

Speed Suits the RAV4

GR SPORT Makes Toyota's Top Seller Quicker and Sharper

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM

The accelerator in the 2026 RAV4 GR SPORT feels almost impatient.

Press it, and Toyota's familiar compact crossover answers immediately. The 324-horsepower plug-in hybrid system gives it serious thrust, but the bigger change is how alert the whole vehicle feels compared with a standard RAV4.

That quick response is unusual in this class. Most compact crossovers are tuned to feel smooth, quiet and inoffensive. The GR SPORT feels eager.

Toyota kept the suspension on the civilized side of the GR family. It rides 15 millimeters lower than other RAV4s, with dedicated springs and dampers, a front performance damper, wider-track 20-inch wheels and summer performance tires.

You feel those changes every time the road bends. Steering response is quicker, body motions are tighter and the RAV4 feels much more willing to change direction.

It's firmer than the standard version, but it isn't concrete-stiff. Broken pavement still feels like pavement, not a punishment.

That makes the GR SPORT easier to enjoy every day than I'd expected. It also leaves Toyota somewhere to go if it ever decides to build



The redesigned 2026 Toyota RAV4 combines upright SUV proportions, angular bodywork and crisp lighting in a cleaner shape that looks tougher and more modern.

an unhinged, full-bore GR RAV4 that's louder, stiffer and more obnoxious.

The plug-in hybrid powertrain fits this personality perfectly. Its 2.5-liter four-cylinder works with electric motors and all-wheel drive to produce 324 horsepower, and the electric assist creates the instant snap that made this RAV4 so much fun around town.

The efficiency numbers are almost as impressive. The EPA window sticker lists 49 miles of all-electric range, 86 MPGe and 37 mpg combined when running on gasoline. Toyota also estimates 40 mpg city and 33

highway for the GR SPORT.

For owners who can charge at home, the plug-in system makes sense beyond the speed. A lot of daily driving can happen on electricity, while the gasoline engine is always there for longer trips.

The cabin is where the price gets harder to defend.

My tester came to \$51,335 including destination. At that number, I wanted richer materials than the RAV4 delivers. The interior is well assembled and functional, but too many surfaces still look and feel like they belong in a mainstream compact crossover.

The missing ventilated seats bothered me more. Toyota offers them on the XSE, but my GR SPORT didn't have them. After a week of triple-digit Texas temperatures, I missed that feature.

The sport seats themselves fit the mission well, with substantial bolsters and GR detailing. A 12.9-inch touchscreen and 12.3-inch digital gauge cluster give the cabin a modern look, and the controls are easy enough to learn.

Practicality remains one of the RAV4's strengths. The plug-in model still offers 33.6 cubic feet of cargo

space behind the second row, so the performance treatment hasn't erased the reason people buy crossovers in the first place.

Price remains the biggest hurdle. The GR SPORT starts at \$48,500, and this one added premium paint, a black roof, wheel locks and cross bars before the \$1,450 destination charge.

Toyota's reputation for dependability and strong resale value helps make that number easier to swallow. Still, buyers who care more about a plush cabin than outright speed may want to compare other options.

Personally, I'd still rather split these jobs between two vehicles. Give me a good sports car when I want to play and a comfortable cruiser when I want to relax. Mixing those missions always creates compromise.

Most buyers need one vehicle to cover both jobs, and the RAV4 GR SPORT does it unusually well. It's fast enough to be exciting, sharp enough to make an on-ramp interesting, efficient enough to commute on electricity and practical enough to live with every day.

Toyota also showed enough restraint to keep the RAV4 part intact. I like it a lot.

If a louder, nastier full-bore GR version ever appears, I want the keys to that one, too.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2026 Toyota RAV4 GR SPORT Plug-in Hybrid AWD (\$48,500). Options: premium paint (\$475), two-tone exterior paint (\$500), black chrome wheel locks (\$90), low-profile cross bars (\$320). Price as tested (including \$1,450 destination charge): \$51,335

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 105.9 in.
Length: 182.9 in.
Width: 74.0 in.
Height: 66.3 in.
Engine: 2.5-liter plug-in hybrid four-cylinder (324 hp combined)
Transmission: Continuously variable
MPG: 40 city, 33 highway
Electric range: 49 miles
MPGe: 86 combined

RATINGS

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

WHY BUY IT?

The RAV4 GR SPORT gives buyers sharp reflexes, strong acceleration, useful electric range and Toyota practicality while keeping the ride livable every day.



