

Winning formula by Joe Sage

The first Mazda CX-5 arrived in 2012 as a 2013 model but seems as though it has been with us forever, which is part of its charm—it was born in a fairly traditional two-box sport utility format, just as some others were evolving to more carlike forms. Folks love SUVs, and compact utilities have become the best-selling segment, so the CX-5 formula has led to a million sales in the second-fastest time ever for Mazda (Mazda3 holds the record).

The second-gen CX-5's valuable brand equity is kept intact. Its established big grille styling is blended with slim LED headlights, giving these larger and smaller features a unified look, emphasized by wings from the grille's chrome lower bar extending below the headlights, for an overall clamshell effect between hood and front fascia.

Dig deeper, and you will find much new in the second generation. Dimensions are about the same, although the new CX-5 rides about an inch lower to the ground. Body and chassis are significantly reengineered, tech features are extensive

(see specs), and the 2.5L engine is now used on all trims. Fuel economy is close to identical to the prior model across trims and drivetrains, and tow capacity remains 2000 pounds.

The CX-5's long hood suggests the power that lies beneath, as on the CX-9 (though Mazda SKYACTIV engines and transmissions bear the compact precision of a Swiss watch). We found 187 horses plenty to move this all-wheel driver at a swift and potent pace, with quick and smooth acceleration through freeway changes and mountain curves, all the moreso with sport mode engaged.

Ours was the top trim Grand Touring with the top AWD drivetrain, bearing a beautiful black and parchment leather interior, touchscreen interface, dual-zone auto climate, 10-speaker Bose audio and more—yet still stickers at a base just a hair above \$30 grand. (The base Sport model in FWD starts at \$24,045.) Our tester's add-ons are useful but not essential—yet even maxed out like this, the price is still quite competitive.

The buzz in the industry is that Mazda intends to broaden their market share by easing the brand image into premium territory. It's actually pretty much there now, so this might just mean it's a great time to buy one at these prices. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	2.5L 4-cylinder SKYACTIV-G
DRIVETRAIN	AWD (FWD available)
HP/TORQUE	187 hp / 185 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	SKYACTIV 6-spd auto w sport mode
SUSPENSION	F: indep, MacPherson strut, coil, stblzr R: indep, multi-link coil and stabilizer bar
STEERING	elec power assist
BRAKES	F: 11.7 vented / R: 11.9 solid discs
WHEELS/TIRES	(Grand Touring) 19x7J / P225/55R19
LENGTH/WB/GRND CLEAR	179.1" / 106.2" / 7.6"
TURNING CIRCLE	36.0 ft
WEIGHT	3655 lb
LUGGAGE CAPACITY	30.9 / 59.6 cu.ft.
FUEL CAPACITY	15.3 gal
MPG	23/29/26 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE **\$30,695**

INCLUDES: Rain-sense wipers, intermittent rear wiper, heated pwr mirrors w signals, LED auto headlamps, LED fogs and DRLs, rear roof spoiler, 19-in alloy wheels, power locks, power windows (driver one-touch), leather-trimmed upholstery, 8-way power driver's seat (6-way passenger manual standard), radar cruise control, electronic parking brake, keyless entry/start, dual zone auto climate w rear vents, Bose 10-speaker audio, 7-in touchscreen display, heated front seats and more.....incl

CARGO MAT.....70

MACHINE GRAY PAINT.....300

RETRACTABLE CARGO COVER.....250

PREMIUM PACKAGE: Driver seat 2-position memory, 6-way pwr front passenger seat, heated steering wheel, heated rear seats, active driving display, windshield wiper deicer....1830

DESTINATION CHARGE.....940

TOTAL.....**\$34,085**



- The 2017 Mazda CX-5 has earned an IIHS Top Safety Pick+ designation, the highest rating. CX-5 has been named a Top Safety Pick every year since its debut in 2012.
- *Digital Trends* named the 2017 Mazda CX-5 SUV of the Year, saying pricier brands meet expectations, while CX-5 beats them in fun, style, and character at its price point.

