

SUV fuel economy is not exactly legendary. A matter of fact, SUVs are known far and wide as some of the biggest gas guzzlers that are. So when one of my friends announced that he was looking for the best gas mileage SUV rating, I was a little bit surprised. It didn't really make any sense. If you're going to buy an SUV, you giving the world a certain message: luxury matters to me much more than efficiency. Of course there are certain SUV companies such as Subaru which specifically market to hippies and other supposedly environmentally conscious folks, but even these are not known for being tremendously energy-efficient. Still, I was intrigued. I wanted to find out more about the best gas mileage SUVs.

The real problem is that the category SUV is pretty flexible. Although they are supposed to be rugged vehicles equipped for off-road driving, the reality is much different. Many of them are simply status symbols for people who like to show off. They are roomy inside, high above the ground, and big enough so that if they get in crashes, the other car takes the worst of it. That isn't to say that SUVs are safe. Even the best gas mileage SUV won't save you from a rollover crash, and that can be fatal. Nowadays, many of the design flaws inherent in sport utility vehicles are being corrected, but I still wouldn't trust one with my life without doing a lot of research.

The biggest problem with this project, of course, was coming up with a definition for what an SUV is. A car like the Saturn Outlook, for example, might be considered an SUV but might not. Would a crossover car qualify for the best gas mileage SUV? It is pretty hard to tell, and my friend couldn't decide.

In a lot of ways his whole project was a waste of time. It did have one good effect, however. Researching the best gas mileage SUV really got him thinking. For the amount of money that he could spend buying a new SUV, he could get something that was really fuel-efficient such as a Honda hybrid car. He came to realize that he didn't really need an SUV. He didn't have much to carry around, and he didn't go off-road very often. Instead, he invested his money in a fuel-efficient car. It might not be as big and overbearing, but it is a better investment in the long term.