

CARGAZING

Making Rugged Feel Refined

Latest Mazda CX-50 Blends Premium Cabin With Adventurous Spirit

By Derek Price

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When luxury brands keep pushing their prices higher, Mazda continues its upward march into the premium territory they're abandoning.

The 2025 CX-50 shows why this strategy works, delivering near-luxury refinement in a rugged crossover wrapper that's equally at home on city streets or snowy backroads.

From its first impression, the CX-50 strikes an interesting balance. While black body cladding and an adventurous stance suggest off-road capability, its elegant proportions and precise detailing speak more to Audi than Subaru.

This duality defines the entire vehicle.

Power from the turbocharged 2.5-liter engine is impressive, delivering 227 horsepower and 310 pound-feet of torque that make the CX-50 feel genuinely quick off the line.

The six-speed automatic transmission may have fewer gears than some competitors, but it makes up for it with smooth, intelligent shifting that always seems to find the right ratio for the situation.

Where the CX-50 really stands out is in its driving dynamics. The steering is precise and communicative, while the suspension manages to deliver both engaging



Black body cladding and rugged proportions give the CX-50 an adventurous look while maintaining Mazda's signature elegant design language.

handling and reasonable comfort.

It's tuned for drivers who want to feel connected to the road rather than isolated from it — a Mazda hallmark.

During winter weather testing in a rare Texas snowstorm, its all-wheel-drive system proved capable and confidence-inspiring on slippery roads.

The interior sets new standards for the mainstream crossover segment. Materials feel premium throughout, with thoughtful design

touches and excellent fit and finish that wouldn't look out of place in an entry-level luxury vehicle.

The driving position is spot-on, and controls are oriented toward the driver in a way that feels distinctly sporting. Even small details like the weight of the door handles and the click of switchgear suggest careful attention to tactile quality.

Passenger space is good up front, with supportive seats and excellent visibility despite the relatively high

belts.

Cargo space is competitive for the class, with a low load floor that makes it easy to load heavy items.

At \$44,720 as tested, our CX-50 2.5 Turbo Premium Plus model isn't cheap. However, it justifies its price premium over mainstream competitors by delivering a more upscale experience.

The CX-50's few compromises come as a result of its driver-focused nature. The ride is firmer than some competitors, though never

harsh. Road noise is well-controlled but noticeable, particularly on coarse surfaces. And while the all-wheel-drive system handles slippery conditions with confidence, this is still more of an all-weather vehicle than a serious off-roader.

These are minor tradeoffs for a vehicle that so successfully bridges the gap between mainstream and luxury segments. The 2025 CX-50 proves that premium qualities don't require a premium badge — or price tag.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2025 Mazda CX-50 2.5 Turbo Premium Plus (\$43,300). Options: None. Price as tested (including \$1,420 destination charge): \$44,720

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 110.8 in.
Length: 185.8 in.
Width: 75.6 in.
Height: 63.9 in.
Engine: 2.5-liter turbocharged four cylinder (227 hp, 310 lbs. ft.)
Transmission: Six-speed automatic
MPG: 23 city, 29 highway

RATINGS

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

WHY BUY IT?

For buyers seeking premium qualities without the premium badge price, the CX-50 delivers refinement with legitimate outdoor capability and engaging dynamics.



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Where the CX-50 really stands out is in its driving dynamics. The steering is precise and communicative, while the suspension manages to deliver both engaging handling and reasonable comfort.



Premium materials and driver-focused ergonomics create a cabin that punches well above its mainstream price point.

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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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