

# Best crossover SUVs for towing

September 9 2020, by Ryan Zummallen Of Edmunds

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This undated photo from Subaru shows the Outback, a midsize crossover with a maximum towing capacity of 3,500 pounds, which is suitable for decently sized boats and campers. (Courtesy of Subaru of America via AP)

RV and trailer sales greatly increased this summer as consumers sought out vacations while remaining socially distant during the pandemic. But what's the best vehicle to tow them?

Many shoppers assume they'll need a brawny pickup truck or a full-size SUV to tow a trailer. But there are also some crossover SUVs that can handle the extra demands of towing.

As a bonus, a crossover SUV is more car-like and is typically easier to drive and more fuel-efficient than a truck-based SUV.

Edmunds' experts compiled a list of five crossover SUVs that rated highly in their testing. Note that while we list maximum towing capacities for the vehicles below, the specific towing capacity of your particular vehicle will vary based on how it's equipped and how much weight you have on board from passengers and cargo. All prices for the recommended trim levels include the destination charge.

## 2020 SUBARU OUTBACK

The redesigned Subaru Outback is one of the most versatile vehicles you can buy. The XT trim level comes equipped with a powerful turbocharged four-cylinder [engine](#). It allows the Outback XT to achieve a maximum towing capacity of 3,500 pounds when properly equipped. That's suitable for pulling a small boat or a trailer loaded up with recreational toys such as personal watercraft or ATVs.



This photo provided by Fiat Chrysler shows the 2020 Jeep Grand Cherokee, which can tow up to 6,000 pounds with its standard V6 engine or 7,200 pounds with the more powerful V8. (Courtesy of FCA US via AP)

Going with the Outback also gets you standard all-[wheel drive](#) and a spacious interior. We're less fond of the Outback's optional 11.6-inch touchscreen. It looks great but isn't very functional. Unfortunately, you're stuck with it on the XT trim levels. Manufacturer's suggested [retail price](#) of 2020 Outback Onyx Edition XT: \$35,905

## 2020 FORD EXPLORER

The Ford Explorer, which is fully redesigned for 2020, is well suited for towing. Unlike most other three-row crossover SUVs, it has a rear-wheel-

drive architecture, which can help with towing stability. It also comes with a variety of engine choices and a 10-speed automatic transmission to balance power with fuel economy.

You can get respectable towing capacity—5,300 pounds when properly equipped—even if you go with the Explorer's base four-cylinder engine. The Explorer's maximum towing capacity with the turbocharged V6 rises a bit to 5,600 pounds. Either figure is suitable for smaller camper trailers. Edmunds hasn't found the Explorer to be quite as refined as other three-row crossover SUVs but its towing capability makes it worth considering. MSRP of 2020 Explorer XLT with rear-wheel drive: \$38,170.



This photo provided by Ford shows the 2020 Ford Explorer with a maximum towing capacity of 5,600 pounds. (Courtesy of Ford Motor Co. via AP)

## 2020 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE

Crossovers can be rugged too. A perfect example is the Jeep Grand Cherokee. It has remarkable off-road capabilities, especially in its specialized Trailhawk trim level. A properly equipped Grand Cherokee can tow up to 6,000 pounds with its standard V6 engine. If you need even more, a larger V8 pushes the rating up to 7,200 pounds. That is enough capability to tow a decent-size boat or a travel trailer.

On the downside, this Grand Cherokee generation has been around since 2011. It looks and feels dated, and it has a firmer ride than more modern rivals. But when it comes to towing, it's a proven veteran. MSRP of a 2020 Grand Cherokee Limited with four-wheel drive and 5.7-liter V8: \$45,350



This photo provided by Fiat Chrysler shows the 2020 Dodge Durango, which can pull 6,200 pounds with its standard V6. If you choose one of its optional V8

engines, you can tow either 7,400 pounds or up to 8,700 pounds. (Courtesy of FCA US via AP)

## 2020 DODGE DURANGO

The Dodge Durango was built to tow, with all three of its available engines boasting lofty maximum tow ratings. The standard V6 can pull 6,200 pounds when properly equipped. Dodge also offers a few available V8 engines that will allow you to haul up to 8,700 pounds.

On the downside, the Durango is not very fuel-efficient, and its bulky size is cumbersome on the road. But this old-school approach pays dividends when towing. The optional tow package includes extra engine cooling and big-time towing features such as a seven-pin wiring harness and a Class IV receiver hitch. MSRP of 2020 Dodge Durango Citadel with 5.7-liter V8: \$48,485.



This photo provided by Jaguar Land Rover shows the 2017 Land Rover Discovery, which boasts an impressive maximum towing capacity of 8,201 pounds. (Matthew Everingham/Courtesy of Jaguar Land Rover via AP)

## 2020 LAND ROVER DISCOVERY

The three-row Land Rover Discovery is a luxurious tow vehicle. It boasts an impressive maximum towing capacity of 8,201 pounds when properly equipped. The Discovery is particularly well suited for towing when powered by its available diesel-powered six-cylinder engine. It provides extra low-end grunt and higher fuel economy compared to the standard gasoline V6.

There's also a wealth of helpful technology to make towing less

intimidating. One helpful available feature allows you to easily control the direction of an attached trailer when you're backing up by twisting a knob inside the cabin and watching your progress on the backup camera display. One drawback is that the Discovery's infotainment screen can be slow to respond and not as intuitive as we'd like. MSRP of 2020 Discovery SE with the diesel engine: \$55,650.

EDMUNDS SAYS: Full-size trucks and SUVs certainly make towing easier. But do some research and you'll find that many crossover SUVs are also capable of handling the job.

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