

2018 Subaru Forester

Recommended

CR Overall 26 MPG
Ranked # 1 of 19
Compact sport-utility vehicles



Road Test 85/100

Predicted Reliability 5/5

Predicted Owner Satisfaction 5/5

THE FOLLOWING TEST RESULTS ARE BASED ON THE: 2.5I PREMIUM 4-DOOR SUV AWD, 2.5-LITER 4-CYL, CVT

Safety

Frontal Crash Prevention	
Forward Collision Warning (FCW)	Optional
Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) City	Optional
Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) Hwy	Optional

Performance

Acceleration	3/5
0-60 mph (sec.)	8.7 sec
CR Accident Avoidance	4/5
Transmission	5/5
Fuel Economy	4/5
CR's Overall Mileage (mpg)	26 mpg
CR's City Mileage (mpg)	18 mpg
CR's Highway Mileage (mpg)	35 mpg
Braking	5/5
Braking From 60 MPH Dry (ft.)	127 ft.
Braking From 60 MPH Wet (ft.)	140 ft.
Emergency Handling	4/5
Avoidance Speed Maneuver (mph)	52.5 mph

Comfort/Convenience

Ride	3/5
Noise	3/5
Front Seat Comfort	4/5
Rear Seat Comfort	5/5
Interior Fit & Finish	3/5
Controls & Display	5/5
Trunk/Cargo Area	3/5
Luggage/Cargo Capacity (cu. ft.)	35.5 cu. ft.

Road Test

Subaru's popular Forester continues to put function in front of form. It stands out from the crowd, resisting the contemporary trend toward making SUVs look like sports coupes with descending rooflines and curvaceous bodies. Instead, the Forester acs the fundamentals with a space-efficient design, large windows, and big square doors. That recipe has resulted in the easiest access and the best view out of almost any vehicle, and one of the roomiest rear seats in the class, with copious head and leg room.

By adapting various fuel-efficient technologies, including using a continuously variable automatic transmission (CVT), the Forester delivers a class-leading 26 mpg overall and 35 mpg on the highway. Performance is decent from that standard 2.5-liter, 170-hp four-cylinder engine; an uplevel 2.0-liter, 250-hp turbocharged four-cylinder XT version is available. Unlike most modern small SUVs, a manual transmission can be had, but only with the base engine and basic trim levels.

Safety is a priority, as evidenced by top marks in Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) crash test results and the benefits of excellent driver visibility. Plus, all Foresters have a standard backup camera. Advanced safety gear is readily available as part of Subaru's EyeSight suite of safety equipment, including lane-departure and forward-collision warning

Highs

- Class-leading fuel economy
- Extremely practical package, with a roomy rear seat, simple controls, and spacious cargo area
- Unusually good view out, especially for a modern car
- Easy access
- Very capable all-wheel-drive system, with some limited off-road ability
- Well-equipped for the money
- Optional EyeSight options package includes comprehensive electronic safety features
- Available manual transmission
- Contemporary touch-screen infotainment system

Lows

- Cabin can get noisy
- Fairly basic and spartan interior

systems coupled with automatic emergency braking. All-wheel-drive is standard on all Foresters; it is very capable in wintry conditions.

The ride is supple — one of the best in the segment. Handling is responsive and very secure, but the Forester isn't as agile as, say, the Ford Escape or Mazda CX-5.

Don't expect luxury inside; interior trim remains quite austere, with several especially cheap-looking touches. It's not particularly quiet inside either, with noticeable engine noise when accelerating. Updates for 2016 included a new touch-screen infotainment system that significantly improves the Forester's connectivity quotient; previous Foresters fell far behind the tech curve. 2017 brings more luxury features, like a heated steering wheel and blind-spot monitoring, plus added noise insulation and engine tweaks for minor fuel economy improvements.

Overall, if you're looking for a small SUV that's very functional and fuel-efficient, the Forester is hard to beat. It also offers a lot for the money. The mid-trim Forester 2.5i Premium has a huge sunroof, heated front seats, and a power driver's seat, all for about \$29,000.

To read the full road text please visit Consumer Reports at <https://www.consumerreports.org/cars/subaru/forester/2018/road-test>.

Best version/options to get:

Here are the major decisions you need to make when picking a Forester:

All wheel drive (AWD) Unlike most SUVs, which offer either two-, four-, or all-wheel-drive, all Foresters have standard AWD.

Which engine? Most Foresters have a non-turbo 2.5-liter four-cylinder and a CVT automatic. A manual transmission is still available, rare these days. XT models have a turbocharged four-cylinder that is faster and smoother.

Which trim line? The 2.5i version is rather basic. The Premium trim adds a power driver's seat, alloy wheels, and a sunroof. Limited models bring leather, a power tailgate, and blind-spot monitoring. Touring trim includes a heated steering wheel and exclusive cosmetic bits like available brown leather.

Looking for advanced safety gear? Subaru's EyeSight system includes forward-collision warning and automatic emergency braking. It is optional on all but the base 2.5i. Blind-spot monitoring is optional on the Premium trim and standard on Limited and Touring.

Best one to choose: The best value is a 2.5i Premium with the EyeSight safety package. Equipped with the CVT automatic transmission, it stickers for about \$29,000.

Notable changes:

For 2018, EyeSight equipped models gain high-beam assist and reverse auto braking.

