

OVERALL SCORE

86

CR Recommended

## 2021 Subaru Outback

CR MPG Overall 24/ City 16/ Hwy 32 mpg  
#2 of 25 Midsize Sport-Utility Vehicles

**HIGHS**

- Ride
- Transmission
- Seat comfort
- Driving position
- Integrated cross bars
- Visibility
- Standard automatic emergency braking

**LOWS**

- Some controls

ROAD TEST

91/100

PREDICTED RELIABILITY

4/5

PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

4/5



## Road Test Results

### Performance

Acceleration	4/5
0 to 60 mph	7.1 sec
Transmission	5/5
Fuel Economy	3/5
CR's Overall Mileage	24 mpg
CR's City Mileage	16 mpg
CR's Highway Mileage	32 mpg
Annual Fuel Cost	\$1,210
Braking	4/5
Emergency Handling	4/5

### Comfort/Convenience

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

## Survey Results

### Reliability History



### Owner Satisfaction



## CR Road Test Results

The Outback is a raised wagon with standard all-wheel drive that serves as a smart alternative to more traditional SUVs. This redesigned model doesn't stray from its successful formula. It is again a comfortable, functional vehicle that's well suited for every day commutes and weekend adventures. Its size and capabilities allow the Outback to compare favorably with small and midsize SUVs.

The Outback has a solid feel, with a very comfortable ride that outshines some luxury SUVs. The elevated ground clearance and standard all-wheel drive help make the Outback ready to tackle light off-road duties. Handling is responsive and secure. We were impressed with its performance in our accident avoidance maneuver.

The standard 182-hp, 2.5-liter engine does the job and gets good fuel economy, but that engine becomes loud under duress. The uplevel turbocharged 260-hp, 2.4-liter engine (denoted as XT in trim names) transforms the Outback, granting it effortless punch and a quieter demeanor. The CVT faithfully mimics traditional gear shifts, and the turbo power

masks some of the common quirks, such as revs rising much quicker than the speed, found with that type of transmission. We got 24 mpg overall with the XT on regular gasoline. A Legacy we also tested with the standard, non-turbo engine returned 28 mpg overall.

The infotainment system uses a large, colorful screen that suffers from slow response time and the need for multiple steps to perform some common climate functions.

The Outback has thoughtful touches throughout. For instance, it has a configurable roof rack with crossbars that can swivel into place when needed, and be tucked neatly away to reduce wind noise. Plus, it has a dual-position cargo cover that helps when loading (it can be nudged up to create a larger opening) and a dedicated storage spot for it when removed.

Standard safety equipment includes automatic emergency braking (AEB), forward collision warning (FCW), lane departure warning (LDW), and lane centering. It also includes adaptive cruise control (ACC). Blind spot warning and rear cross traffic warning are optional.

## Best Version to Get

Whether opting for the standard 2.5-liter or 2.4-liter turbo engine, we would gravitate toward the Limited trim level for the more supportive leather seats, power passenger seat, and power rear gate. Shoppers drawn to the lower Premium trim should choose the optional blind spot warning.

### Notable changes:

The redesigned Outback is based on Subaru's latest platform and shares most components with the Legacy. A 260-hp, 2.4-liter four-

cylinder turbocharged engine replaced the previous six-cylinder. Starting with the 2021 model year, steering responsive headlights, which are designed to swivel according to steering input to give added visibility in corners, are standard on all trims.

To read the full road test, visit [www.consumerreports.org/cars/subaru/outback/2021/road-test](http://www.consumerreports.org/cars/subaru/outback/2021/road-test)

## New Cars

(as of November 2020)



