Kelley Blue Book Announces 2026 Best Buy Award Winners

Awards Recognize True Excellence Among Today's New Cars

ATLANTA, Jan. 21, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Following a year of expert testing of nearly every new and redesigned vehicle available in the United States, Kelley Blue Book, a Cox Automotive brand, today announces the winners of the 2026 Best Buy Awards.

The Best Buy Awards is a comprehensive recognition program that spotlights the standout cars, trucks and SUVs Kelley Blue Book recommends to new-car shoppers across a variety of segments. Now in its 12th year, the program continues to adapt to the dynamic automotive landscape with evolving categories that reflect advances in technology, safety and efficiency, providing buyers with expert advice on the best car for their needs.

"We keep the everyday driver at the forefront of our minds while testing new and redesigned cars each year, ultimately choosing the models we recommend as unsurpassed in their category for the Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Awards," said Brian Moody, executive editor at Kelley Blue Book. "With several hundred new-vehicle models available in 2026, the multitude of options can be overwhelming for many new-car shoppers. Our goal is to alleviate some of that stress and help people choose the right car that best suits their individual needs, empowering them with information to make confident purchase decisions. Our team does the heavy lifting by carefully testing, evaluating and comparing new cars, and the Best Buy Award winners represent the true standouts in the most popular vehicle categories."

At-a-Glance: 2026 Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Award Winners

Best New Model: 2026 Nissan LEAF	**Best Compact Truck:** 2026 Ford Maverick
Best Compact Car: 2026 Honda Civic	**Best Midsize Truck:** 2026 Toyota Tacoma
Best Midsize Car: 2026 Toyota Camry	**Best Full-Size Truck:** 2026 Ford F-150

Best Subcompact SUV: 2026 Hyundai Kona	**Best Minivan:** 2026 Toyota Sienna
Best Compact SUV: 2026 Toyota RAV4	**Best Electric Vehicle:** 2026 Hyundai Ioniq 5
Best Midsize SUV: 2026 Hyundai Palisade	**Best 3-Row Electric Vehicle:** 2026 Kia EV9
Best Full-Size SUV: 2026 Ford Expedition	**Best Electric Vehicle Under $35,000:** 2026 Nissan LEAF

Kelley Blue Book's Expert Commentary Overview: 2026 Best Buy Award Winners

Best New Model: 2026 Nissan LEAF
The stylish, feature-heavy Nissan Leaf has more than 300 miles of range, a low starting price and will never be affected by the cost of gas. That value triple threat makes driving an EV accessible to just about everyone.

Best Subcompact SUV: 2026 Hyundai Kona
The 2026 Hyundai Kona sets a high bar in the subcompact SUV segment, redefining what quality, safety and features a shopper can — and should — expect in a small, affordable SUV. It's as likable and spunky as ever, and Hyundai protects it all with the best warranty in the industry (a 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty).

Best Compact SUV: 2026 Toyota RAV4
More power for the money? Check. More miles per gallon to stretch your dollar further? The RAV4 checks that mark, too. Of course, the RAV4's value story doesn't end there. Toyota as a brand boasts the best resale values in the business, and we expect the 2026 RAV4 to retain its status of holding its value well over the long run.

Best Midsize SUV: 2026 Hyundai Palisade
The Hyundai Palisade went from good to great when it was redesigned for the 2026 model year. In addition to an updated look inside and out enhancing its premium aesthetics, it gets an efficient new hybrid powertrain option, a roomier interior with upgraded features and materials, and a rugged XRT Pro trim that's ready for adventure. Combine its reasonable pricing, above-average resale value, class-leading warranty, and the hybrid's low fuel costs, and the new Palisade is an excellent value in new midsize SUVs.

Best Full-Size SUV: 2026 Ford Expedition
The Ford Expedition is tough, capable and great-looking. It can haul both the family and their toys either on-road or off with surprisingly decent fuel economy. No wonder we've named it Best Buy in the Full-Size SUV category yet again.

