

The niche Subaru inhabits is growing fast, as the entire lineup becomes more handsome, more hearty or both, depending upon each model's mission, your perceptions or both. Subaru Crosstrek is both of those—and also kinda cute, while utterly purposeful. This is a winning combination.

Maybe it's that perky profile, moreso than most of the lineup. Or the tough cladding you'd expect on their off-roaders. Or the extra capability already baked into the cake—ground clearance, wheelset and turning circle that can tackle the outdoors in its spare time without even breaking a sweat.

Maybe it's the notably high fuel mileage AND extra punch that come with its dual electric motor-generator almost-horsepower-doubling, more than torque-doubling hybrid powertrain.

Maybe it's the attention-grabbing Citron Yellow Pearl paint on our Crosstrek (and yes, some might say green), giving it an edge that reflects its lively

performance and sunny personality.

Put it all together, and you have not only what makes a Subaru a Subaru, but one that could appeal to the widest market of any Subaru ever.

Driven here is the 2026 Subaru Crosstrek Limited Hybrid, with a next-gen series-parallel hybrid system—a newly developed version of its engine plus electric motors and high-capacity battery.

Is it wrong if one of our favorite Subarus is the least expensive one? (The Impreza sedan is actually \$400 less, but you get the idea.) Our Limited Hybrid at \$34,995 is the top of seven versions starting at \$26,995—five non-hybrids and two hybrids (at just two or three grand more than their comparable non-hybrids)—with value all around. All have the new 180-hp 2.5-liter Subaru Boxer engine.

The hybrids' electric motors and high-capacity lithium-ion battery boost the base 180 horsepower with their own 118-horse equivalent (a lot), cal-

culated at a combined 194 hp (a nice bump), given the usual variables of electric participation. Torque is simpler to figure—154 lb-ft base adds 199 lb-ft electric, the latter with instant effect. The system is rated at 36 mpg across the board in ours (city/hwy/comb). As usual for Subaru, all are AWD.

This colorful little machine was peppy from the word go, promptly putting us in one of our favorite moods, where now that we're in motion, we just want to keep going, maybe even coast to coast. It could put us in the go-anywhere do-everything mood even while parked. It was perfectly comfortable, and controls are friendly. The tank hardly seemed to drop, which called our attention to its charge-economy indicator, delivering generous payback from the regenerative electrical system.

When the light turns green, this is a smooth, tight and precisely handling little rocket. Its full-time AWD feels on a par with far pricier such sys-



tems, and dare we say may even feel better.

Cargo volume is generous—just over 50 cubic feet with rear seats down or close to 20 with them up (beyond even a large sedan trunk). About five-foot-six long inside with seats down, it's sleepable only for shorter folks, which could push some toward, say, the Outback. But smaller size and nimble handling are the whole point of the Crosstrek. (And there's always the two-car garage solution.)

You may have experienced some just-along-for-the-bragging-points hybrids. Then there are carrying-their-fair-share hybrids. The Subaru Crosstrek electrified system carries its fair share and then some. It's not just a matter of saving on gas, the traditional hybrid touchstone—it's a matter of also providing significant power and torque, the EV touchstone. All this in one very attractively priced build, in two trim levels. A keeper. ■

Punching way above its weight

by Joe Sage

Hard to miss in our sample's Citron Yellow Pearl paint, the new Crosstrek is worth a look in any color.



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	OTA, Gunma, Japan
POWERTRAIN	next-gen series-parallel hybrid system w two electric motor generators, internal combustion engine, hybrid transaxle
ENGINE	2.5L 4-cyl Boxer (Hybrid Type), Atkinson/Miller cycle, alum/alum
ENGINE HP/TORQUE	180 hp / 154 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	12.0:1
ELEC TRACTION MOTOR (3-phase AC synchr)	118 hp (88 kW)
ELEC MOTOR OUTPUT	199 lb-ft
ELEC MOTOR TORQUE	199 lb-ft
BATTERY SYSTEM	high-volt sealed Li-ion
HORSEPOWER: NET COMBINED	194 hp
TRANSMISSION	Lineartronic CVT (Hybrid Type)
DRIVETRAIN	Symmetrical AWD
X-Mode dual-mode system (snow/dirt and deep snow/mud) w hill descent control	4-wheel indep, raised: F: MacPherson-type struts; lower L-arms, coils, stblzr bar, hydraulic engine mounts R: dbl wishbone, coils, stblzr bar
STEERING	elec pwr assist rack & pinion (dual pinion)
BRAKES	F: 12.6 vented; R: 11.2 vented
WHEELS	hybrid-exclusive 18 x 7.0 alum alloy, dark gray machine-finish
TIRES	225/55 R18 98V all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	176.4 / 105.1 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.7 in
APPRCH / DEPART / BRKVER	18.0 / 19.3 / 30.1°
TURNING CIRCLE	35.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	(moonrf) 38.7 / 37.6 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.9 / 36.7 in
CARGO CAPACITY	18.6 / 50.6 cu.ft
MAX LOAD LENGTH AT FLOOR	seats up 31.8 in rear seats down 63.8 in
WEIGHT	3662 lb
TOW CAPACITY	1500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 16.6 gal
MPG	36/36/36 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$34,995
PAINT: Citron Yellow Pearl	395
OPTIONS PKG 37: power moonroof, 360-degree surround view monitor	1600
DESTINATION CHARGE	1420
TOTAL	\$38,410

2026 SUBARU CROSSTREK LINEUP

(base)	\$26,995
Premium	27,995
Sport	30,625
Limited	32,995
Wilderness	33,795

HYBRID

Sport Hybrid	\$33,995
Limited Hybrid	♥ 34,995

We like these particular machined wheels, 18-inches with the presence of, say, 20s, but still with a sidewall that allows serious dirt time. (We're also thinking that not that long ago, you could have paid this vehicle's total purchase price just for a set of custom wheels as cool as these, alone.) •