

The Mazda crossover buyer's first decision is among five models (see inset), starting, as is typical, with budget and size. Those who focus on the handsome compact CX-50 (midrange by actual size) will find the usual trim level and feature variables. But the big decision will be the powertrain.

The Mazda CX family variously offers base, Turbo, Turbo S and two types of hybrid (no model offers all four). CX-50, however, is the only one with a hybrid rather than plug-in hybrid (PHEV), helping to keep the prices of CX-50 Turbo and Hybrid very close in comparable trims. Unlike CX-70 or -90, where a PHEV costs more, the CX-50 Hybrid costs less, a win-win for both purchase price and MPG.

With the 2.5 S base engine at 187 hp, the more intense comparison will be between CX-50 Hybrid and Turbo, both in the 200s. And those are the two we have had for a week each, this year. While driving all versions on the same day is the best way to compare performance and impressions, we had a Hybrid last winter (in top Premium Plus trim), and we now have the Turbo (also in Premium Plus).

Differences are more power for the Turbo (256 hp on premium fuel vs 219 for the Hybrid) and not-

ably more torque (320 lb-ft for the Turbo [on premium, 310 on regular], vs just 163 lb-ft from the engine on the Hybrid). The Turbo also has a 6-speed automatic with manual paddle shift, vs an eCVT on the Hybrid. And towing is quite different, if needed (3500 lb Turbo, 1500 lb Hybrid, significant when considering many typical likely tow loads. A downside tradeoff for the Turbo is fuel mileage—23/29/25 city/hwy/combined, vs 39/37/38 in the Hybrid—although mid-upper 20s in the Turbo is still healthy, and it has a bigger fuel tank, to compensate for range (15.9 gallons Turbo vs 14.5 Hybrid).

One intriguing spec is top speed—135 mph for the Turbo vs 112 for the Hybrid, which may sound close, as well as something you will never do. But while most people will never see 135, many may push 100, and the Turbo has far more headroom.

More down to earth, the Turbo has more ground clearance than the battery-bearing Hybrid, though it has a slightly bigger turning circle (36.0 feet for the Turbo—our benchmark for a really good turning circle, anyway—vs 35.4 feet for the Hybrid, a wild card perhaps due to the fuel tank). Lack of hybrid battery volume also gives the Turbo a bit more head-

2026 MAZDA CROSSOVER / SUV FAMILY

(from)	2.5 S	Turbo	Turbo S	Hybrid/PHEV
CX-5	\$29,990	---	---	---
CX-30	25,975	\$34,410	---	---
CX-50	29,900	▼ 37,900	---	(hyb) 34,750
CX-70	---	42,750	53,440	(PHEV) 44,450
CX-90	---	38,800	53,940	(PHEV) 50,495

room and a significant two inches more rear legroom (just under 40 inches, another benchmark).

There are other minor differences, but as noted when we had the Hybrid, they are things that basically just come along for the ride, more than being decision points. The bottom line is that when we had the Hybrid, we had said, “this does not, for example, have the highest top speed, but who cares—we were driving it all day and having a ball.” We could easily flip that script for the Turbo and essentially say the same thing.

We’d probably want the power, transmission, legroom, ground clearance and tow capacity of the Turbo, then just tough it out on additional gas expense—in theory. In reality, it’s hard to ignore savings on both purchase price and fuel in the Hybrid. And this, once again, is why we have choices. ■

All good choices

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Madison, Alabama
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Japan / Japan
PARTS CONTENT	US/Canada 65% / Japan 15% / Mexico 15%
ENGINE	SKYACTIV-G 2.5L 4-cyl twin scroll turbo w i-stop, dir inj, alum alloy/alum alloy
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
HP/TORQUE	(reg 87 oct) 227 hp / 310 lb-ft (prem 93 oct) 256 hp / 320 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	SKYACTIV-Drive 6-spd automatic
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
MODES	Mi-Drive (sport, off-road, tow)
TOP SPEED	135 mph
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut w stblzr bar; R: torsion beam
STEERING	elec pwr rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 12.8 vented; R: 12.8 solid
WHEELS	20x8J alloy / P245/45 R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	185.8 / 110.8 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.6 in
APPROACH / DEPARTURE	18.4 / 24.7°
TURNING CIRCLE	36.0 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.6 / 37.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.7 / 39.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	31.4 / 56.3 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3915 lb
TOW CAPACITY	3500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg or prem / 15.9 gal
MPG	23/29/25 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$42,900
TURBO PREMIUM PLUS:	hood graphics, side rocker garnish, black lug nuts & locks, 360- degree monitor, auto-dim driver side mirror, smart brake support w turn across traffic & front crossing, smart brake support reverse, front cross traffic alert, blind spot assist, frameless auto-dim rear mirror w Homelink, cruise & traffic support.....incl
PAINT: Ingot Blue Metallic	nc
RETRACTABLE CARGO COVER	225
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$44,620

2026 MAZDA CX-50 LINEUP

CX-50 2.5 S	187-hp 2.5L SKYACTIV-G, 6-spd auto, AWD, 24/30/26 mpg (city/hwy/comb), tow 2000 lb
2.5 S Select	\$29,900
2.5 S Preferred	32,400
2.5 S Meridian Edition	33,150
2.5 S Premium	34,900
CX-50 2.5 Turbo	256-hp 2.5L Twin Scroll Turbo, 6-spd auto, AWD, 23/29/25 mpg (city/hwy/comb), tow 3500 lb
2.5 Turbo	\$37,900
2.5 Turbo Meridian Edition	40,400
2.5 Turbo Premium Plus	▼ 42,900
CX-50 Hybrid	219-hp 2.5L Hybrid engine, eCVT, eAWD, 39/37/38 mpg (city/hwy/comb), tow 1500 lb
Hybrid Preferred	\$34,750
Hybrid Premium	38,150
Hybrid Premium Plus	40,150