Best 3-Row Electric Vehicle: 2026 Kia EV9
The Kia EV9 is a spacious midsize SUV with more than 300 miles of range. It's a true family hauler that also happens to be fully electric.

Best Electric Vehicle Under $35,000: 2026 Nissan Leaf
Drivers have relied on the Leaf name for a practical EV that costs little to drive since 2012. The 2026 version still offers those virtues, adding new style inside and out, more power and more range, while keeping the price tag under $35,000. That makes it our top pick in its category.

Best Electric Vehicle: 2026 Hyundai Ioniq 5
In a year when the average new-car price has reached the$50,000 mark, Hyundai did something remarkable with the latest Ioniq 5: It slashed the price, keeping the Ioniq 5 among the most competitive in terms of EV pricing and making this best-of-the-best EV approachable to an even wider set of shoppers. That doesn't even factor in the potentially vastly lower fuel costs or the long-term assurance you get from Hyundai's unbeatable warranty.

Best Compact Car: 2026 Honda Civic
The Honda Civic offers something for everyone. It's fuel-efficient, practical and fun

to drive, and the hybrid takes those to the nth power. If your heart cries out for something with more performance, there's the Civic Si and Type R. Whatever Civic resonates with you, it will be one that offers excellent resale value and reliability.

Best Midsize Car: 2026 Toyota Camry
The 2026 Toyota Camry remains a sensible top choice for American families due in part to its practical design. The car offers an efficiency rating of up to 51 mpg, notches exceptional safety scores, and boasts class-leading resale value. All of these qualities make the Camry not only easy to drive, but also easy to live with.

Best Minivan: 2026 Toyota Sienna
For families looking to maximize safety, efficiency and overall practicality, the Toyota Sienna is our top pick. The hybrid powertrain ensures low fuel costs, and it's the reigning minivan champ for our Best Resale Value Awards.

In addition, the Sienna excels when it comes to what minivan drivers value: safety and reliability.

Best Compact Truck: 2026 Ford Maverick
The Ford Maverick has the style and capability of a full-size truck, albeit on a much smaller scale. It is the compact truck choice for those who want an upright cab, tall ride height and a multi-talented bed, plus phenomenal fuel economy. Best of all, the Maverick's sub-$30,000 starting price means buyers who never thought they could afford a new pickup truck might still have a chance.

Best Midsize Truck: 2026 Toyota Tacoma
The Tacoma has taken the top step of the midsize truck podium many times over the past decades, and it still reigns supreme when it comes to resale value on the open market. Toyota's ground-up redesign needed to be stellar to maintain that status, and they didn't disappoint. We still find ourselves bowled over by the capability, durability, customization and comfort of this newest generation of Tacoma.

Best Full-Size Truck: 2026 Ford F-150
Whether you gauge a truck's prowess by its capability, power, efficiency or comfort, the 2026 Ford F-150 excels, and its diverse model range ensures there's an F-150 for anyone looking for a full-size pickup.

For more information and full coverage of the 2026 Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Awards, including full editorial comments about each model, pricing details, photos and more, visit https://www.kbb.com/awards/best-buy-awards-2026/.

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. Kelley Blue Book 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 Book℠ 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. Kelley Blue Book also provides vehicle values to finance and insurance companies as well as governmental agencies. Kelley Blue Book is a Cox Automotive brand.

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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, auto manufacturers, dealers, lenders and fleets. The company has 29,000+ employees on five continents and a portfolio of industry-leading brands that include Autotrader®, Kelley Blue Book®, Manheim®, vAuto®, Dealertrack®, NextGear Capital™, CentralDispatch® and Cox Fleet®. Cox Automotive is a subsidiary of Cox Enterprises Inc., a privately owned, Atlanta-based company with $23 billion in annual revenue. Visit **coxautoinc.com** or connect via **@CoxAutomotive** on X, **CoxAutoInc** on Facebook or **Cox-Automotive-Inc** on LinkedIn.

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For further information: Brenna Buehler, 949-473-6595, Brenna.Buehler@coxautoinc.com

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