

Sensible Goes Electric

Subaru Adds Hybrid Power To Its Practical Crossover Formula

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

Subaru's Forester has long exemplified practical, no-nonsense transportation.

Now for 2025, the addition of a hybrid powertrain brings welcome improvements in efficiency without sacrificing the qualities that have made the model a perennial favorite.

The new Forester Hybrid combines a 2.5-liter boxer engine with electric motors for a combined output of 194 horsepower. While that's a modest bump over the standard model, the electrification brings significant efficiency gains with EPA ratings of 35 mpg in the city and 34 on the highway, impressive figures for an all-wheel-drive vehicle with 8.7 inches of ground clearance.

Behind the wheel, the Forester Hybrid feels reassuringly solid and surprisingly refined.

The cabin remains noticeably quieter than the non-hybrid version, with the electric assistance smoothing out power delivery at lower speeds.

Acceleration, however, remains merely adequate. During testing on a construction-laden stretch of Interstate 30, early planning was necessary to reach safe merging speeds.

Where the Forester continues to excel is its exceptional utility. The boxy,



The 2025 Subaru Forester Hybrid maintains the model's upright, practical shape while adding hybrid badges and unique wheels that hint at its improved efficiency.

upright shape maximizes interior volume, creating a cavernous cargo area that puts some larger vehicles to shame.

With rear seats folded, the flat load floor and wide opening make it ideal for hauling bulky items that wouldn't fit in sleeker-styled competitors.

Despite its practical shape and substantial ground clearance, the Forester drives with car-like composure. Steering is precise, the turning radius tight, and visibility exceptional thanks to the large greenhouse.

The standard

Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive provides confident traction in all conditions without any driver intervention required.

The Premium trim I tested comes impressively equipped with an 11.6-inch touchscreen, digital instrument cluster, heated front seats, and Subaru's comprehensive EyeSight driver assistance suite.

Interior materials prioritize durability over luxury, but everything feels well-assembled and purposeful.

The upright seating position provides excellent visibility, while the squared-off

windows create an airy feel for all passengers. Rear seat space accommodates adults comfortably, while the wide-opening doors make child seat installation less of a back-straining exercise.

Off-road capability remains a Forester strength, with the X-MODE system optimizing the all-wheel-drive system for challenging conditions. The hybrid system integrates seamlessly, maintaining all the ground clearance and capability of the standard model, something not all hybrid SUVs can claim.

The Forester Hybrid faces

strong competition from the Toyota RAV4 Hybrid and Honda CR-V Hybrid, but it counters with superior off-road capability and better visibility. Its combination of efficiency, utility and all-weather confidence makes a compelling case for practical-minded shoppers.

For those who prioritize function over flash, the new Forester Hybrid represents a logical evolution of an already excellent package. Its blend of efficiency, capability and thoughtful design delivers everyday satisfaction that flashier competitors often miss.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2025 Subaru Forester Premium Hybrid (\$34,995). Options: None. Price as tested (including \$1,420 destination charge): \$36,415

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 105.1 in.
Length: 183.3 in.
Width: 72 in.
Height: 68.1 in.
Power: 2.4-liter four cylinder and two electric motors (194 combined hp)
Transmission: Continuously variable
Fuel Economy: 35 city, 34 highway

RATINGS

Style: 7
Performance: 6
Price: 9
Handling: 8
Ride: 7
Comfort: 7
Quality: 8
Overall: 9

WHY BUY IT?

The Forester Hybrid combines exceptional utility, impressive fuel economy and genuine off-road capability in a practical package that works equally well for outdoor adventures and everyday family use.



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Where the Forester continues to excel is its exceptional utility. The boxy, upright shape maximizes interior volume, creating a cavernous cargo area that puts some larger vehicles to shame.



With its spacious, airy cabin and new digital displays, the Forester Hybrid prioritizes visibility, comfort and user-friendly technology over flashy design elements.

With rear seats folded, the flat load floor and wide opening make it ideal for hauling bulky items that wouldn’t fit in sleeker-styled competitors.

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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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