

OVERALL SCORE

84

CR Recommended

2020 Subaru Forester

CR MPG Overall 28 / City 20 / Hwy 38 mpg
#1 of 16 Compact Sport-Utility Vehicles

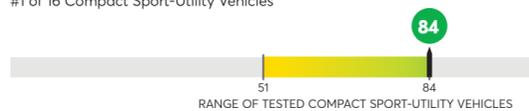
- HIGHS**
- Fuel economy
 - Great visibility
 - Roomy interior
 - Easy controls
 - Standard AEB

- LOWS**
- Engine noise

ROAD TEST 90/100

PREDICTED RELIABILITY 3/5

PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION 5/5



Road Test Results

Performance

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Acceleration | 3/5 |
| 0 to 60 mph (sec.) | 9.2 sec |
| Transmission | 4/5 |
| Fuel Economy | 4/5 |
| CR's Overall Mileage | 28 mpg |
| CR's City Mileage | 20 mpg |
| CR's Highway Mileage | 38 mpg |
| Annual Fuel Cost | \$1,030 |
| Braking | 5/5 |
| Emergency Handling | 3/5 |

Comfort/Convenience

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Ride | 4/5 |
| Noise | 3/5 |
| Front Seat Comfort | 4/5 |
| Rear Seat Comfort | 5/5 |
| Interior Fit & Finish | 4/5 |
| Trunk/Cargo Area | 3/5 |

Survey Results

Reliability History



Owner Satisfaction



CR Road Test Results

The updated Subaru Forester is a smart, well-executed small SUV that boasts a roomy interior, great fuel economy, and plenty of standard safety equipment.

Beneath the familiar exterior design, Subaru has made a lot of improvements without altering the SUV's sensible, no-nonsense character. The ride is comfortable and supple, the steering is responsive, and there's little body lean around corners.

The standard 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine is a little more powerful, but that doesn't make the Forester any quicker. Sprinting from 0-60 mph takes 9.2 sec—which puts it on the slow side compared to other small SUVs. In the real world, however, the Forester has enough power to pass and merge successfully. The continuously variable transmission (CVT) has been refined to be less obtrusive, but drivers still hear a pronounced engine buzz under acceleration.

Fuel economy is impressive at 28 mpg overall, tying the Honda CR-V EX for the best mileage of any small SUV that isn't a diesel or a hybrid.

Ride and handling have also improved. The Forester is adept at absorbing road imperfections, making it one of the better riding SUVs in the category. And yet, it benefits from responsive handling with less body roll and quicker steering than the previous version when rounding corners.

The spacious interior has controls that are easy to use, plenty of headroom, and some of the best visibility of any new vehicle. The driving position helps provide a commanding view of the road ahead. Most versions come with a power seat that is comfortable and supportive, thanks in part to its adjustable lumbar support.

As is often true for Subaru, the controls are simple to reach and use. The latest infotainment system is intuitive and responds quickly. It is also compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

On the utility front, the split seats fold nearly flat, leaving a slightly inclined surface for cargo. Opening the power liftgate exposes a wide, square-shaped space that can swallow a fair amount of bulky warehouse-store items. There's even enough space with the rear seat folded down to fit a bicycle with both wheels on.

The Forester falters only when it comes to refinement. Despite upgraded soft-touch surfaces and additional padding, some interior materials look cheap. But what the SUV lacks in panache it makes up for in practicality.

Forward collision warning (FCW), automatic emergency braking (AEB), lane departure warning (LDW), and lane keeping assistance (LKA) come standard.

Notable changes:

The Forester was all new for 2019. We're pleased to see that Subaru's Eyesight suite of advanced safety features is now standard on all trims. Updates for 2020 include a standard rear-seat reminder system, and new functions added to the lane keeping assistance feature.

To read the full road test go to <https://www.consumerreports.org/cars/subaru/forester/2020/road-test>

For additional convenience and luxury items such as leather upholstery, bigger infotainment screen, and dual-zone automatic climate control, the Limited trim is the way to go.

New Cars

(as of March 2020)



