

Brawny Family Hauler

Big-SUV Style Meets Everyday Comfort And Efficiency in Updated Explorer

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

The Ford Explorer has been a household name for decades, and the 2025 update reminds you why. It's not trying to be flashy or reinvent the segment.

It's about delivering comfort, versatility and a confident presence on the road.

From the driver's seat, the first impression is smoothness. Even in the base-level Active trim, the cabin is impressively quiet at highway speeds, filtering out the sort of wind and road noise you'd expect in this price class.

The ride feels tuned for comfort, with suspension compliance and plush, squishy seats that encourage long-haul road trips.

Power comes from a 2.3-liter turbocharged four-cylinder with 300 horsepower, a spec that feels plenty strong in practice.

Merging and passing require just a jab of the gas pedal, and the 10-speed automatic does a good job of keeping the engine in its sweet spot. The four-cylinder also helps the Explorer return respectable fuel economy for its size, with EPA ratings of 20 mpg in the city and 27 on the highway, solid numbers for a three-row SUV with this much muscle.

The Explorer's styling remains broad-shouldered



The 2025 Ford Explorer wears broad shoulders and a bold grille that emphasize its traditional SUV stance.

and brawny, giving it the stance of a traditional SUV even though it drives more like a crossover.

Ford's recent refresh brings a bigger grille and new lighting signatures, along with a handsome interior centerpiece: a standard 12.3-inch touchscreen. The new infotainment software feels modern, with crisp graphics and straightforward menus that are easy to learn.

Space is another Explorer strength. The second row is generous for both legroom and headroom, while the

third row is better suited for kids or short trips with adults.

Where it shines most is cargo versatility. The rear holds thoughtful storage cubbies built into the side walls and an underfloor compartment for stashing smaller items. Fold the seats flat and you get a cavernous, nearly van-like load space.

Still, not everything is perfect. Interior quality lags behind some rivals, with plastics and finishes that don't quite measure up to the Honda Pilot or Hyundai Palisade.

Handling is competent but not particularly engaging, with some body lean when cornering. Yet those shortcomings don't diminish the Explorer's core mission: being an approachable, family-friendly SUV that delivers a lot of capability for the money.

The tested Explorer Active 4WD rang in at \$48,520 with options, including premium paint, 20-inch wheels and the Active comfort package.

That's not bargain-basement territory, but it's competitive given its size, power

and features. If you want a three-row SUV that balances traditional SUV looks with modern-day efficiency, the Explorer remains a sensible choice.

In the end, the Explorer's appeal is its breadth. It can commute quietly, haul the family with ease, tackle weekend projects thanks to its versatile cargo hold, and still project the tough SUV image many buyers want.

For shoppers who want big-SUV presence without big-SUV thirst, the 2025 Explorer makes a strong case.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2025 Ford Explorer Active 4WD (\$41,755). Options: Premium paint (\$795), 20-inch wheels (\$1,295), active comfort package (\$3,080). Price as tested (including \$1,595 destination charge): \$48,520

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: 20 city, 27 highway

RATINGS

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

WHY BUY IT?

The 2025 Ford Explorer offers big-SUV style, everyday versatility and comfortable refinement at a competitive price.



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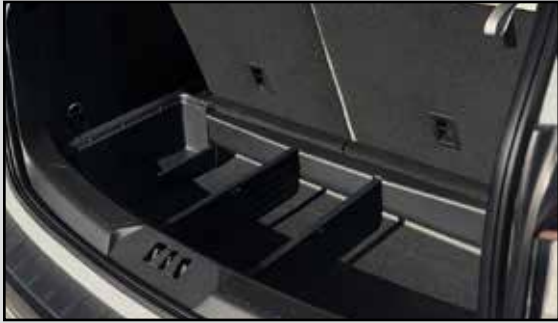
A large 12.3-inch touchscreen and roomy seating highlight the Explorer's modern, family-friendly cabin.

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built into the side walls and an underfloor compartment for stashing smaller items. Fold the seats flat and you get a cavernous, nearly van-like load space. Still, not everything is perfect. Interior quality lags behind some rivals, with plastics and finishes that don't quite measure up to the Honda Pilot or Hyundai Palisade. Handling is competent but not particularly engaging, with some body lean when cornering. Yet those shortcomings don't diminish the Explorer's core mission: being an approachable, family-friendly SUV that delivers a lot of capability for the money. The tested Explorer Active 4WD rang in at \$48,520 with options, including premium paint, 20-inch wheels and the Active comfort package. That's not bargain-basement territory, but it's competitive given its size, power and features. If you want a three-row SUV that balances traditional SUV looks with modern-day efficiency, the Explorer remains a sensible choice. In the end, the Explorer's appeal is its breadth. It can commute quietly, haul the family with ease, tackle weekend projects thanks to its versatile cargo hold, and still project the tough SUV image many buyers want. For shoppers who want big-SUV presence without big-SUV thirst, the 2025 Explorer makes a strong case.

A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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