

# TOP PICKS

These 10 vehicles set the standard for excellence in our tough tests.

BY JEFF S. BARTLETT

THERE ARE MORE THAN 260 CARS, trucks, and SUVs on the market today—enough to make a car buyer's head spin—but only the cream of the crop make it onto CR's Annual Top Picks list. Whether you're looking for a compact car or a full-sized truck, these 10 models are outstanding in their respective categories, earning high marks in our testing. All achieved an exceptional Overall Score—a comprehensive measure that accounts for road-test performance, predicted reliability, owner satisfaction, and safety.

For the first time, every CR Top Pick is either a hybrid (or available as one) or an electric vehicle. While you can't go wrong with any version of our picks, the hybrid option is often quieter and more refined at speed, and its improved fuel efficiency usually saves you money in the long term.

For each pick, our endorsement applies to any different version of that specific model. For example, our pick of the Honda Civic means we think the gas-only Civic, the hybrid, and the sporty Si are all excellent. But for some models, we emphasize the version that we think will work best for most people. In this example, that's the Civic Hybrid.

Thanks to its improved reliability, the Ford F-150 is the first full-sized pickup truck in years that scored high enough to be a Top Pick. We especially like the hybrid for its power and efficiency.

Read on to learn why these 10 special models earned Consumer Reports' highest honor for 2026.

**SMALL CAR**

✓ **HONDA CIVIC**

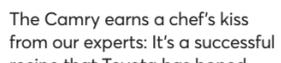


GAS 33 MPG / GAS (SI) 32 MPG  
HYBRID 44 MPG

The Honda Civic is an excellent small car, and the Hybrid is the best version. It has all the qualities we love about the gas-only car, including quick, responsive steering, a comfortable ride, and a roomy interior. But the Hybrid version adds a marvelous 2.0-liter four-cylinder powertrain that produces 200 hp—50 hp more than the base gas-only Civic. That extra boost helps it zip from 0 to 60 mph in 7.5 seconds, a full 2 seconds faster than the regular Civic, while also achieving 44 mpg overall, up from 33 mpg. But the Civic Hybrid is more than the sum of its test results. It's as impressive for its refined power delivery and rewarding driving experience as it is for being refreshingly entertaining on twisty roads.

**MIDSIZE CAR**

✓ **TOYOTA CAMRY**

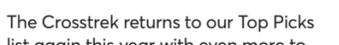


HYBRID 48 MPG

The Camry earns a chef's kiss from our experts: It's a successful recipe that Toyota has honed even closer to perfection this year. It's now sold exclusively as a hybrid, with a very efficient 2.5-liter, four-cylinder engine that hit a superb 48 mpg overall in our tests. The latest iteration delivers a pleasing balance of ride comfort and capable handling, practical interior space, and user-friendly controls that make good use of physical knobs and switches. Both front and rear seats are comfortable, but the low stance can make access a challenge for some people. Every trim is available with all-wheel drive, broadening its already wide appeal. The cherry on top? The Camry's reliability score is stronger than last year's model's, making this repeat winner an even smarter choice than before.

**SUBCOMPACT SUV**

✓ **SUBARU CROSSTREK**



The Crosstrek returns to our Top Picks list again this year with even more to love. Every gas-only trim now has a 180-hp, 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine with a continuously variable transmission and AWD, which yields 29 mpg overall. (The new, slightly more powerful Hybrid has an EPA-estimated 36 mpg combined.) The Crosstrek handles well, with quick steering and minimal roll through turns, but it's the ride quality that's most noteworthy. It absorbs road imperfections better than many cars, and it's comfortable even during off-pavement excursions. Its added ground clearance makes getting in and out a cinch.

**COMPACT SUV**

✓ **SUBARU FORESTER**



GAS 29 MPG / HYBRID 34 MPG

Last year, the gas-only Forester claimed a spot in our Top Picks due to its good all-around performance and reliability scores. We also loved the easy access in and out, great visibility, comfortable ride, good safety credentials, and spacious interior. This year, the Forester adds to those virtues a fuel-efficient hybrid powertrain, with a 2.5-liter flat-four "boxer" engine augmented by Toyota-sourced electric hardware. Unlike most other small hybrid SUVs, which offer only limited all-wheel drive, the ForesterHybrid has a mechanical, full-time AWD system. The hybrid boasts a 5 mpg advantage over the regular Forester, making the exceptional SUV even more desirable.

