

Meet a new-for-2025 version of the Toyota Grand Highlander, the Nightshade Hybrid trim. It brings the incredible fuel mileage of the midrange Hybrid lineup (see chart)—mid-to-upper 30s per gallon—in a spacious three-row SUV.

Nightshade creates a new top trim in the Hybrid group (yet at a lower price than standard-power-train Platinum). Each group has its wonders—lowest price (Standard), highest MPG by far (nearing double in the Hybrid, for a couple of grand more), or by far most power (Hybrid MAX, lower MPG but still beating Standard, for a couple of grand on top of that). Clearly, the mid-group Hybrids strike a balance point—and, as it turns out, have considerable power, as we found in a busy two weeks.

Grand Highlander is a direct relative of two others in this issue—its obvious cousin the Lexus TX and its less obvious sibling Toyota Sienna. (All are tops, and your choice will as always come down to basics of style, budget and purpose. And power-trains also vary among them.) Also, the Standard engine tows 5,000 pounds, the Hybrid 3,500.

Nightshade Edition adds multiple black exterior accents, 20-inch black alloy wheels, and JBL premium audio. The wheels are a big visual contributor to its long yet lean balance and stance, yet they maintain the model's nimble turning circle (a good spec that beats even many a two-row SUV).

One way the Hybrid achieves its high MPG is by being outfitted with an electronic CVT (the others have direct-shift automatics). Most people never notice, and you still have paddles and modes, if you want. We played with those briefly, but were satisfied with default for the duration. The drivetrain is so smooth, in fact, we also went through two full weeks without even turning off auto start-stop (the first thing we do every time in most brands).

Our Grand Highlander Hybrid thumbed its nose at the gas pumps for two weeks of very spirited and varied driving over many miles.

You'd be hard-pressed to find a significant difference between this and the Lexus TX, other than the carefully calibrated (yet ever closer) value and finish distinctions between the two badges them-

**2025 GRAND HIGHLANDER LINEUP**

Standard gasoline	FWD	AWD
265 hp 2.4L turbo - 21/28/24 to 20/26/22 mpg		
<b>LE</b>	\$41,360	\$42,960
<b>XLE</b>	44,130	45,730
<b>Limited</b>		48,860
<b>Limited XLE</b>		50,460
<b>Platinum</b>		54,545
Hybrid	FWD	AWD
245 hp 2.5L hybrid - 37/34/36 to 36/32/34 mpg		
<b>Hybrid LE</b>	\$44,710	
<b>Hybrid XLE</b>	\$45,880	47,480
<b>Hybrid Limited</b>		52,210
<b>Hybrid Nightshade</b>		53,190
Hybrid MAX	AWD	
362 hp 2.4L turbo hybrid MAX - 26/27/27 mpg		
<b>Hybrid MAX Limited</b>		\$55,190
<b>Hybrid MAX Platinum</b>		59,275

selves (and with Grand Highlander, you save about \$15 grand). Toyota has significantly higher volume, and an SUV is a widely-sought format, giving this a range of tangible advantages over its relatives also in these pages. Variety brings decisions, but tough choices can be good choices, and Grand Highlander offers plenty of good choices. ■

**SPECIFICATIONS**

ASSEMBLY	Princeton, Indiana
ENGINE	2.5L 4-cyl hybrid, 16v, dual VVT-i
HYBRID BATTERY	NiMH, 5.0Ah, 259V
HP/TORQUE	245 hp / 310 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	14.0:1
TRANSMISSION	e-CVT
DRIVETRAIN	Dynamic Torque Control AWD
SUSPENSION	F: indep MacPherson strut w 28.6mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link w 18mm stblzr bar
STEERING	elec pwr-assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 13.38 vented; R: 13.3 vented
WHEELS	20-in black alloy w black lug nuts
TIRES	255/55 R20 a/s (ours) Continental CrossContact LX20 m+s
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	201.4 / 116.1 in
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	40 / 38.5 / 37.2 in
LEGGROOM (F/2/3)	41.7 / 39.5 / 33.5 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	38.06 ft
CARGO CAPACITY	20.6 / 57.9 / 97.5 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	(hybrid) 3500 lb
WEIGHT	(7-seat) 4620 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	min 87 unl / 17.17 gal
MPG	36/32/34 (city/hwy/comb)
<b>BASE PRICE</b>	<b>\$52,610</b>
PANORAMIC VIEW MONITOR	600
PANORAMIC ROOF	1350
WHEEL LOCKS	105
CARPET FLOOR MATS / CARGO MAT	378
CONNECTED SERVICES TRIAL: 2 addtl years	325
DESTINATION CHARGE	1450
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$56,818</b>

*Note: sticker price varies from info at left.*

# Tough choice?

THAT CAN BE A GOOD THING!

BY JOE SAGE

