

The 2026 GMC Yukon has not one but two Ultimate builds—the more luxury-oriented Denali Ultimate and the more dirt-oriented AT4 Ultimate (though each bears plenty of the other).

On a parallel plane, there are two kinds of AT4—regular (\$76,600) or Ultimate (\$97,900).

A third parallel plane brings us any of the above in a choice of either standard Yukon or Yukon XL length (Chevy Tahoe or Suburban equivalents). All have three rows of seating.

Our standard-length AT4, as an Ultimate, has a 420-hp 6.2L V8. (Lower trims have a 355-hp 5.3L V8. A high-torque turbo-diesel option is also arriving later for any and all.)

Denali Ultimate is known for fancier finishes, AT4 Ultimate for going more rugged places and doing more rugged things (and it also costs a little

less). All that said, we're pretty sure no country club is going to turn away a handsome AT4 Ultimate. It's (ultimately) all up to you, which one rings your bell and opens your doors.

That may be all the deciding you'll need to do. The vehicle category (officially Large SUV, bigger than full-size) is largely self-sorting, with most just identifying it by brand name, as these dominate it.

This build delivers the commanding performance you would expect, even just from appearances—power-to-weight is ample with the larger V8 that is standard on this trim. This in itself is a vote for the higher trims (standard on either Denali, standard on AT4 Ultimate, optional on non-Ultimate AT4). And it handles superbly, belying its size.

Odds are good that you're not buying into this group with the tightest parking lot maneuvers in

mind, but there are nonetheless rocky trails and ranch corrals to conquer. That said, the Yukon XL is 15 inches longer than this one, with the turning circle increasing from 39.4 to 43.3 feet (or a little more with 24-inch wheels). Also, tow capacity of 8,400 lb in the standard length drops to 8,200 in the XL, as its own additional body weight is subtracted. That may be two votes for standard length. However, trailer or not, the additional interior volume of the XL means a place to toss in some saddles and tack, even with three rows of seats up.

One thing did catch our attention throughout our week. The brakes of course never failed to effectively stop us, but we'd love a firmer feel. (Digging into this, there's some indication it may indeed just be feel, not performance, from an electronic Brake Assist feature, perhaps a candidate for

an e-update—worth further digging, if shopping.)

Size is also reflected inside. As you would expect, this includes generous leg- and hip room, but also a huge center screen loaded with functions, while seeming right-sized in its environs. Three rows of headrests also bring a camera-based center rearview mirror (as well as a real one).

We're familiar with people who always buy a Denali, be it an SUV or pickup. Punto. They can see, touch, feel and brag every material and surface particular to that build with their eyes closed.

For a person open to comparison, the AT4 Ultimate, with its stitched leather instrument panel and seats, along with many other touches, should be more than luxurious enough and an overall very similar experience—clean, high-stylish, thoroughly well outfitted, fully featured and then some.

The difference is that this is Arizona, where perhaps 98 percent of the surface area (or so it may seem) is rocky and/or forested wilderness.

And with the AT4 or AT4 Ultimate, you are always ready to confidently access and enjoy it all.

It's really that simple. There are no defensible downsides to having the AT4's capabilities, if you even just might need them. Ride, comfort and features arguably all deliver just as generously as in a Denali. If it seems like trading off some specific nominally luxury material to have some tougher material with its own impressive level of luxury, well, most people would never even miss it.

There are some people who buy the top trim, interpreted as the most expensive one, because it seems it automatically carries the most prestige. GM has kept prices close enough to preempt that, one might hope—"this is the top one but a serious off-roader" seems an ambiguously valid boast.

Neither of the two top models should generate badge envy from buyers of the other. Differences may be superficial or functionally substantial, but either scenario should negate any debate. ■

Speaks for itself

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

(Some info 3rd-party sourced; check w dealer)

ASSEMBLY	.....Arlington, Texas
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	.....USA / USA
PARTS CONTENT	...US/Can 38% / Mexico 36%
ENGINE	.....6.2L Ecotec3 V8, 16v OHV, VVT, dir high-pressure fuel inj w Dynamic Fuel Mgmt, cast alum/cast alum
HP/TORQUE	.....420 hp / 460 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....11.5:1
TRANSMISSION	.....10-spd automatic
DRIVETRAIN	.....4WD
AXLE RATIO	.....3.23
SUSPENSION	....(opt) 4-corner Air Ride Adaptive Suspension, Magnetic Ride Control
STEERING	.....elec pwr-assst rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....Duralife rotors front/rear: F: 13.5x1.2 vented; R: 13.6x1.0 vented
WHEELS	.....20-in Talos bronze metallic
TIRES	.....275/60R20
	ours: Goodyear Wrangler Territory A/T
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....210.5 in / 120.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....8.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....(20-in wheels) 39.37 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	....(sunrf) 40.4 / 37.5 / 38.2 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	.....44.5 / 42.0 / 34.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....(max) 122.9 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....(base) 5602 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....8400 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....reg unl / 25.89 gal
MPG	.....14/18/16 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$97,300
NIGHT VISION	.....2000
ENHANCED TRAILERING TECH PKG:	trailer camera provisions, trailering assist guides
BLACK GMC EMBLEMS (dealer install)	.....295
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....2595

TOTAL.....\$102,190

Pricing above per our Monroney; manufacturer pricing n/a; public website info below.

2026 GMC YUKON LINEUP

(Chevy Tahoe equivalent size/format)

	.....RWD	.....4WD
Elevation	.....\$69,600	.....\$72,600
AT4	.....--	.....76,600
Denali	.....--	.....83,400
AT4 Ultimate	.....--	.....\$97,900
Denali Ultimate	.....--	.....103,900

2026 GMC YUKON XL LINEUP

(Chevy Suburban equivalent size/format)

	.....RWD	.....4WD
Elevation	.....\$72,600	.....\$75,600
AT4	.....--	.....79,600
Denali	.....--	.....86,400
AT4 Ultimate	.....--	.....100,900
Denali Ultimate	.....--	.....106,900