

Review: 2023 Lexus RX 350 versus 2022 Mercedes-Benz GLE

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This photo provided by Toyota shows the Lexus RX 350, a midsize luxury SUV that has been fully redesigned for the 2023 model year. Credit: Courtesy of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. via AP

The [Lexus RX 350](#) has consistently been one of the best-selling midsize

SUVs and a leading model for the Lexus brand. So when a new RX is released, there's understandably a lot of interest from SUV shoppers. The redesigned 2023 RX 350 gets a new engine, improved technology and a more luxurious interior. But is it enough to elevate it to the top of the class? The experts at Edmunds compared it to their No. 1 pick in the midsize luxury SUV category, the [Mercedes-Benz GLE 350](#), to find out.

PERFORMANCE AND FUEL ECONOMY

Lexus replaced the RX 350's previous V6 engine with a new turbocharged 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine. It makes a competitive 275 horsepower and 317 lb-ft of torque. Combined with a quick-shifting eight-speed [automatic transmission](#), that powerplant manages to feel punchier than the V6 despite having two fewer cylinders. The RX remains front-wheel-drive-based, though all-wheel drive is available. Edmunds tested an all-wheel-drive RX 350 and found it can accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in 7.8 seconds, which is ultimately a little slow for a luxury SUV of this size.

Like the RX, the GLE 350 comes with a turbocharged four-cylinder base engine. It produces less power and torque than the Lexus—255 horsepower and 273 lb-ft—but ultimately proves to be more effective in real-world driving. At the Edmunds test track, a GLE 350 with all-wheel drive accelerated from 0 to 60 mph in 7.1 seconds.

The RX 350 does make up a bit of ground with [fuel economy](#). A front-wheel-drive RX 350 will get an EPA-estimated 25 mpg in combined city/highway driving, versus an EPA-estimated 22 mpg for a rear-wheel-drive GLE 350. But overall we prefer the power of the Mercedes.

Winner: GLE

DRIVING AND COMFORT

The GLE 350 is rear-[wheel-drive](#)-based, and that helps it feel more athletic around turns than the RX 350. You can drive it along twisty roads at a decent clip without making your passengers feel queasy. It also benefits from precise steering and strong and responsive brakes that help with easy parking and smooth stops in town.

Lexus takes a more comfort-oriented approach for its RX 350, which is likely more of a priority for luxury shoppers. It has a slightly smoother ride over bumps and ruts than the GLE 350, and the front seats are well shaped and supportive for long drives. Wind and road noise on the freeway is minimal, further making the RX the better choice for relaxed cruising.

Winner: RX 350

INTERIOR AND TECH



This photo provided by Mercedes-Benz shows the 2022 Mercedes-Benz GLE, one of the best midsize luxury SUVs on the market today. Credit: Courtesy of Mercedes-Benz USA via AP

The RX's interior takes a big leap forward. Besides receiving a bolder, more youthful design, the RX's cabin gets a much-needed tech infusion. A 9.8-inch touchscreen comes standard, while an impressive-looking 14-inch display is also available. That's right, we said touchscreen, as Lexus has finally discontinued the much-despised touchpad controller used in earlier generations. The new screen runs Lexus' latest infotainment system and features wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto smartphone integration.

It's a solid setup, though the GLE's tech is still the best in its class. The

MBUX infotainment system, with its combined digital instrument panel and central touchscreen, is both easy to use and highly customizable. It does come standard with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, though a wired connection is required.

In the back, the Lexus offers good legroom but is a little tight on headroom. The Mercedes, in comparison, is more spacious. The GLE's larger dimensions also make it the better choice for hauling cargo with the rear seats up or folded. Lexus used to offer a three-row version of the RX but that L model has been discontinued for 2023. Mercedes continues to offer a third-row seat for the GLE, although it's too small to be used regularly.

Winner: GLE

PRICING AND VALUE

Lexus models have historically undercut their German rivals since the brand was introduced in 1989. That's true again with the 2023 Lexus RX. Its starting price of \$48,550 including destination comes in approximately \$8,600 less than the GLE's. For that price, you get a comprehensive suite of advanced driving aids, including [adaptive cruise control](#) and lane centering.

The GLE is more expensive to start and doesn't have as many driver aids as standard equipment. But you get higher-quality materials, excellent build quality and a driving experience that makes you feel like you're getting your money's worth.

Winner: tie

EDMUNDS SAYS: The 2023 Lexus RX receives a host of updates that keep it competitive and looking fresh without alienating its core

audience. However, the Mercedes-Benz GLE continues to be the better all-around midsize luxury SUV thanks to its impressive and user-friendly tech and more spacious interior.

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