

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

## 2023 Mazda CX-5 2.5 Turbo Signature AWD

MSRP: \$26,700 (2.5S) As Tested: \$41,655



Previously, I've reviewed the Mazda's CX-50; one of two models that the company fields in the compact crossover segment. The other offering is the CX-5, which we drive this week. It's available in eight trim levels, with prices ranging from \$26,700-\$39,650. All versions are All Wheel Drive. My tester was the top ranging, Turbo Signature.

Particularly in top trim models, the interior materials in the CX-5 have an upscale look and feel. Controls for HVAC functions are found low on the center stack. The CX-50's similarly designed pod is positioned higher, and arguably easier to reach. A 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ " center touchscreen is standard on all trim levels, and the infotainment system is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Most functions are accessed by a combination of a console dial and buttons. The amount of time it takes to make system adjustments is about average for the segment. The Turbo Signature occupies the top rung on the trim ladder, and the extensive roster of standard equipment includes Nappa leather seating surfaces, real wood trim and LED interior lighting. The steering wheel is trim-specific, as is the black headliner. Onboard navigation is included, and the driver safety features are augmented by Rear Smart City Brake Support, Traffic Jam Assist, Driver Attention Alert and the desirable, bird's-eye, 360 degree view monitor, with front/rear parking sensors. Size-wise, six footers are a tight squeeze in back, with like size people up front. Cargo capacity is 29.1-59.3 cu.-ft.. Rear seatbacks fold to a flat load floor, though you may first have to move the front seat forward, for clearance.



*Photos courtesy of the manufacturer*

Lower trim levels in CX-5 are equipped with a 187 h.p. version of Mazda's 2.5L four cylinder engine (186 lb.-ft. torque). The top, two levels get a twin turbo version of that engine. Fed premium fuel, it's rated at 256 horsepower and 320 lb.-ft. of torque. On a diet of regular, the numbers are 227 h.p. and 310 lb.-ft. All versions of the 2.5 are paired with a six-speed automatic transmission. The EPA says that your predicted fuel economy will be 22/27/24 with the 2.5 turbo, and I logged 19 mpg's during my test drive. Sport and Off Road driving modes are offered on the top four trim levels. Sport mode yields a more responsive throttle, and more aggressive shift points. The CX-5's maximum towing on all versions of the 2.5 is 2,000 lb. (In sibling CX-50, the tow rating in turbo versions is 3,500 lb. max; something to keep in mind, if towing is in your plans).

While there's little sport in most Sport Utility Vehicles, some crossovers can rightly make that claim, and this is one of them. Some of the driving DNA found in its sibling sports car (the Mazda Miata) is in evidence here. Find a curvy road, and the Mazda is happy to tackle it. The peppy, turbo motor doubles down on the fun factor. I've seen mid/high 6-second times quoted from reputable sources for 0-60 times with the CX-5 turbo, and they're believable. Overall, the Mazda offers a fine balance of handling and ride quality.

Really, the differences between the CX-5 and the CX-50 boil down to a matter of style. The CX-50 is slightly longer, lower and wider. With its dark, body side cladding, it exudes a woodsy, outdoor active, SUV vibe. Absent the cladding and a skosh smaller, the CX-5's has a more urban/suburban feel, and its smaller footprint would come in handy in those environments.

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