| | Make & Model | Overall Score | Road Test Results | Survey Results | Highs | Lows | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| CR Recommended | | | Road-test score | Overall mpg | Predicted reliability | Owner satisfaction | | |
| ✓ | 2020 Subaru Forester | 84 | 90 | 28 | 1 | 5 | Fuel economy, great visibility, roomy interior, easy controls, standard AEB. | Engine noise. |
| ✓ | 2020 Mazda CX-5 | 84 | 80 | 24 | 5 | 5 | Rides comfortably, quiet cabin, responsive handling, nicer interior than the class norm, standard forward collision warning and automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection. | So-so visibility to the rear corners, infotainment learning curve, fuel economy not a standout. |
| ✓ | 2020 Honda CR-V | 77 | 82 | 28 | 1 | 5 | Roomy interior, responsive handling, competitively priced and well-equipped. | Ride is a touch firm, fussy infotainment system on EX and higher trims. |
| ✓ | 2020 Chevrolet Equinox | 76 | 78 | 25 | 5 | 1 | Roomy interior, comfortable ride and quiet cabin, intuitive controls, easy-to-use infotainment system, standard forward collision warning and automatic emergency braking. | Drab interior, leisurely acceleration with the 1.5-liter turbo. |
| ✓ | 2020 Kia Sportage | 75 | 78 | 23 | 1 | 1 | Easy-to-use controls, handy size with a roomy and versatile interior, sportier to drive than most competitors, automatic emergency braking is standard. | Hampered rear and side visibility. |
| ✓ | 2020 Nissan Rogue | 75 | 74 | 24 | 5 | 1 | Roomy and accommodating interior, very easy access, optional surround-view camera system, lots of standard safety equipment. | Bland to drive, engine gets loud when pushed and is exacerbated by the CVT transmission, driver's seat short on support. |
| ✓ | 2020 Toyota RAV4 | 72 | 72 | 27 | 1 | 1 | Fuel economy, standard advanced safety features. | Engine noise, ride, fit and finish. |
| | 2020 GMC Terrain | 69 | 67 | 22 | 5 | 1 | Strong acceleration with optional 2.0-liter turbo, impressive braking performance, secure handling, standard automatic emergency braking. | Loud cabin, stiff ride, short on agility, push button gear selector is a nuisance, hampered visibility, low-rent interior. |
| | 2020 Hyundai Tucson | 67 | 75 | 22 | 1 | 1 | Controls, braking, standard advanced safety features. | Humdrum interior, uncompetitive fuel economy with the 2.4-liter engine. |
| | 2020 Ford Escape | 62 | 73 | 26 | 1 | 5 | Agility, stopping distance, fuel economy with standard 1.5-liter engine and hybrid, controls. | Engine vibration with the 1.5-liter, overly sensitive brake pedal (except hybrid), no auto up windows in SE. |
| | 2020 Volkswagen Tiguan | 61 | 84 | 25 | 1 | 1 | Roomy interior, user-friendly controls, easy access, good visibility, fuel economy, optional third row within a modest footprint SUV, standard automatic emergency braking. | Engine gets noisy when revved, acceleration trails competitors. |
| | 2020 Mitsubishi Outlander | 54 | 59 | 24 | 1 | 1 | Lots of utility for the money, has a standard third-row seat, unusual for a small SUV, long warranty. | Ponderous handling, unsettled ride, tepid acceleration accompanied by lots of racket from the engine. |
| | 2020 Jeep Cherokee | 52 | 68 | 23 | 1 | 1 | Space, controls, braking. | Sluggish initial acceleration with turbo engine, uncooperative transmission, ride, agility, engine noise. |
| | 2020 Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross | 52 | 57 | 24 | 1 | 1 | Access, rear seat room. | Controls, agility, visibility, front-seat comfort, acceleration, cargo space. |
| | 2020 Jeep Compass | 51 | 56 | 24 | 1 | 1 | The allure of the Jeep brand, easy-to-use controls. | Slow, noisy, rough riding, short on agility, uncomfortable rear seat. |
| | 2021 Chevrolet TrailBlazer | Not Tested | NA | NA | 1 | 1 | | |

HOW TO READ THE RATINGS

Recommended vehicles, indicated with a check mark (✓), are the models with the highest Overall Scores that meet the threshold in their category.

Make • Model reflect the vehicle we tested and its engine displacement.

Overall Score reflects a vehicle's performance in our road tests; the latest results from the reliability and owner satisfaction sections of CR's exclusive Annual Auto Surveys; the availability of frontal crash prevention systems with forward collision warning, automatic emergency braking, and pedestrian detection, along with blind spot warning; and, if available, results from government and insurance-industry crash tests.

Survey Results reflect findings from CR's Annual Auto Surveys, completed by Consumer Reports members.

Predicted reliability is our determination of how well a model will hold up, based on the problems that members reported in CR's Annual Auto Surveys, which include data on around 420,000 vehicles.

Owner satisfaction is based on the percentage of surveyed owners who said they would definitely buy the same car again. We use a model's latest three years of data to determine the prediction, provided it hasn't been redesigned or significantly updated. In cases where we have insufficient survey responses, or when a model is all-new or redesigned, we use our expert judgment based on brand track record and similar models to predict reliability and owner-satisfaction ratings.

Road-Test Results include CR's test findings that we feel are the most relevant. We buy and test between 50 and 60 vehicles each year, driving them for thousands of miles and putting them through more than 50 tests and evaluations. The results of these tests make up our road-test score. Some tests, such as those for braking and fuel economy, are measured with instruments; categories such as seat and ride comfort, noise, and fit and finish are graded by our experts. The Usability rating is a combination of our testers' assessments of the ease of performing everyday driving tasks, as well as cockpit ergonomics and interface design. The energy consumption of electric vehicles is expressed in a miles-per-gallon equivalent rating (MPGe). Energy consumption for plug-in hybrids is listed in electric and gas modes.

Highs and lows give a quick summary of a model's notable strengths and weaknesses.

Why Some Vehicles Are Not Rated
Certain models have been redesigned or extensively refreshed since our last test, or are new. All are scheduled to be included in future road tests. Models include the Chevrolet Corvette, Hyundai Sonata, Mazda CX-30, Mercedes-Benz GLB, Nissan Sentra, Toyota Highlander, and Volkswagen Passat.

What Our Ratings Symbols Mean



Go to [CR.org/newcarbuyingguide](https://www.consumerreports.org/newcarbuyingguide) for advice on whether you should buy or lease your next new car, and other car shopping tips.