

There's a lot to unpack on the new generation-six 2026 Toyota RAV4 lineup, with thirteen variants across seven trim levels, three powertrains and even a few front-drivers, then three distinct styling treatments—Core, Rugged and Sport—each with a very different flavor.

Fundamental specs are boosted for the new gen—horsepower is up, fuel mileage is up, range on the plug-in hybrid is up. The full lineup runs from about \$30k to about \$50k. Ours is a Limited, only available in the hybrid group and with AWD.

Our particular Limited Hybrid AWD came with a whole list of add-ons, still just about \$2,000, pushing our total price higher than the otherwise line-topping GR Sport base price and higher than the top plug-in (though that is not as high a grade as our Limited, the highest hybrid). And we could live without some of the add-ons on ours, if need be.

Our first impression was how big it is, perhaps recalling RAV4's diminutive size at birth, perhaps seeing our new one next to the larger Highlander. But in fact, it has been the same for some time—it's almost exactly the same length as 10 years ago with just about an inch longer wheelbase (though turning circle is almost identical). It apparently just appears more substantial, a pretty good trick in itself, in the bang for the buck department.

Cabin dimensions are quite generous for both humans and cargo, and we were wowed by over-the-shoulder visibility through ample glass.

Behind the wheel, we took to it right away. Power is good and acceleration feels strong (no spec is given). Its very well engineered transmission—an

electronic CVT with sequential shift—does its job seamlessly, with no hesitation. Steering and handling are very accurate and neutral. You feel road connectedness and pavement details, as you should, but all with smoothness—like wearing rugged but soft leather gloves, on even the roughest surface. The RAV4 has the attributes of something more complex and more expensive, which in its price range certainly telegraphs value.

We had a volume of notes about ever-expanding driving assistance and other tech features, some of which seemed unusually invasive. Some may be overthought. Some were arguably humorous (if still irritating), such as unfounded “driver inattention” warnings that ironically would require you to take



Core, Sport and Rugged style treatments shown here on the RAV4 Limited, GR Sport and Woodland.

your eyes off the road to see what the urgent message is. The key to these, of course, is to deep dive, assess and make some choices. (Since many are in the name of safety and security, we try to leave all or most on, since it's not our vehicle.)

Toyota are masters of size, efficiency and variety. With a complex SUV lineup overall, you can easily see where everything falls and what suits you perfectly. The new RAV4 is a case in point. In fact, we are highly intrigued by the variety and diversity of powertrains and styling within its own lineup and look forward to trying them all. ■

2026 TOYOTA RAV4 LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
Hybrid LE	\$31,900	\$33,300
Hybrid SE	34,700	36,100
Hybrid Woodland	--	39,900
Hybrid XLE Premium	36,100	37,500
Hybrid XSE	--	41,300
Hybrid Limited	--	43,300
PHEV SE	--	41,500
PHEV Woodland	--	45,300
PHEV XSE	--	47,200
GR Sport	--	48,500

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Toyota Takaoka, Aichi, Japan
ENGINE	A25A-FXS (Atkinson Cycle) 2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cyl hybrid, 16v DOHC, direct ignition, VVT-i by elec VVT-i on intake cam & VVT-i on exhaust cam, alum alloy block/head,
COMPRESSION RATIO	14.0:1
HORSEPOWER: ENGINE	183 hp
TORQUE: ENGINE	163 lb-ft
MOTOR GENERATOR MG2 (front/regen brake)	perm magnet synchronous 134 hp
MG2 TORQUE	153 lb-ft
MAX VOLTAGE	DC 600V
REAR MOTOR TORQUE (MGR) (AWD)	89 lb-ft
HYBRID BATTERY PACK (sealed lithium-ion)	NOM VOLTAGE / CAPACITY 247.5V / 4.1 Ah
HP: NET COMBINED	(AWD) 236 hp
TRANSMISSION	electronic CVT (e-CVT) w sequential shift mode
DRIVETRAIN	electric on on-demand AWD
SUSPENSION	F: indep MacPherson strut w 25.4mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link w 23.2mm stblzr bar
STEERING	elec pwr-asst rack & pinion, rack-mtd parallel-type
BRAKES	F: 12.0 vented; R: 11.1 solid
WHEELS	(std Limited) 18-in alum alloy
TIRES	235/60R18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	181.0 / 105.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.1 in
APPRCH / DEPART	19.0 / 23.0°
TURNING CIRCLE	36.9 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	(w moonrf) 37.9 / 39.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.0 / 37.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	37.8 / 70.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT	(Limited) 3920 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(Limited AWD) 3500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / (hyb) 14.5 gal
MPG	43/37/41 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$43,300
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	600
MATS: carpeted floor mats, cargo mat	339
DOOR SILL PROTECTORS	199
WHEEL LOCKS	90
REAR HATCH CARGO LAMPS	425
MUDGUARDS	160
ROOFTOP CROSSBARS: low profile	320
DESTINATION CHARGE	1450
TOTAL	\$46,883

Variety lineup

Why we have 3-car garages

BY JOE SAGE

