

Car Shopping Checklist

Gas SUV / Crossover • Under \$30,000 • Safety, Comfort & Simplicity
Models to check: *Hyundai Tucson SE • Mazda CX-5 • Toyota Corolla Cross*

1. COST

	Check	What to Ask / Look For
☐	Sticker price under \$30,000?	<i>MSRP is not the final number. Always ask for the out-the-door price.</i>
☐	Out-the-door price confirmed?	<i>Includes tax, title, and all dealer fees. Get it in writing.</i>
☐	No surprise dealer add-ons?	<i>Watch for packages added to the sticker. Ask to remove them.</i>
☐	Safety features in this trim level?	<i>Blind spot monitoring is often on the 2nd or 3rd trim, not base.</i>

2. GETTING IN AND OUT

	Check	What to Look For
☐	Step-in height is comfortable?	<i>You should step in, not climb up or fold yourself down.</i>
☐	Door opens wide enough?	<i>Wide door swing matters in tight parking spaces.</i>
☐	No awkward twist to sit down?	<i>A straight-in entry is easier on your back and hips.</i>
☐	Grab handle available to assist?	<i>Many crossovers have a handle above or beside the door opening.</i>

3. COMFORT

	Check	What to Look For
☐	Seat feels supportive?	<i>Sit for a few minutes before deciding. Not too stiff, not too soft.</i>
☐	Enough headroom?	<i>You should not be touching the ceiling or sitting with neck bent.</i>
☐	Enough legroom for driver and passenger?	<i>Test the seat all the way back and forward.</i>
☐	Seatbelt easy to reach and buckle?	<i>Shoulder belt should cross the chest, not the neck.</i>
☐	Steering wheel adjusts naturally?	<i>Both tilt and telescoping. Try it before the test drive.</i>

	Check	What to Look For
☐	Ride smooth over bumps?	<i>Drive over a rough patch deliberately during the test drive.</i>
☐	Road noise acceptable at highway speed?	<i>Test on a highway stretch if possible.</i>

4. VISIBILITY

	Check	What to Look For
☐	Can you see clearly over the hood?	<i>Low hood line = better forward visibility.</i>
☐	Side windows give a clear view?	<i>Thick pillars create blind spots. Check both sides.</i>
☐	Rear window large enough to see through?	<i>Some crossovers have small rear windows. Look before trusting the camera.</i>
☐	Backup camera clear and wide?	<i>Ask to see it in the lot. Some are low-resolution or poorly aimed.</i>
☐	Minimal blind spots overall?	<i>Do a slow loop around a parking lot before the highway.</i>

5. SAFETY FEATURES

	Check	What to Confirm
☐	IIHS Top Safety Pick rating?	<i>Check iihs.org for the current model year specifically.</i>
☐	Automatic emergency braking standard?	<i>Should be on all trims. Confirm it.</i>
☐	Blind spot monitoring included?	<i>Ask which trim level. May not be on the base model.</i>
☐	Rear cross-traffic alert included?	<i>Warns you when backing out as traffic approaches from the side.</i>
☐	Lane departure warning included?	<i>Useful on highway. Ask if it can be turned off when needed.</i>
☐	Adaptive cruise control available?	<i>Nice for longer family road trips. Ask which trim it appears on.</i>

6. EASE OF USE

	Check	What to Test Right Now
☐	Climate controls easy to find without menus?	<i>Look for physical knobs or buttons, not buried in a touchscreen.</i>

	Check	What to Test Right Now
☐	Volume and radio controls make sense?	<i>Try them before starting the car. Should be obvious without instructions.</i>
☐	Phone connection is simple?	<i>Apple CarPlay / Android Auto. Ask the salesperson to demo it.</i>
☐	Driver seat has power adjustment?	<i>Manual seat adjustment gets harder over time. Power is worth it.</i>
☐	Mirrors adjust easily from inside?	<i>Power mirrors are standard. Make sure they adjust fully in all directions.</i>
☐	Dashboard is not overwhelming?	<i>Less to read while driving is better. Trust your gut here.</i>
☐	Trunk opens and closes easily?	<i>Power liftgate is a nice-to-have. Also check the opening height.</i>

7. RELIABILITY

	Ask / Check	Why It Matters
☐	Reliability rating checked in advance?	<i>J.D. Power or Consumer Reports. Do this before the visit.</i>
☐	Bumper-to-bumper warranty confirmed?	<i>Hyundai offers 5yr/60k. Toyota and Mazda offer 3yr/36k.</i>
☐	Powertrain warranty confirmed?	<i>Covers engine and transmission. Longer is better.</i>
☐	Roadside assistance included?	<i>Most brands include it. Ask for how long.</i>
☐	Routine maintenance included or extra?	<i>Some brands include oil changes. Ask specifically.</i>
☐	Local service center convenient?	<i>Tucson has all major dealers. Confirm hours and location.</i>

8. QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING

	Question to Ask Out Loud Before Signing Anything
☐	What is the complete out-the-door price, including all fees and taxes?
☐	Which trim level includes blind spot monitoring?
☐	Can I see the IIHS safety rating for this exact model year?
☐	What does the warranty cover, and for how long?
☐	Is this a gas-only model, or is there a hybrid version too?
☐	Can I take it on the highway for 15 minutes during the test drive?

Question to Ask Out Loud Before Signing Anything	
☐	Are there any dealer-added packages on this car that I can remove?

9. NOTES FROM THIS VISIT

Notes	
	Car / Dealership visited:
	Out-the-door price quoted:
	Safety features confirmed:
	How did getting in and out feel?:
	Overall impression:

Print one copy per dealership visit. Take your time. There is no rush.