

Review: The best plug-in hybrids for driving without filling up on gas

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This photo provided by Toyota shows the 2024 Prius Prime. More powerful and stylish than before, the latest Prime can drive about 45 miles on all-electric power. Credit: Courtesy of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. via AP

Buying a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle is a great way to try living with

an electric vehicle without giving up the convenience of using gasoline for longer trips. They're perfect for driving shorter commutes, shuttling kids to school, and running local errands on electricity. But when your plans call for a longer trip, a plug-in hybrid's gasoline engine takes over and makes it possible to drive across the city or the entire country without recharging the battery.

The latest plug-in vehicles offer more electric driving range than in the past. Edmunds researched current range estimates and chose five models in different vehicle classes that can travel an impressive distance using nothing but electricity. They are listed below by lowest to highest base price.

SMALL CAR: 2024 TOYOTA PRIUS PRIME

Most people know what a Toyota Prius is. The Prius Prime is the [plug-in hybrid](#) version of the iconic hybrid car. It's able to travel up to an EPA-estimated 45 miles on nothing but electricity. After that, it will get up to 52 mpg in combined city/highway driving when used as a traditional hybrid.

Because the Prius Prime supplies 220 horsepower and surprisingly speedy acceleration, each of its three trim levels is sport-themed. The Prius Prime offers plenty of utility too, thanks to its five-passenger, four-door hatchback configuration. Open the hatch, fold the back seat down, and you might decide this Prius Prime is a credible alternative to a small crossover SUV. However, the most surprising thing about the 2024 Prius Prime is its sense of style, which Toyota no longer sacrifices at the altar of sensibility.

Starting manufacturer's suggested retail price: \$33,770



This photo provided by Toyota shows the 2024 RAV4 Prime. It's the quickest RAV4 you can buy, and it can go about 42 miles on a fully charged battery before the gas engine switches on. Credit: Courtesy of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. via AP

SMALL SUV: 2024 TOYOTA RAV4 PRIME

If the Prius Prime is too small, or you want a plug-in hybrid with all-[wheel drive](#), Toyota has another model worthy of consideration: the RAV4 Prime. You can get this plug-in version of the popular RAV4 in two trim levels, each providing an EPA-estimated 42 miles of electric-only range and returning 38 mpg in combined driving when used as a hybrid. In addition to efficiency, the RAV4 Prime offers a remarkable 302 horsepower, making it mighty quick. And when the weather goes

from delightful to frightful, the standard all-wheel-drive system makes the most of available traction.

Five people fit inside the RAV4 Prime, and this compact crossover SUV is one of the roomiest models in its class for hauling cargo. So, if you don't mind paying entry-level luxury SUV prices for a Toyota, the RAV4 Prime is ready to tackle nearly any task.

Starting MSRP: \$44,790



This photo provided by Kia shows the Sorento Plug-in Hybrid. A midsize SUV with three rows of seating, the Plug-in Hybrid version can drive 32 miles on all electric power. Credit: Courtesy of Kia America via AP

THREE-ROW SUV: 2024 KIA SORENTO PLUG-IN HYBRID

For a larger midsize SUV with a third-row seat, consider the Kia Sorento Plug-in Hybrid. It offers seating for six and more cargo room than the RAV4 Prime. Equipped with a hybrid powertrain good for 261 horsepower, the Sorento Plug-In Hybrid provides an estimated 32 miles of electric-only range and 34 mpg in combined driving when used as a hybrid. Like the RAV4 Prime, it includes standard all-wheel drive. Only one trim level is available, and it's expensive. But Kia loads it up with standard features and covers it with one of the best warranty coverage plans you can get.

Starting MSRP: \$51,315



This photo provided by Chrysler shows the Pacifica Hybrid. The only plug-in hybrid in its class, the Pacifica can drive 32 miles on electricity alone. Credit: Courtesy of Stellantis via AP

MINIVAN: 2024 CHRYSLER PACIFICA HYBRID

If the Kia isn't big enough for your brood, consider the Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid, a seven-passenger minivan boasting nearly as much cargo space as a Chevy Suburban. With a Pacifica Hybrid, you can drive 32 miles on electricity and then average 30 mpg in combined driving when using the minivan as a hybrid. Keep it charged up, and this Chrysler can effortlessly handle kid-shuttling, grocery-getting, and other typical minivan tasks without burning a drop of gasoline. Five trim levels are available, including sporty, upscale and road-trip-ready versions, ensuring one might appeal to you.

Starting MSRP: \$54,825



This photo provided by Mercedes-Benz shows the 2023 S-Class sedan. The 580e plug-in hybrid can drive an EPA-estimated 46 miles on all-electric power.

Credit: Courtesy of Mercedes-Benz USA via AP

LUXURY CAR: 2023 MERCEDES-BENZ S 580e

For a big injection of luxury to go with your plug-in hybrid aspirations, try the Mercedes-Benz S-Class sedan in 580e specification. It provides 46 miles of electric-only range and 23 mpg in combined driving when used as a hybrid. Unfortunately, this big Benz has a tiny trunk. But it seats five people, delivers the performance you expect from a Mercedes, and oozes style, class and sophistication. Notably, this plug-in hybrid also has the rare capability to charge at public fast-charging stations.

Starting MSRP: \$123,700

EDMUNDS SAYS

To maximize electric everyday driving without giving up the convenience of gasoline, a plug-in hybrid represents the best of both worlds. The models highlighted above offer the most electric-only range in their segments and remain comparatively efficient even if you never plug them in to recharge the battery.

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