Road Test

The updated Subaru Forester is a smart, well-executed small SUV that boats a roomy interior, great fuel economy, and plenty of standard safety equipment.

Beneath the familiar exterior design, Subaru has made a lot of improvements without altering the SUV’s sensible, no-nonsense character. The ride is comfortable and supple, the steering is responsive, and there’s little body lean around corners.

The standard 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine is little more powerful but that doesn’t make the Forester any quicker. Sprinting from 0-60 mph takes 9.2 sec—which puts it on the slow side compared to other small SUVs. In the real world, however, the Forester has enough power to pass and merge successfully. The continuously variable transmission (CVT) has been refined to be less obtrusive, but drivers still hear a pronounced engine buzz under acceleration.

The fuel economy is impressive at 28 mpg overall, tying the Honda CR-V EX for the best mileage of any small SUV that isn’t a diesel or a hybrid.

The latest infotainment system is intuitive and responds quickly. It is also compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

Owner Reports

Reliability

This car is new and detailed reliability trouble spots will be available at a later date.

Reliability Trouble Spots

Owner Satisfaction

This car is new and detailed owner satisfaction will be available at a later date.

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On the utility front, the split seats fold nearly flat, leaving a slightly inclined surface for cargo. Opening the power liftgate exposes a wide, square-shaped space that can swallow a fair amount of bulky ware-house-store items. There’s even enough space with the rear seat folded down to fit a bicycle with both wheels on.

The Forester falters only when it comes to refinement. Despite upgraded ride and handling, the Forester still has some interior materials look cheap. But what the SUV lacks in panache it makes up for in practicality.

Best Version to Get

The Premium trim is a good place to start since it includes blind-spot warning, a power driver’s seat, rear air vents, sunroof and alloy wheels. For additional convenience and luxury items such as leather upholstery, bigger infotainment screen, and dual-zone automatic climate control, the Limited trim is the way to go.

Notable changes:
The Forester is all new for 2019. We’re pleased to see that Subaru’s Eyesight suite of advanced safety features is now standard on all trims.

To read the full road test go to https://www.consumerreports.org/cars/subaru/forester/2019/road-test.