

OVERALL SCORE

(as of July 2026)

✓ CR RECOMMENDED

89

2026 Subaru Outback

CR MPG 27 mpg  
#3 of 10 Midsized SUVs

ROAD TEST

89/100

PREDICTED RELIABILITY

58/100

PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

73/100

89

RANGE OF TESTED MIDSIZED SUVs

HIGHS

- Punchy turbo engine with the XT model
- Short stopping distances on the Premium trim
- Compliant and composed ride
- Comfortable seats front and rear
- Easy to get into and out of
- Excellent outward visibility
- Straightforward controls

LOWS

- Slow acceleration with the standard engine
- Some debatable exterior styling details

Road Test Results

Performance

|                             |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Acceleration<br>0 to 60 mph | <div></div> 3/5 |
|                             | 9.1 sec         |
| Transmission                | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Routine Handling            | <div></div> 3/5 |
| Emergency Handling          | <div></div> 3/5 |
| Braking                     | <div></div> 5/5 |
| Headlights                  | <div></div> NA  |

Comfort & Convenience

|                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Ride                  | <div></div> 5/5 |
| Noise                 | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Driving Position      | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Front Seat Comfort    | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Rear Seat Comfort     | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Front Access          | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Rear Access           | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Usability             | <div></div> 5/5 |
| Interior Fit & Finish | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Cargo Score           | <div></div> 4/5 |
| Towing                | <div></div> 3/5 |
| Climate System        | <div></div> 5/5 |

Fuel Economy & Range

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Fuel Economy         | <div></div> 4/5  |
| CR's Overall Mileage | 27 mpg           |
| CR's City Mileage    | 19 mpg           |
| CR's Highway Mileage | 38 mpg           |
| Green Choice         | No               |
| Greenhouse Gas       | <div></div> 5/10 |
| Smog Rating          | <div></div> 6/10 |

Survey Results



Reliability History

| 2018 | 2019 | 2020* | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| ↓    | ↓    | ↓     | !    | !    | ↑    | ↑    | ↑    |

\* Redesign year

Owner Satisfaction

| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| ↑    | ↑    | ↑    | ↑    | ↑    | ↑    | ↑    | ↑    |

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Driving Experience | <div></div> NA |
| Comfort            | <div></div> NA |
| Value              | <div></div> NA |
| Styling            | <div></div> NA |

Subaru Outback Road Test

Introduction

The latest Outback marks a dramatic departure, styling-wise, from its heritage, officially transitioning from a tall station wagon to an SUV. All it took was for Subaru to raise and flatten the roof, square off the nose, and deck the vehicle with more rugged, blocky styling. Now it looks like a true two-row midsized SUV, fitting between the Subaru Forester and the larger three-row Ascent.

The added headroom is sure to be appreciated by drivers and passengers, but the more significant change to the cabin is the modernized interior, which features a horizontal center screen, a new infotainment system, and the return of long-lost physical climate controls.

The familiar four-cylinder boxer engines continue with refinements: a base 180-hp naturally aspirated engine and a 260-hp turbocharged version. Of course, all-wheel drive is standard. The Outback features the latest generation of the brand's EyeSight suite of active safety and driver assistance features, with enhanced camera and radar sensors.

With the updates and revised pricing ladder, the Outback carves a niche above the Honda CR-V and Toyota RAV4, yet slots below the Honda Passport and Toyota 4Runner. Not a bad place to be.

Subaru Outback at a Glance

- New exterior styling ditches the wagon look in favor of SUV blockiness
  - Most Outback traits remain, including a comfortable ride and competent handling
  - The standard engine sounds and feels underpowered
  - All-new infotainment system and physical climate controls are a vast improvement
- We tested two versions of the new Outback. We bought a 2026 Subaru Outback Premium for \$40,098 and a 2026 Outback Touring XT for \$50,290—both anonymously from an area dealer, as we do with every vehicle we test—for the purpose of this road test review. Our Outbacks were assembled in Ota, Gunma, Japan.
- We also borrowed a 2026 Outback Wilderness edition from Subaru for

evaluation, with an as-driven cost of \$50,535. Likely due to a combination of its electronic dampers and all-terrain tires, the ride quality proved even better at lower speeds in the Wilderness than the two tested Outback trims, with an impressive ability to absorb all manner of bumps. The downside to those all-terrain tires is a slight increase in tire noise and slightly “squishier,” less confidence-inspiring handling.

After our testers spent months compiling results from more than 50 specific tests and evaluations at Consumer Reports' 327-acre Auto Test Center in Connecticut, along with lots of miles behind the wheel on public roads in both trims, we determined that most of what owners liked about the previous Outback carries over. The front seats are comfortable and supportive, the rear seat is spacious, and the ride is pleasant and very absorbent. Yet Subaru improved the interior space and design, including an easier-to-use infotainment touchscreen and physical climate controls.

Drivability differs heavily by engine choice. The standard 2.5-liter engine in the base Premium can feel underpowered, whereas the turbocharged Touring XT delivers punchy, effortless acceleration and quieter overall operation.

But that's not to say that the more expensive Touring XT is worth the extra investment; our staff consensus points to the lower-tier Premium as the smarter buy, given its nearly identical road-test score and thrifter fuel economy. Plus, while the Touring XT's cabin is slightly more plush, it isn't leaps and bounds better than the base model.

Regardless of the powertrain or trim, some of our staff miss the “wagon-ness” of the previous Outback. Where the outgoing model had some elegance, with its chrome window accents and gentle curves, the new version is, to put it bluntly, a block, with discordant lines and odd-shaped plastic wheel arches fitted with nonfunctional “grab handles.”

A few styling oddities aside, we came away with overwhelmingly favorable feelings about the new Outback. As such, it remains a top contender in the midsized two-row SUV class.

Summary

Best Version to Get:

The Outback is more expensive than before, largely because the prior, unpopular base version has been discontinued. The lineup now starts with the Premium trim, followed by the Limited and Limited XT, the latter featuring the more pleasant and powerful 260-hp turbo-four. The Wilderness is Subaru's “off-road” trim, featuring extra ground clearance, all-terrain tires, and the turbo engine.

As for which trim to get, we were happy with the base Premium. It comes standard with many creature comforts, including dual-zone automatic climate control, heated front seats, a 10-way power driver's seat with two-way lumbar adjustment, StarTex leatherette upholstery, a leather-wrapped steering wheel, a 12.1-inch infotainment screen, wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, and a power liftgate. A reasonably priced option package adds built-in navigation, a power sunroof, a heated steering wheel, and a wireless charger.

But what about that turbo engine? The cheapest way to get that is the Limited XT, but it costs nearly \$9,500 more than the Premium. Which, to

us, feels like a lot of extra money for what is basically just a powertrain upgrade. If you can afford it and don't mind giving up some fuel economy, go for it. But the extra cost doesn't seem worth it—especially considering that both trims got very similar road-test scores.

We tested the Touring XT to experience the turbo powertrain and the Highway Hands-Free Assist active driving assistance system. But after spending time with Subaru's latest system, it also doesn't seem worth the added cost.

Notable changes:

The Outback was redesigned for the 2026 model year, featuring an all-new, squared-off SUV body instead of the previous station-wagon-esque look. The powertrains have been largely carried over.

To read the full road test, visit [consumerreports.org/cars/subaru/outback/2026/road-test-report/#pagetop](#)