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**TEST DRIVE**

## Winter Escape

### 2017 Ford Escape Titanium 4WD

DAN LYONS | text  
Special to the Times Union

In winter, the Capital District is a well-worn notch in the Snowbelt. In locales like ours, it's not for nothing that compact crossovers are popular. The combination of versatility, a right-size footprint and (when equipped with AWD) winter worthiness make this segment a perennial top seller in this market.



Of course, we're not the only region blessed with this climate, and so most automakers field products in this segment, to meet the collective demand in this hotly contested segment. When you're working in a crowded space, it's helpful to have a way to stand out from the crowd. In the case of the Ford Escape, one difference has to do with engines. Escape is offered with three, available mo-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

**2017 Ford Escape Titanium 4WD**  
MSRP: \$30,850 · As Tested: \$36,625

tors: a 2.5L 4-cylinder (168 h.p./170 lb.-ft. of torque), 1.5L turbo four (179 h.p./177 lb.-ft.), and a 2.0L turbo four (245 h.p./ 275 lb.-ft.).

The 2.5 is standard on base, "S" trim models (MSRP: \$23,750), the 1.5L turbo is standard on the mid-grade SE trim (\$25,250), and the 2.0L turbo is optional (\$1,345) on both the SE and the range-topping Titanium trim Escape (\$29,250). The top, two trim levels can be had with all-wheel-drive in place of the standard



**THE 2017 FORD ESCAPE** sets itself apart from its small crossover competitors with a choice of three different engines, including the optional 2.0L EcoBoost (left) on the top-ranging Titanium trim level.

front-wheel-drive for an additional \$1,600. All engines are paired with a six-speed automatic transmission. I've driven both the 1.5L and 2.0L turbo motors in Escape, the former being new this year. Ford's EcoBoost (turbocharged, direct injection) 1.5 offers respectable acceleration, with moderate engine noise noted at full throttle. EPA predictions for fuel economy are 22/28 for AWD versions, and I registered 23 mpg's in a mix of mostly in town driving. The power numbers for the twin scroll, EcoBoost 2.0L are among the highest in the segment. Given the increase in horsepower and torque (+66 and 98, respectively) it's unsurprisingly, a much more responsive driving partner than the smaller turbo mill, with smooth and abundant power. Those who tow will

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be interested to know the difference in the capacity of the Escape engine choices: 2.5L (1,500 lb.; same as rivals CR-V and RAV4), 1.5L (2,000 lb.) and 2.0L (3,500 lb.). The latter number is impressive given the size of the motor, and for the fact that it's more than the rating of the formerly available, 3.0L V-6. Mileage estimates for the 2.0L are 20/27 (AWD). Escape handles confidently and rides comfortably. Ford's on-demand AWD system distributes torque to the front and rear wheels as needed, to maximize traction. The system corrects for both oversteer and understeer, and it works in wet or dry road conditions. Available Torque Vectoring Control and Curve Control improve handling and stability on winding roads. A mix  
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