

Quietest Midsize SUVs From Consumer Reports' Tests

These vehicles prove that family-friendly models don't have to be raucous playscapes

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It can get quite loud inside an SUV. Its boxy shape can create plenty of wind noise, and the raised height lets road noise bounce off the underside. Some SUVs also use small four-cylinder engines, which have to work hard. And that's before adding in a few kids during a carpool or on a road trip.

Not every midsize SUV suffers from too much noise, but it's a challenge for buyers to determine during a test-drive just how loud the test model can be.

That's where Consumer Reports' car experts come in. We evaluate interior noise as part of more than 50 objective and subjective tests. We listen to the wind, road, engine, and tire noises that often penetrate the interior.

Below, we've identified the six quietest midsize SUVs in order of their results in our interior noise tests. Plus, all of them are recommended, meaning they scored well in our road tests, have good reliability and key advanced safety equipment, and performed well in crash tests.

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CR QUICK TAKE

97

✓ RECOMMENDED

2021 Kia Telluride

CR MPG: Overall 21 mpg / City 14 / Hwy 30 mpg

#1 of 13: Midsize sport-utility vehicles 3-row

⊕ PREDICTED RELIABILITY

⊕ PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

CR QUICK TAKE

85

✓ RECOMMENDED

2021 Hyundai Palisade

CR MPG: Overall 21 mpg / City 15 / Hwy 29 mpg

#2 of 13: Midsize sport-utility vehicles 3-row

⊕ PREDICTED RELIABILITY

⊕ PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

Kia's all-new Telluride is a formidable competitor in the midsize three-row SUV segment. It did so well in our testing that it vaulted its way almost to the top of the standings, thanks to its refined driving experience, user-friendly controls, thoughtful features, and vast cargo room. It also has a lot of standard equipment for the price. The cabin is impressively quiet, with a relaxed engine hum and low levels of road and wind noise. Overall, it's quieter than most of its competitors in the class.

The three-row Palisade is an extremely functional family vehicle, distinguished by a no-nonsense powertrain and thoughtfully designed interior. It scored high in our testing but not as high as the mechanically similar Kia Telluride. The Palisade is pleasantly quiet with good road and wind isolation. The engine hum in the background isn't objectionable. The sound character is more serene than several competing models.

CR QUICK TAKE



✓ RECOMMENDED
2021 Ford Edge

CR MPG: Overall 22 mpg / City 15 / Hwy 31 mpg
#2 of 9: Midsized sport-utility vehicles
 ⬢ PREDICTED RELIABILITY
 ⬢ PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

Ford has sharpened the Edge’s performance, improving acceleration and fuel economy. The two-row SUV remains a pleasant, well-rounded vehicle that is distinguished by handling agility, a steady ride, and an overall premium feel. The automaker also has made key safety features standard across the model range. The cabin is very quiet and largely devoid of road and wind noise. Only the muted and pleasant hum of the turbo four-cylinder engine is heard when revved.

CR QUICK TAKE



✓ RECOMMENDED
2021 Subaru Outback

CR MPG: Overall 24 mpg / City 16 / Hwy 32 mpg
#1 of 9: Midsized sport-utility vehicles
 ⬢ PREDICTED RELIABILITY
 ⬢ PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

Yes, it looks more like a raised wagon than an SUV, yet the Outback is a formidable competitor, thanks to its solid feel and very comfortable ride that outshines even some luxury SUVs. The uplevel 260-hp, turbo four-cylinder engine in the XT trim gives the Outback effortless punch. It also has a far-quieter demeanor than the base engine. The XT’s interior is nicely trimmed and keeps most noises where they belong—outside the cabin.

CR QUICK TAKE



✓ RECOMMENDED
2021 Mazda CX-9

CR MPG: Overall 22 mpg / City 15 / Hwy 32 mpg
#5 of 13: Midsized sport-utility vehicles 3-row
 ⬢ PREDICTED RELIABILITY
 ⬢ PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

The CX-9 is a particularly agile and comfortable-riding three-row SUV. Long, sleek, and rakish, with a powerful four-cylinder turbo engine, it’s a compelling alternative to the more popular players. The SUV has low road noise, which is atypical for Mazda, and overall the CX-9 is well-hushed. On the downside, the turbocharged engine can sound a bit gravelly when pushed hard.

CR QUICK TAKE



✓ RECOMMENDED
2021 Toyota Highlander

CR MPG: Overall 22 mpg / City 14 / Hwy 32 mpg
#3 of 13: Midsized sport-utility vehicles 3-row
 ⬢ PREDICTED RELIABILITY
 ⬢ PREDICTED OWNER SATISFACTION

The fourth-generation Highlander comes with a smooth, powerful 295-hp V6 engine that is quiet and refined. There is also a 243-hp hybrid four-cylinder available that gets an excellent 35 mpg overall and can run silently on electric power at around-town speeds. The front seats are comfortable for many body types, and the roomy second-row bench seat provides good support. The third row is snug, low, and firm.