

Kelley Blue Book Names Best Cars for College Students for 2023

Editors Offer Helpful Advice, Detail Best New, Used Cars, SUVs for College Students at Various Price Points

ATLANTA, Aug. 23, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- With young adults across the country heading back to college campuses to kick off a brand-new school year, buying a car may be on their to-do lists. Several considerations should influence a buying decision when shopping for cars for college students, but sometimes they can conflict. To help college students and their families tiptoe through this minefield, Kelley Blue Book, a Cox Automotive company, recently provided helpful advice and named the [Best Cars for College Students](#) for 2023.

"There are so many variables to weigh in picking any car - let alone one for a college student - and sometimes the process can be truly overwhelming," said Brian Moody, executive editor for Kelley Blue Book. "Usually purchase price is top-of-mind, so we started with a price ceiling of \$25,000 for the new cars on this list, and then chose several used models at various price points for more budget-oriented shoppers. Other important factors to weigh include cost of ownership, safety, technology and practicality. While reduced inventories of new and used cars have presented challenges including stubbornly high prices and limited choices for some brands, we are seeing downward movement on the average prices for new cars, so there is hope. We recommend shoppers stay flexible, understanding they may need to make a few compromises on car color and content to secure the type of car they want."



Kelley Blue Book

Expert Advice and Things to Consider When Buying a Car for College

Want vs. Need

- A car at college can be a real hassle between expenses, campus parking and more, so if a personal car isn't necessary for getting to a job, or to and from an off-campus residence, it may be more of a want than a need.

Vehicle Affordability

- An affordable payment is a function of a vehicle's cost, and whether it's the parents or the student shouldering the monthly installments, those payments need to be kept low.
- Most carmakers use a captive financing company that offers financing deals on new and certified pre-owned (CPO) vehicles - that is a good place to start.
- If securing a loan outside of captive financing, usually you can get a lower monthly payment on a used vehicle versus a new one. Credit unions are known to offer lower percentage rates on car loans, which is something to consider given recent interest rate increases.

Cost of Ownership

- Cost of ownership factors including insurance, maintenance/repairs, fuel economy and depreciation all can vary greatly from one car to the next. Check out Kelley Blue Book's [5-Year Cost to Own](#) tool to compare models.
- Insurance cost is a key contributor to the total cost of ownership, and historically, drivers younger than 25 can expect insurance to be an even greater factor in total cost of ownership. Always involve your insurance costs in a purchase decision, and shop around for insurance to save money.
- Gasoline is a monthly expense that can vary wildly from year to year depending on fluctuations in the price of oil. Seeking out vehicles delivering better fuel economy, or considering hybrid vehicles, can save you a few trips to the pump. Hybrids tend to cost a bit more than gasoline-fueled cars, so a used hybrid may be a better choice.

Other Factors to Consider

- Safety features and rating always should be a key qualifier in purchasing a vehicle for anyone regardless of age, so be sure to check out the crash test scores from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The picks on our lists below scored high with most of them.
- Technology factors are critical on several levels, but staying connected is of the utmost concern for college-aged people. At the very least, they expect to be able to integrate their devices into a vehicle's infotainment system. The newer the model, the more connectivity options available.
- Remember that this car may need to continue as the main mode of transportation after college and into the first few years of building a career, so put some time into thinking about what that may look like regarding commuting needs and lifestyle, in addition to cost of ownership.

Kelley Blue Book's Best New Cars and SUVs Under \$25,000 for College Students for 2023

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 2023 Toyota Corolla | 6. 2023 Subaru Crosstrek |
| 2. 2023 Honda Civic | 7. 2023 Kia Seltos |
| 3. 2023 Hyundai Elantra | 8. 2023 Hyundai Kona |
| 4. 2023 Honda HR-V | 9. 2023 Nissan Sentra |
| 5. 2023 Mazda3 | 10. 2023 Kia Soul |

Kelley Blue Book's Best Used Cars and SUVs Under \$20,000 for College Students for 2023

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. 2015 - 2017 Toyota Camry | 7. 2015 - 2016 Honda CR-V |
| 2. 2016 - 2017 Honda Accord | 8. 2016 - 2018 Subaru Crosstrek |
| 3. 2017 - 2018 Toyota Corolla | 9. 2016 - 2018 Mazda3 |
| 4. 2015 - 2018 Mazda CX-5 | 10. 2016 - 2018 Honda Civic |
| 5. 2012 - 2015 Toyota Prius | 11. 2017 - 2019 Kia Soul |
| 6. 2014 - 2016 Toyota RAV4 | 12. 2015 - 2019 Honda Fit |

Kelley Blue Book's Best Used Cars and SUVs Under \$15,000 for College Students for 2023

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. 2012 - 2014 Toyota Camry | 4. 2011 - 2014 Toyota Corolla |
| 2. 2007 - 2014 Honda CR-V | 5. 2013 - 2015 Honda Civic |
| 3. 2011 - 2015 Honda Accord | 6. 2009 - 2012 Toyota RAV4 |

For more information about Kelley Blue Book's Best Cars for College Students for 2023, including full editorial commentary about each vehicle, pricing details and more, visit <https://www.kbb.com/best-cars/college-students/>.

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About Kelley Blue Book

Founded in 1926, Kelley Blue Book, *The Trusted Resource*[®], is the vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry for nearly a century. As the industry standard for generations, Kelley Blue Book provides transparent, objective information and data-driven, innovative tools for consumers, automotive dealers and manufacturers. The company publishes millions of market-reflective values weekly on its top-rated website KBB.com, from its famous Blue Book[®] Trade-In Values to the Kelley Blue Book[®] Price Advisor tool, which offers a range for what consumers reasonably can expect to pay for a vehicle in their area. KBB.com editors rate and review hundreds of new vehicles each year to help consumers understand the [Best Cars](#) and [Best SUVs](#) to meet their needs. Kelley

Blue BookSM Instant Cash Offer provides a redeemable trade-in offer to transaction-ready consumers and conveniently connects them to local participating dealers. Kelley Blue Book's Service Advisor provides guidance on how much to pay for service and repairs, allowing consumers to schedule service with local dealers on KBB.com. The company also provides vehicle values to finance and insurance companies as well as governmental agencies. Kelley Blue Book is a Cox Automotive brand.

About Cox Automotive

Cox Automotive is the world's largest automotive services and technology provider. Fueled by the largest breadth of first-party data fed by 2.3 billion online interactions a year, Cox Automotive tailors leading solutions for car shoppers, automakers, dealers, retailers, lenders and fleet owners. The company has 25,000+ employees on five continents and a family of trusted brands that includes Autotrader[®], Dealertrack[®], Kelley Blue Book[®], Manheim[®], NextGear Capital[™] and vAuto[®]. Cox Automotive is a subsidiary of Cox Enterprises Inc., a privately-owned, Atlanta-based company with \$22 billion in annual revenue. Visit coxautoinc.com or connect via [@CoxAutomotive](https://twitter.com/CoxAutomotive) on Twitter, [CoxAutoInc](https://facebook.com/CoxAutoInc) on Facebook or [Cox-Automotive-Inc](https://linkedin.com/company/Cox-Automotive-Inc) on LinkedIn.

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