52,350
Volvo XC90	50,800 - 61,000

# For more information

Whether you're looking for information about a specific car model or looking for more general automotive and transportation information, the Internet and your telephone provide access to a wide variety of sources.

**Automobile manufacturers.** Most manufacturers have a local phone number and a toll-free phone number for calls from anywhere in Canada. The table at right provides those numbers, along with each company's Web address. "NA" indicates that we could not obtain a phone number.

**Federal and provincial governments and organizations.** Transport Canada can provide general information on vehicle-safety standards, vehicle-restraint systems, fuel-consumption ratings, emissions, collision statistics, tires, and other topics. Its toll-free number is 866-995-9737.

Transport Canada's website ([tc.gc.ca](http://tc.gc.ca)) has information on topics such as road safety and Canadian automotive regulations. You'll also find a number of other useful resources, including Natural Resources Canada (environmental information), Statistics Canada (information on a wide variety of subjects, including data derived from the national census), the Canadian Automobile Association (information on safety, travel, and other consumer topics), and the Transportation Association of Canada (technical and advocacy transportation issues).

You'll also find links to U.S. organizations and government agencies, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ([nhtsa.dot.gov](http://nhtsa.dot.gov)), the Transportation Research Board ([trb.org](http://trb.org)), and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety ([iihs.org](http://iihs.org)).

**Automotive organizations.** Good sources of information include [autos.ca](http://autos.ca), the Canada Safety Council (for driving safety and other safety-related topics), and the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators ([ccmta.ca](http://ccmta.ca)), a transportation and highway-safety organization.

MAKE	LOCAL NUMBER	TOLL-FREE NUMBER	WEB ADDRESS
Acura	905-888-8110	888-922-8729	<a href="http://acura.ca">acura.ca</a>
Audi	NA	800-822-2834	<a href="http://audi.ca">audi.ca</a>
BMW	905-683-1200	800-567-2691	<a href="http://bmw.ca">bmw.ca</a>
Buick	905-644-5000	800-263-3777	<a href="http://gm.ca">gm.ca</a>
Cadillac	905-644-5000	800-263-3777	<a href="http://gm.ca">gm.ca</a>
Chevrolet	905-644-5000	800-263-3777	<a href="http://gm.ca">gm.ca</a>
Chrysler	519-973-2000	800-465-2001	<a href="http://chrysler.ca">chrysler.ca</a>
Dodge	519-973-2000	800-465-2001	<a href="http://dodge.ca">dodge.ca</a>
Fiat	NA	NA	<a href="http://fiatcanada.com">fiatcanada.com</a>
Ford	905-845-2511	800-565-3673	<a href="http://ford.ca">ford.ca</a>
GMC	905-644-5000	800-263-3777	<a href="http://gm.ca">gm.ca</a>
Honda	905-888-8110	888-946-6329	<a href="http://honda.ca">honda.ca</a>
Hyundai	NA	NA	<a href="http://hyundaicanada.com">hyundaicanada.com</a>
Infiniti	905-629-2888	800-361-4792	<a href="http://infiniti.ca">infiniti.ca</a>
Jaguar	905-696-9147	800-668-6257	<a href="http://jaguar.ca">jaguar.ca</a>
Jeep	519-973-2000	800-465-2001	<a href="http://jeep.ca">jeep.ca</a>
Kia	NA	NA	<a href="http://kia.ca">kia.ca</a>
Land Rover	NA	800-346-3493	<a href="http://landrover.ca">landrover.ca</a>
Lexus	416-438-6320	800-265-3987	<a href="http://lexus.ca">lexus.ca</a>
Lincoln	905-845-2511	800-565-3673	<a href="http://lincolncanada.com">lincolncanada.com</a>
Maserati	NA	NA	<a href="http://maserati.com">maserati.com</a>
Mazda	NA	NA	<a href="http://mazda.ca">mazda.ca</a>
Mercedes-Benz	416-425-3550	800-387-0100	<a href="http://mercedes-benz.ca">mercedes-benz.ca</a>
Mini	866-378-6464	866-378-6464	<a href="http://mini.ca">mini.ca</a>
Mitsubishi	NA	888-576-4878	<a href="http://mitsubishi-motors.ca">mitsubishi-motors.ca</a>
Nissan	905-629-2888	800-387-0122	<a href="http://nissan.ca">nissan.ca</a>
Porsche	770-290-3500	800-767-7243	<a href="http://porsche.com/canada">porsche.com/canada</a>
Ram	NA	800-465-2001	<a href="http://ramtruck.ca">ramtruck.ca</a>
Scion	NA	NA	<a href="http://scion.ca">scion.ca</a>
Smart	NA	877-627-8004	<a href="http://thesmart.ca">thesmart.ca</a>
Subaru	905-568-4959	800-894-4212	<a href="http://subaru.ca">subaru.ca</a>
Tesla	416-969-8800	NA	<a href="http://teslamotors.com">teslamotors.com</a>
Toyota	416-438-6320	888-869-6828	<a href="http://toyota.ca">toyota.ca</a>
Volkswagen	248-754-5000	800-822-8987	<a href="http://vw.ca">vw.ca</a>
Volvo	416-493-3700	800-663-8255	<a href="http://volvocars.com">volvocars.com</a>