

Trail Comes First

Lexus GX 550 SUV Puts Capability Ahead of Cushy Comfort

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

The 2026 Lexus GX doesn't try to hide the truck underneath.

Many luxury SUVs work hard to smooth away their rugged origins. The GX takes the opposite approach. Even in richly equipped Overtrail+ form, it feels like an off-road vehicle first and a luxury vehicle second.

That's not a complaint.

You feel the ladder frame, tall body and 33-inch all-terrain tires every time the GX rolls over a bump. The ride can be stiff and busy on rough pavement, where it doesn't deliver the creamy isolation some buyers may expect from a Lexus.

On smooth roads, though, it's a perfectly pleasant commuter. The cabin stays quiet, the seats are supportive and the commanding driving position makes traffic easier to manage.

The closest comparison I can make is the Mercedes-Benz G-Class. Both have an unusual mixture of stiffness and plushness. You're always aware of the rugged structure underneath, but you're surrounded by comfort at the same time.

That tension gives the GX its personality.

The Overtrail+ isn't just a rugged appearance package. It has a one-inch suspension lift, 9.8 inches of ground clearance, an electronic



The 2026 Lexus GX combines square-edged styling, tall proportions and body-on-frame construction in a luxury SUV that looks as capable as it feels.

locking rear differential and Lexus' Electronic Kinetic Dynamic Suspension System.

Crawl Control, Multi-Terrain Select and cameras that show what's under and around the vehicle add real usefulness on trails.

Power comes from a twin-turbocharged 3.4-liter V6 making 349 horsepower and 479 pound-feet of torque. It feels strong at low speeds, and the GX can tow more than 9,000 pounds in this configuration. Fuel economy is a predictable 15 mpg in the city and 21 on the highway.

Inside, the first two rows are exceptionally roomy. Overtrail models seat five instead of squeezing in a third row, leaving generous passenger space and a large, useful cargo area.

The cabin also gets the balance between technology and usability right. A 14-inch touchscreen handles infotainment, but Lexus keeps physical controls for frequently used functions. That's welcome in a vehicle designed to bounce over uneven ground.

Then there are the massaging front seats.

They sound almost absurd in a serious off-roader until you imagine climbing back inside after several hours on a rocky trail. At that point, they feel more useful than frivolous.

My tester's sticker reached \$89,890, so nobody will mistake the GX for a bargain. Still, the materials and attention to detail feel appropriate for a Lexus at this price.

I also place real value on Lexus' reputation for durability and quality. The twin-turbo V6 hasn't been around long enough to prove it can match the

extraordinary longevity of the brand's older V6 and V8 engines, though. I'm cautiously optimistic, but time will answer that question.

The GX makes a clear choice. It prioritizes articulation, ground clearance and toughness over the last degree of ride softness.

That'll make it the wrong luxury SUV for some buyers. It's also exactly why I like it.

Lexus didn't eliminate the truck feel from the GX entirely, and it feels more honest and memorable because of it.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2026 Lexus GX 550 Overtrail+ 4WD (\$81,395). Options: Digital key (\$375), head-up display (\$900), Mark Levinson premium audio (\$1,140), premium paint (\$500), tonneau cover (\$110), traffic jam assist (\$620), bi-tone paint (\$350), cool box (\$170), rock rails (\$990), off-road roof rack (\$1,580), cargo net (\$80), ball mount (\$80), all-weather cargo tray (\$150). Price as tested (including \$1,450 destination charge): \$89,890

BY THE NUMBERS

Wheelbase: 112.2 in.
Length: 197.1 in.
Width: 78.7 in.
Height: 77.2 in.
Engine: 3.4-liter twin-turbocharged V6 (349 hp, 479 lb.-ft.)
Transmission: 10-speed automatic
MPG: 15 city, 21 highway

RATINGS

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

WHY BUY IT?

The GX has a rare combination of serious trail hardware, generous passenger room and genuine Lexus pampering, as long as a firm truck-based ride suits your priorities.



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Inside, the GX combines generous passenger space, physical controls and a modern 14-inch touchscreen.

System.

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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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