The redesigned 2026 Toyota RAV4 combines upright SUV proportions, angular bodywork and crisp lighting in a cleaner shape that looks tougher and more modern.

Speed Suits the RAV4

GR SPORT Makes Toyota’s Top Seller Quicker and Sharper

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM

The accelerator in the 2026 RAV4 GR SPORT feels almost impatient. Press it, and Toyota’s familiar compact crossover answers immediately. The 324-horsepower plug-in hybrid system gives it serious thrust, but the bigger change is how alert the whole vehicle feels compared with a standard RAV4.

That quick response is unusual in this class. Most compact crossovers are tuned to feel smooth, quiet and inoffensive. The GR SPORT feels eager.

Toyota kept the suspension on the civilized side of the GR family. It rides 15 millimeters lower than other RAV4s, with dedicated springs and dampers, a front performance damper, wider-track 20-inch wheels and summer performance tires.

You feel those changes every time the road bends. Steering response is quicker, body motions are tighter and the RAV4 feels much more willing to change direction.

It’s firmer than the standard version, but it isn’t concrete-stiff. Broken pavement still feels like pavement, not a punishment.

That makes the GR SPORT easier to enjoy every day than I’d expected. It also leaves Toyota somewhere to go if it ever decides to build an unhinged, full-bore GR RAV4 that’s louder, stiffer and more obnoxious.

The plug-in hybrid powertrain fits this personality perfectly. Its 2.5-liter four-cylinder works with electric motors and all-wheel drive to produce 324 horsepower, and the electric assist creates the instant snap that made this RAV4 so much fun around town.



Inside, the RAV4 uses a broad digital dashboard, large touchscreen and straightforward controls to create a practical cabin with a more modern feel.

The efficiency numbers are almost as impressive. The EPA window sticker lists 49 miles of all-electric range, 86 MPGe and 37 mpg combined when running on gasoline. Toyota also estimates 40 mpg city and 33 highway for the GR SPORT.

For owners who can charge at home, the plug-in system makes sense beyond the speed. A lot of daily driving can happen on electricity, while the gasoline engine is always there for longer trips.

The cabin is where the price gets harder

to defend.

My tester came to \$51,335 including destination. At that number, I wanted richer materials than the RAV4 delivers. The interior is well assembled and functional, but too many surfaces still look and feel like they belong in a mainstream compact crossover.

The missing ventilated seats bothered me more. Toyota offers them on the XSE, but my GR SPORT didn’t have them. After a week of triple-digit Texas temperatures, I missed that feature.

The sport seats themselves fit the mission well, with substantial bolsters and GR detailing. A 12.9-inch touchscreen and 12.3-inch digital gauge cluster give the cabin a modern look, and the controls are easy enough to learn.

Practicality remains one of the RAV4’s strengths. The plug-in model still offers 33.6 cubic feet of cargo space behind the second row, so the performance treatment hasn’t erased the reason people buy crossovers in the first place.

Price remains the biggest hurdle. The GR SPORT starts at \$48,500, and this one added premium paint, a black roof, wheel locks and cross bars before the \$1,450 destination charge.

Toyota’s reputation for dependability and strong resale value helps make that number easier to swallow. Still, buyers who care more about a plush cabin than outright speed may want to compare other options.

Personally, I’d still rather split these jobs between two vehicles. Give me a good sports car when I want to play and a comfortable cruiser when I want to relax. Mixing those missions always creates compromise.

Most buyers need one vehicle to cover both jobs, and the RAV4 GR SPORT does it unusually well. It’s fast enough to be exciting, sharp enough to make an on-ramp interesting, efficient enough to commute on electricity and practical enough to live with every day.

Toyota also showed enough restraint to keep the RAV4 part intact. I like it a lot.

If a louder, nastier full-bore GR version ever appears, I want the keys to that one, too.

A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2026 Toyota RAV4 GR SPORT Plug-in Hybrid AWD (\$48,500). Options: premium paint (\$475), two-tone exterior paint (\$500), black chrome wheel locks (\$90), low-profile cross bars (\$320). Price as tested (including \$1,450 destination charge): \$51,335

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 105.9 in.
Length: 182.9 in.
Width: 74.0 in.
Height: 66.3 in.
Engine: 2.5-liter plug-in hybrid four-cylinder (324 hp combined)
Transmission: Continuously variable
MPG: 40 city, 33 highway
Electric range: 49 miles
MPGe: 86 combined

RATINGS

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

WHY BUY IT?

The RAV4 GR SPORT gives buyers sharp reflexes, strong acceleration, useful electric range and Toyota practicality while keeping the ride livable every day.