

It's hard to beat a three-row SUV, and a midsize can be more manageable in town or maneuverable in the wild. Utilizing its format extremely well, Kia Telluride conquers all of the above. New in 2019 for 2020, interior space is well engineered, with exceptional second row legroom and a roomy third row with easy access. (Upper trims are seven-seaters; lower trims seat eight.) Power is solid, acceleration is strong, handling is smooth, and the turning circle is reasonably tight for a three-row.

Through 2022, there have been four trim levels—LX, S, EX and SX—with a Prestige package available on the SX. For 2023, there is a light front styling refresh, and SX with Prestige is now treated as a separate trim (aka SXP). That plus all-new X-Line and X-PRO variants take us from four trim level versions to ten. Front-drive variants on lower trims boost the final total now to fourteen. Pricing is up a few grand across the board, and the new top trims run as much as \$5300 above that, bringing the lineup from formerly lower, now mid-\$30s entry, up into the \$50s—good news, with the same value formula of this widely popular vehicle now expanded to appeal to a wider range of buyers.

SXP adds leather, second row heated seats and

chargers, and upscale interior color schemes. It's a handsome interior, with tan, black and brushed metal well apportioned, along with a doublewide single pane touchscreen, a fair number of actual knobs, buttons and tactile points below that, and the right share of instrumentation on the console. The team has thought things through well.

Our first X-Line encounters were the 2020 Kia Soul, with trim and style add-ons, then the 2021 Sorento, adding AWD and more ground clearance.

The new-for-'23 Telluride X-Line continues with all of the above, and with 20-inch wheels aimed at milder off-pavement. This is where the new X-PRO steps in, with 18-inchers and a tow tech bump from 5,000 to 5,500 lb, for \$1,000 more.

Downsides noted during our week were a tendency, in any mode, to pause and recover slowly in surface street turns; an overpowering presence of alarms and alerts about phantom conditions; the drivetrain setting like fresh cement at a stop, for safety, but disquieting if you're simply hoping to move up a few inches closer to a wall.

These added up to a bit of a bipolar week. We enjoyed the styling, interior and engine just fine. But try as we might, we were unable to conquer those nitpicks. But perhaps over time you can. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	West Point, Georgia
ENGINE	3.8L V6 GDI Lambda-II, DOHC CVT, dir inj
HP/TORQUE	291 hp / 262 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	13.0:1
TRANS / DRIVE	8-spd auto / on-demand AWD
SUSPENSION	F: indep MacPherson strut, coils, stblzr bar; R: indep multilink, stblzr bar
STEERING	col-mtd motor driven pwr
BRAKES	F: 13.4 vented; R: 12.0 solid
WHEELS / TIRES	7.5x18 alloy / P245/50 R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	196.9 / 114.2 in
GROUND CLRNC / APPR / DEPART	8.4 in / 17.7 / 23.0°
TURNING CIRCLE	38.8 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	39.5 / 38.8 / 37.8 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	41.4-44.1 / 42.4 / 31.4 in
CARGO CAPACITY	21.0 / 46.0 / 87.0 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4378-4524 lb
TOW CAPACITY	5000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY87 oct reg unl / 18.8 gal
MPG	18/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE **\$51,785**

X-LINE: X-Line 20-in black alloy wheels, X-Line exterior style points, self-leveling rear susp, tow mode	incl
PAINT: Wolf Gray	495
INTERIOR: Terracotta Color Pkg	295
CARPETED FLOOR MATS	210
DESTINATION CHARGE	1335

TOTAL **\$54,120**

2023 KIA TELLURIDE LINEUP

	FWD	AWD	X-Line AWD	X-Pro AWD
LX	\$35,690	\$37,690	-	-
S	37,590	39,590	-	-
EX	41,290	43,290	45,485	-
SX	45,490	47,490	48,885	49,885
SXP	-	50,390	51,785	52,785

X-Line all the things

by Joe Sage

