

The relationship between Lexus GX and the Toyota lineup is clearer than ever in generation three (which was new for 2024). It's readily apparent that GX is the premium badge cousin to Toyota Land Cruiser, its body form near-identical. Two years ago, we had a Lexus GX 550 Luxury, the top dollar trim of three by name (they then add a "plus" ["+"] version available for each). Overtrail falls mid-lineup by price, almost \$5 grand lower than Luxury. As the "+" versions generally add premium content, and the Luxury trim has less headroom for add-ons, Overtrail+ and Luxury+ are basically head-to-head solutions for top-dollar shoppers, with just a \$1335 price difference. This adds the feel-good factor of high spending for shoppers who want to boast the top ticket but

also have one eye on some serious off-road time. To add to dirt readiness, Overtrail and Overtrail+ have 33-inch all-terrain tires on 18-inch wheels, more ground clearance (at 9.84" vs 8.66" on other trims), a locking rear differential, adaptable suspension, multi-terrain modes and downhill assist. (Approach/departure/breakover angles are almost unchanged, as body differences are minimal.) To ensure the luxe aspect leaves no-one short in town, both Overtrail versions have paid special attention to innovative underpinnings, addressing the wide potential range from harsher dirt duty to boulevard/freeway cruising with an Electronic Kinetic Dynamic Suspension System (E-KDSS). The Overtrails are also two-row, while the others are three-, for far more default cargo volume,

plus the second row stows away flatter, providing even more, dramatically so. (And nobody will end up bouncing around in a third row, off-road.) As much personality as specification. GX Overtrail and Overtrail+ are the adventure-ready version of this proven premium SUV. We were happy with the GX's easy-going drive experience all week—smooth power and shifting, accurate handling, intuitive controls. (The powertrain is the same for the whole GX lineup, although word is that they will add a hybrid in 2027.) One feature we loved in ours was the Cool Box in the console (standard on Luxury, optional on Overtrail). While we had quite a few vehicles this hot summer with heat-related problems, this one gave us a heat-related benefit. Chilled and ready at any

time, it's not six-pack size, but very welcome for stashing sunglasses while running an errand, or cooling off our constantly overheated new phone. We didn't have a chance to hit any serious off-road trails during our week, but you are aware all the time that you certainly can—and this rugged-luxe formula may in fact be key to its niche. As a Lexus, after all, people are buying the premium luxury brand. And while some Toyota cousins may come off as more extreme off-roaders, the GX is very close and in fact more than enough for most people's reasonable departures from pavement. Have a sudden desire to tackle the trails, pack for a picnic, go fishing, take a ski weekend? GX is ready. The rest of the time, there is no off-road specialty build handful, just a smooth daily drive. We have a friend who was seeking a good vehicle for her mix of higher-end property remodeling and management, hauling everything from furni-

ture and tools to classy clients, all intermixed with transport of large and very active dogs to potentially dirty or muddy fun adventures, as often as not in very wild weather. We usually avoid recommendations or keep them more general, but this one came to us easily. We realized her kind of mix may be kind of key to the whole vehicle. We only wondered, if she wants a premium brand like Lexus, is the styling of the GX too boxy or funky and clunky? Or is that the whole point? And her response was just as its multiple-purpose personality suggests: "That's the new Lexus? Wow, that's so cool!" The newest Lexus GX and Toyota Land Cruiser have become more directly adapted or translated between the two, at a time when Land Cruiser has moved closer to its roots. The result arguably brings a broadening of the Lexus premium persona to include something a little bolder, a little tougher, for those for whom that is their exactly perfect fit. ■

TOUGH LUXE

High-trim dirt build double-delivers

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Tahara, Aichi, Japan
ROWS / SEATS	(Overtrail) two / five
ENGINE	3.4L V6 twin turbo, 24v DOHC, chain drive, dual VVT-i
HP/TORQUE	349 hp / 479 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.3:1
TRANSMISSION	10-spd Direct Shift auto
DRIVETRAIN	AWD, Torsen limited-slip center locking differential, electronic locking rear differential, crawl control, downhill assist control, multi-terrain select
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	6.5 sec / 109 mph
SUSPENSION	F: dbl wishbone; R: four link w coil spring. Electronic Kinetic Dynamic Suspension System (E-KDSS), adaptive variable suspension
STEERING	rack & pinion elec pwr
BRAKES	F: 13.94 x1.26 vented, 4-cyl fixed; R: 13.19 x0.79 vented, 1-cyl fixed caliper
WHEELS	18-in six-spoke alloy, matte gray metallic finish
TIRES	33-in all-terrain: 265/70R18 116H (ours: Toyo Open Country A/T III)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	197.05 / 112.2 in
OVERHANG (F/R)	37.8 / 47.05 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(Overtrail) 9.84 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	(°) 26 / 22 / 24°
WADING DEPTH	27.56 in
TURNING CIRCLE	39.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	(moonroof) 39.39 / 43.15 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.18 / 36.73 in
CARGO CAPACITY	45.6 / 90.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	5674-5704 lb
TOW CAPACITY	9096 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	premium / 21.14 gal
MPG	15/21/17 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$81,395
PREMIUM PAINT: Earth (4Z1)	500
BI-TONE PAINT	350
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	900
AUDIO: Mark Levinson premium audio	1140
TRAFFIC JAM ASSIST: 4G network dep, requires Drive Connect subscrip, 3-yr trial incl	620
COOL BOX	170
ALL WEATHER CARGO TRAY	150
TONNEAU COVER	110
ROCK RAILS	990
BRIDGE RAIL CROSS BARS	570
DESTINATION CHARGE	1450
TOTAL	\$88,345
Prices have increased; see below.	

2026 LEXUS GX LINEUP

GX 550 Premium	\$68,335
GX 550 Premium+	72,800
GX 550 Overtrail	75,980
GX 550 Overtrail+	83,445
GX 550 Luxury	80,800
GX 550 Luxury+	84,800