

CARGAZING

Getting Smart, Staying Strong

Fresh Tech Makes Ford's Family SUV More Capable Than Ever

By Derek Price

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Family SUVs don't have to be boring, and the refreshed 2025 Ford Explorer proves it.

With muscular styling outside and thoughtful updates inside, this latest version of America's best-selling SUV shows why it's managed to stay popular for nearly 35 years.

The most dramatic changes for 2025 happen in the cabin, where a new 12.3-inch touchscreen runs Google's intuitive interface. It's a massive improvement over Ford's previous system, with crisp graphics and quick responses.

Even better, the Explorer is expanding the availability of BlueCruise, Ford's impressive hands-free driving system that works on most major highways.

After extensive testing, BlueCruise proves to be more than just marketing hype. The system confidently handles highway driving, including lane changes initiated simply by using the turn signal. While the 90-day trial period feels short, the subscription cost — \$49.99 monthly or \$495 annually — seems reasonable given how much stress it removes from long trips.

The Explorer's comfort credentials extend beyond its tech. Our ST-Line tester's optional massaging seats provide welcome relief



Refreshed styling keeps the Explorer's muscular presence intact while adding modern LED lighting elements for 2025.

during extended drives, while the hushed cabin rivals luxury SUVs costing thousands more.

The first two rows offer abundant space, though the third row remains best suited for occasional use.

Power comes from a 2.3-liter turbocharged four-cylinder that delivers 300 horsepower and 310 pound-

feet of torque through a 10-speed automatic transmission.

While adequate for most situations, the engine's drone under hard acceleration lacks refinement.

Those seeking more grunt can opt for the 400-horsepower V6 in ST and Platinum models.

The Explorer's

broad-shouldered styling has aged well, and the 2025 updates — including a revised grille and new LED lighting — keep it looking fresh.

Interior quality remains a mixed bag, with some materials feeling less premium than key rivals offer. Ford's reliability ratings also continue to trail segment lead-

ers.

Yet the Explorer's fundamental appeal endures because it nails the basics that matter most to families: space, comfort, capability and style.

The addition of cutting-edge tech like BlueCruise and Google integration only strengthens its position as a segment leader.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2025 Ford Explorer ST-Line (\$44,615).
Options: Premium paint (\$495), premium package (\$1,360) Price as tested (including \$1,595 destination charge): \$48,065

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 119.1 in.
Length: 198.7 in.
Width: 78.9 in.
Height: 69.6 in.
Engine: 2.3-liter turbocharged four cylinder (300 hp, 310 lbs. ft.)
Transmission: 10-speed automatic
MPG: 18 city, 25 highway

RATINGS

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

WHY BUY IT?

If you want a three-row SUV that does everything well while offering some of the most advanced driver assistance features available, the Explorer deserves a spot on your shopping list.

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A new Google-based infotainment system brings welcome improvements to the Explorer's technology interface.

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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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