

Edmunds picks 5 SUVs to help you save at the pump

April 6 2022, by Miles Branman

This photo provided by Toyota, shows the 2022 Tesla Model 3, an all-electric SUV that has an estimated maximum range of about 330 miles. Credit: Tesla Motors via AP

As of this writing, the national average fuel price is \$4.24 per gallon, according to the American Automobile Association. Up 20% from a month ago, gas prices aren't likely to taper or deflate unless crude oil supply improves or consumer demand softens. Until that happens, costly fill-ups are hitting Americans who are already grappling with inflation.

Understandably, drivers are keen to keep their [fuel](#) bills in check.

Purchasing a new vehicle solely for better [fuel economy](#) isn't usually a wise decision, and that's especially true in today's shortage-plagued car-buying market. But if you were already shopping for a new SUV, now's a great time to consider a more fuel-efficient model.

To refine your research, Edmunds highlights five SUVs based on a combination of EPA-estimated fuel economy and our test team's full evaluations of performance, utility and more. All prices below include the destination charge.

2022 FORD ESCAPE HYBRID

Offered in both conventional and plug-in hybrid variations, the 2022 Ford Escape is one the most fuel-efficient small SUVs you can buy. The standard hybrid earns an EPA-estimated 41 mpg combined (44 city/37 highway), giving it a total potential maximum range of 582 miles. The plug-in hybrid returns 40 combined mpg and supplements its efficiency with 37 miles of electric-only operation. That means those with shorter commutes and convenient charging options may rarely need to use fuel.

This photo provided by Ford shows the 2022 Ford Escape Hybrid, a compact SUV that gets about 41 mpg in mixed driving. Credit: Ford Motor Co. via AP

Regardless of configuration, the Ford Escape Hybrid boasts a comfortable cabin, a compliant ride and sufficient power. A couple of drawbacks are its smaller than average cargo capacity and [air conditioner](#) that doesn't quite get super cold on hot days.

Starting price: \$30,415

2022 TOYOTA RAV4 HYBRID

Like the Escape, Toyota's RAV4 is offered in both hybrid and plug-in flavors. The conventional hybrid nets 40 combined mpg (41 city/38 highway) for a total max range of 580 miles. The RAV4 Prime PHEV scores 38 combined mpg and a class-leading 42-mile all-electric range. Better still, the Prime is downright quick with 302 horsepower and a 0 to 60 mph sprint of just 5.6 seconds.

Other highlights of the 2022 RAV4 Hybrid include a roomy cabin, plenty of cargo space and standard all-wheel drive. Drivers will be less enthused with a somewhat awkward brake feel and the infotainment system's dated-looking graphics.

This photo provided by Hyundai shows the 2022 Hyundai Tucson, a compact SUV that gets about 38 mpg in mixed driving. Credit: Hyundai Motor America via AP

Starting price: \$30,290

HYUNDAI TUCSON HYBRID

The Hyundai Tucson small SUV is fully redesigned for 2022. In addition to distinctive new styling and features, Hyundai has added hybrid powertrains to the Tucson's portfolio. Rated at 38 combined mpg (38 city/38 highway), and slightly less on higher trims, the standard hybrid can travel up to an estimated 521 miles on a single tank. Alternatively, the plug-in model returns 35 combined mpg and offers 33 miles of all-electric range.

Spacious, pleasant-riding and quick, the Hyundai Tucson is currently Edmunds' highest-rated hybrid SUV. Fuel economy and electric range lag slightly behind close competitors, but Hyundai's class-leading warranty provides extra ownership assurance.

Starting price: \$30,595.

TOYOTA HIGHLANDER HYBRID

Thankfully, those requiring a third row of seating aren't doomed to bad gas mileage. The 2022 Toyota Highlander Hybrid touts class-leading fuel economy of 36 mpg combined (36 city/35 highway), for a total range of 616 miles. Toyota's modest upcharge over the base Highlander and lower starting price than rivals keep the Hybrid attainable.

This photo provided by Toyota shows the 2022 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid, a compact SUV that gets about 40 mpg in mixed driving. Credit: Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. via AP

The Highlander Hybrid is easy to maneuver and smooth-riding, and it includes a full suite of driver aids as standard. Taller riders will have a tight squeeze in the third row and cargo space behind that row is constrained, though the total cabin volume is competitive.

Starting price: \$40,270

2022 TESLA MODEL Y

The only thing better than fuel sipping is fuel abstinence. Tesla's Model Y Long Range serves up to 330 miles of electric range on a full charge. In our own range testing, we've found the Model Y underperforms its EPA estimate a little, but it's still one of the best SUVs available for going the distance. With overnight top-ups via a Level 2 charger, or stops at a Tesla Supercharger station, most drivers will never experience range anxiety and can happily ignore lofty fuel prices.

The Model Y is quick and cavernous, and it offers cutting-edge technology. Its inconsistent build quality and uninspiring design have opened the door for new challengers, however.

This photo provided by Toyota shows the 2022 Toyota Highlander Hybrid, a mid-sized SUV that gets about 36 mpg in mixed driving. Credit: Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. via AP

Starting price: \$64,440

EDMUNDS SAYS:

A burgeoning electric vehicle market and compelling hybrid options give consumers a variety of ways to beat the prices at the pump. But keep in mind that amid a vehicle shortage and rising fuel costs, these cars may be even harder to find or may carry premiums at dealers.

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