**MIDSIZE SUV**

✓ **TOYOTA GRAND HIGHLANDER**



GAS 22 MPG / HYBRID 35 MPG

It's rare to find a three-row SUV that's roomy enough to accommodate an adult in every seat and still have space for cargo. The Grand Highlander is that SUV, which makes it a near-perfect people mover. When outfitted in a trim with 18-inch tires, it's also unusually smooth to drive. But the Toyota's real advantage is its optional 245-hp hybrid powertrain, which matches the standard turbo engine's acceleration while returning a stunning 35 mpg overall in our tests—fuel efficiency that's on a par with the best compact SUV hybrids.

**LUXURY COMPACT SUV**

✓ **LEXUS NX**



GAS 25 MPG / HYBRID 38 MPG / PHEV 35 MPG 37<sup>E</sup> RANGE

If you're interested in a small luxury SUV, the Lexus NX is the surest answer. This repeat Top Pick combines elegance, efficiency, and reliability. Yes, the cabin is fairly compact, but it doesn't feel crowded, and it's equipped with soft surfaces and controls with a solid, high-quality feel. The front seats are especially plush and supportive. The turbocharged four-cylinder in the gas-only NX has real pep, making it competitive among its upscale peers. The hybrid version—now available with front-wheel drive—is even more refined, with the electric assist smoothing out the power delivery. The AWD version achieved 38 mpg overall, far better than the 25-mpg gas-powered NX. In addition to the benefit of being able to drive solely on electricity for 37 miles, the NX PHEV has a combined 304 hp—enough to make it among the quickest in the class.

**SMALL PICKUP**

✓ **FORD MAVERICK**



GAS 23 MPG / HYBRID 37 MPG

The Maverick is a great choice if you want a weekday commuter and a weekend plaything. The latest Maverick continues to stand out for its low entry price, relatively roomy cabin, and smooth ride—and for being available with a hybrid powertrain. The 2.5-liter, front-drive hybrid impressed us by achieving a superb 37 mpg overall in our tests. The more spirited gas-only 250-hp turbocharged four-cylinder returned 23 mpg overall, but it has a better predicted reliability score. This year, AWD configurations are available for each engine, and there are special trims, such as the street performance Lobo and off-road-ready Tremor. The Maverick remains a standout vehicle, and its appeal continues to increase over time.

**LUXURY MIDSIZE SUV**

✓ **BMW X5**

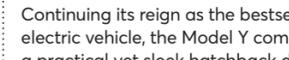


GAS 23 MPG / PHEV 21 MPG 39<sup>E</sup> RANGE

The BMW X5 remains one of the best luxury SUVs we've ever tested. It's a premium, well-rounded vehicle that feels special even before you put it into gear. The cabin is dressed in leather, wood, chrome, and soft surfaces, and the supportive seats are perfectly sculpted for daylong road trips. The gas-only X5 is both powerful and efficient, with acceleration that rivals a sports sedan and fuel economy that, at 23 mpg overall, is among the best of any nonhybrid midsize SUV. The X5 plug-in hybrid version is ideal for drivers whose daily trips are near its 39-mile electric-only range. (Once the battery is depleted, that version gets 21 mpg.) Either configuration provides an entertaining driving experience that lives up to BMW's reputation.

**ELECTRIC VEHICLE**

✓ **TESLA MODEL Y**



EV 331 RANGE

Continuing its reign as the bestselling electric vehicle, the Model Y combines a practical yet sleek hatchback design, long driving range, sports-car-level performance, and access to the widespread Tesla Super-charger network. Refreshed for 2026, the latest Model Y gained numerous updates. It has a more compliant ride, acoustic glass for a quieter cabin, upgraded interiors, and—in the midlevel Premium trim and up—an 8-inch touchscreen for rear passengers. Like last year's version, the revised Y still benefits from thrilling acceleration, sharp handling, comfortable front seats, and wonderfully unobstructed forward views. Most significantly, its reliability continues to improve, making it more enticing than ever.

**FULL SIZED PICKUP**

✓ **FORD F-150**



GAS 19 MPG / HYBRID 20 MPG

The Ford F-150 remains America's bestselling truck for many good reasons. This year, its improved reliability earned it a spot on our list. It also stands out for its strong powertrains, roomy cabin, and simple controls. The latest version adds useful innovations, such as blind spot monitors and aids that simplify backing up and hooking up a trailer, as well as a flat tailgate designed to double as a workbench. The base 325-hp, 2.7-liter turbo V6 is a gem, with loads of low-end power and a smooth-shifting 10-speed automatic transmission. A traditional midtier 400-hp V8 is also still available, but a more potent option is the 430-hp, 3.5-liter turbo V6 hybrid. Unlike some hybrids, this powertrain prioritizes brawn over efficiency. It boasts an impressive 570 lb.-ft. of torque compared with the 5.0-liter V8's 410 lb.-ft., and at a lower rpm, making it a strong choice for towing. Ford's excellent BlueCruise active driving system is also available.

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