CR Recommended	Make & Model	Overall Score	Road Test Results		Survey Results		Highs	Lows
			Road-test score	Overall mpg	Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction		
✓	2021 Kia Telluride	97	97	21	⬆️	⬆️	Ride, quietness, braking, powertrain, interior room, well-equipped for price.	Agility.
✓	2021 Subaru Outback	86	91	24	⚠️	⬆️	Ride, transmission, seat comfort, driving position, integrated cross bars, visibility, standard automatic emergency braking.	Some controls.
✓	2021 Hyundai Palisade	85	88	21	⬆️	⬆️	Powertrain, interior room, access, quiet cabin, standard automatic emergency brake.	Agility, gear selector.
✓	2021 Toyota Highlander	84	86	22	⬆️	⬆️	Smooth V6 engine, hybrid version's fuel economy, ride, controls, second-row seats.	Agility, too easy to turn off daytime running lights.
✓	2021 Ford Edge	83	84	22	⬆️	⚠️	Handling, quietness, braking, interior room, access, standard safety features.	Driving position.
✓	2021 Mazda CX-9	80	79	22	⬆️	⬆️	Nimble handling for its size, effortless power delivery, comfortable ride, quiet cabin, Grand Touring and Signature versions plusher than the competition.	Infotainment system is unintuitive, not as roomy as some competitors, including a tight third-row seat, short on towing capacity compared to V6-powered rivals.
✓	2020 Hyundai Santa Fe	80	80	21	⬆️	⬆️	Handling, controls, rear-seat room and access, standard safety features.	Uneven power delivery, ride is a touch firm.
✓	2020 Nissan Murano	79	77	21	⬆️	⚠️	Plush cabin, powerful engine, simple infotainment system, standard automatic emergency braking.	Hindered outward visibility to rear and sides, overly light and vague steering robs driver confidence, CVT idiosyncrasy is not for everyone.
✓	2021 Honda Pilot	72	80	20	⚠️	⚠️	Versatile interior, nifty one-button folding seat access to third row, smooth engine, rides comfortably and is quiet, can be had with eight-passenger capacity, standard forward collision warning and automatic emergency braking.	Handling short on agility, some controls including pushbutton gear selector.
	2021 Chevrolet Traverse	69	95	20	⬇️	⬆️	Rides comfortably, has a quiet interior, easy-to-use infotainment system, has a rear-seat reminder system to make sure kids aren't forgotten inside.	Advanced safety features available only on the top trims, driver seat has only two-way lumbar support adjustment, manual sunshade for optional sunroof.
	2021 Chevrolet Blazer	67	93	19	⬇️	⚠️	Acceleration, braking, transmission, quietness, controls.	Visibility, low dash vents, no standard advanced safety features.
	2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee	67	80	18	⚠️	⬆️	Versatility and towing capability, off-road capability when properly optioned, refined, with a quiet well-finished cabin, composed ride, and supportive seats, optional Uconnect infotainment system is one of the most user-friendly available.	Fuel economy with the gasoline V6 has fallen behind the curve.
	2021 Honda Passport	64	79	21	⬇️	⚠️	Acceleration, quietness, interior room, standard advanced safety features.	Ride, lackluster handling.
	2021 Toyota 4Runner	64	55	18	⬆️	⬆️	Very capable off-road, long history of being extremely reliable.	Clumsy handling and unsettled ride; big climb to get inside; low ceiling hurts driving position and visibility; tight interior space given its outside dimensions; loud engine roar; only top-trim Limited version offers automatic four-wheel-drive; gets rather expensive, given level of equipment and interior finish.
	2021 Volkswagen Atlas Cross Sport	64	81	21	⬇️	⚠️	Interior room, access, controls.	Too wide for tight parking spaces.
	2021 Subaru Ascent	60	93	22	⬇️	⬆️	Ride, quietness, interior room, visibility, braking, controls, standard AEB.	Agility.
	2021 Volkswagen Atlas	57	84	20	⬇️	⚠️	Huge interior, roomy third-row seat, smooth powertrain, easy to use controls, standard automatic emergency braking.	Outright acceleration trails main competitors.
	2020 Nissan Pathfinder	54	72	18	⬇️	⬇️	Practical package with easy access, a spacious interior, and simple controls; second-row seat can slide forward to ease access to the rear, even with a child seat strapped to it; has a rear seat reminder to prevent leaving a child in the car; standard automatic emergency braking.	Lackluster handling, second row short on thigh support, so-so rear and side visibility, 18 mpg is not stellar.
	2021 Dodge Durango	49	83	18	⬇️	⚠️	Comfortable riding, quiet cabin, relatively nimble handling, supportive seats, towing capacity is higher than most competitors, Uconnect touch-screen control system is among the best.	Fuel economy with either V6 or V8 engines, rear visibility is so-so.
	2021 Ford Explorer	42	78	21	⬇️	⚠️	Agility, controls, interior room.	Ride, low-speed transmission shifts, price.
	2021 Jeep Wrangler	29	36	18	⬇️	⬆️	Off-road ability, strong V6 powertrain.	Stiff ride, lots of wind noise, awkward access, fuel economy.
	2021 Ford Bronco	Not Tested	NA	NA	⬇️	⬆️		
	2021 Hyundai Santa Fe	Not Tested	NA	NA	⬆️	⬆️		
	2021 Kia Sorento	Not Tested	NA	NA	⚠️	⬆️		
	2021 Toyota Venza	In Test	NA	NA	⬆️	⬆️		

### 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 Ford Bronco, Hyundai Santa Fe, Kia Sorento, and Toyota Venza.

#### What Our Ratings Symbols Mean



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