Vehicle Ratings

These charts provide a quick reference guide to all of the vehicles that Consumer Reports has recently tested. At a glance, you can see how each vehicle matches up with its competitors.

Guide to the Charts

► **Price as tested** is the sticker price at the time of purchase of our test vehicle, including an automatic transmission (unless otherwise noted) and typical equipment.

► **Overall Score** accounts for a vehicle's performance in our road tests, results from our reliability and owner satisfaction surveys, the availability of a frontal crash-prevention system, and, if

applicable, crash tests performed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

► **Survey results** include predicted reliability, our forecast of how well a new car will hold up based on its recent history from our 2016 Annual Auto Survey. The survey includes owner satisfaction, which is based on the percentage of subscribers who

say they would definitely buy or lease their vehicle again. Reliability and owner satisfaction predictions for new or redesigned models are based on other models from the manufacturer and the history of the previous generation. A model that is based on limited data for either category is identified with an asterisk (*). ► **Road-test score** is based on results from more than 50 objective

and subjective tests and evaluations performed at our 327-acre Auto Test Center, located in central Connecticut.

► **Overall MPG** is the overall miles per gallon a vehicle achieved in Consumer Reports' fuel-economy tests, reflecting a mix of city and highway driving.

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

Ratings & Reference



Rec.	Make & Model	Overall Score	Survey Results		Test Results		Highs	Lows
			Predicted Reliability	Owner Satisfaction	Road Test Score	Overall MPG		
SUVs: COMPACT								
✓	Subaru Forester 2.5i Premium	83	↑	↑	85	26	Fuel economy, visibility, braking, roomy interior, access, controls.	Noise, touchy throttle.
✓	Toyota RAV4 XLE	79	↑	↓	75	24	Fuel economy, transmission, access, roominess, reliability, standard forward-collision avoidance.	Driver's seat lumbar support, too easy to turn off daytime running lights.
✓	Toyota RAV4 Hybrid XLE	78	↑	↓	74	31	Fuel economy, transmission, access, roominess, reliability, standard forward-collision avoidance.	Driver's seat lumbar support, too easy to turn off daytime running lights.
✓	Kia Sportage LX (2.4L)	76	↑*	↑*	78	23	Handling, powertrain, room, easy controls.	So-so fuel economy, rear visibility.
✓	Hyundai Tucson Sport (1.6T)	75	↓	↑	79	26	Room, quietness, ride, agility, braking, fuel economy, upscale features, long warranty.	Vibration at low speeds, rear visibility, expensive with options.
✓	Ford Escape Titanium (2.0T)	74	↓	↓	79	22	Agility, ride, quietness, solid feel, access.	Narrow driving position.
✓	Mazda CX-5 Touring (2.5L)	74	↑	↑	74	25	Fuel economy, agility, rear-seat, blind-spot detection.	Ride, noise, cumbersome infotainment system, low dash vents.
✓	Hyundai Tucson SE (2.0L)	73	↓	↑	76	24	Room, ride, agility, braking, upscale features, long warranty.	Acceleration, engine noise, rear visibility, expensive with options.
✓	Honda CR-V EX	72	↑	↑	73	24	Rear seat, roomy and functional, fuel economy, active safety features on higher trims.	Ride, noise, unintuitive infotainment system.
✓	Volkswagen Tiguan SEL	72	↑	↓	74	21	Agility, transmission, access, fit and finish, rear seat.	Ride and noise with 19-inch wheels.
✓	Ford Escape SE (1.6T)**	71	↓	↓	75	22	Agility, ride, quietness, solid feel, access.	Narrow driving position.
✓	Nissan Rogue SV	71	↑	↓	74	24	Ride, access, spacious interior, fuel economy, optional surround-view camera, available third-row seat.	Engine noise, cloth front-seat lacks support, gets pricey.
	Mitsubishi Outlander SEL (4-cyl.)	60	↓*	↓*	59	24	Standard third-row seat, access, visibility.	Agility, acceleration, engine noise, unsettled ride, no A/C vents for rear passengers.
	Jeep Cherokee Limited (V6)	55	↓	↓	71	21	Quietness, access, rear seat, high-end options.	Reliability, transmission, choppy ride, agility, visibility, confusing pricing structure.

* Based on limited data

Key to the Ratings

The vehicles are divided by category and ranked according to their Overall Score. Some models are included in multiple categories, as appropriate. Sometimes we also include vehicles that are viable alternatives to those in a specific category. **Recommended vehicles** are those that meet Consumer Reports' stringent testing, reliability, and safety standards.

To earn our Recommendation, noted with a ✓, vehicles must perform well in our testing; have average or better reliability; and perform adequately if included in government or industry safety tests. In addition, pickups and SUVs must not have tipped up in the government's rollover test, if evaluated. Models with subpar crash-test results are identified by (I).

Why Some Vehicles Are Not in the Ratings

These models have been redesigned or extensively freshened since our last test, and they are scheduled to be included in future road tests: Audi Allroad; Buick LaCrosse; GMC Acadia; Kia Cadenza; Lincoln MKT; Mercedes-Benz E-Class and SLC; Nissan Armada; Porsche 718 Boxster and Panamera, and the Subaru Impreza. For updates, check a future issue of Consumer Reports Cars or ConsumerReports.org.