

No Tradeoffs Here

Lexus NX Makes Case for Logical, Reasonable Luxury Transit

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

Luxury cars are, by definition, a splurge purchase. They go beyond what anyone needs.

If you want a luxury vehicle that still seems somewhat reasonable, though, it's hard to think of one that makes more logical sense than this one: the Lexus NX.

This compact crossover definitely qualifies as luxurious. It makes its lucky occupants feel pampered in a near-silent leather cocoon, and it oozes the same solid-as-a-rock build quality as pricier Lexus vehicles.

It starts under \$39,000, which seems downright cheap in today's inflation-riddled world, but doesn't feel as compact as its price would suggest. The smaller UX has taken its place on the bottom rung of Lexus' crossover ladder, and after a redesign last year, the NX feels like a roomy, substantial car from the inside.

It stands out from competitors in other cerebral ways, too.

Lexus is known for reliability, for one thing, something rare among luxury brands. Most of them are known for creating problems for owners down the road, which is not surprising when you consider luxury cars have more features to break and more fresh technologies that haven't been



The Lexus NX is more substantial and spacious after a complete redesign last year. A plug-in hybrid version is rated for the equivalent of 84 miles per gallon.

thoroughly tested.

Lexus is an outlier in creating bells and whistles that actually last.

That plays a factor in another logical selling point for the NX: Lexus' resale value. The brand's reputation for durability helps it command higher prices on the used-car market compared to a lot of other luxury brands whose values tend to tank more quickly.

It even gets good gas mileage.

The NX is available with

four different drivetrains, starting with a 2.5-liter base engine that earns a 33-mpg rating on the highway. Other choices include a more powerful turbocharged engine rated for 29 mpg, a hybrid that gets 41 mpg in the city, and a plug-in hybrid that gets the equivalent of 84 mpg, if you believe the government's wonky rating system.

My tester was the plug-in hybrid, called the NX 450h+, with batteries that take it 36 miles on a full charge before

the gasoline engine kicks in. That makes rating its fuel economy nearly impossible because people who mainly use it for short trips won't burn any gasoline, and people who take it on long highway drives will burn plenty. Mileage depends heavily on the use case.

I put a lot of highway miles on my NX tester, and it was heavenly in that role. The hybrid drivetrain made it cheap to fill up at the gas pump, and its long list of comfort systems — includ-

ing driving assistance that works flawlessly — made highway trips more refreshing than exhausting.

The NX has one glaring downside for people who aren't shopping based on logic alone. It doesn't inspire excitement for drivers who crave that sort of thing.

Its ho-hum acceleration and numb handling don't bother me because I own a sports car for the times I need thrills. Some drivers want to have it all in one vehicle, though, and the

WHAT WAS TESTED?

2023 Lexus NX 450h+ Luxury (\$56,555)

Wheelbase: 105.9 in.

Length: 183.5 in.

Width: 73.4 in.

Height: 65.8 in.

Powertrain: 2.5-liter engine plus electric motor (304 total system horsepower)

Transmission: Continuously variable

Gasoline fuel

economy: 36 mpg combined

Gas + electric fuel

economy: 84 mpg equivalent

Why buy it?

It's a rare luxury vehicle that makes logical sense. It's spacious, solid, quiet, efficient and packed with thoughtful design and tech touches.

European luxury brands all do a better job at making faster, more exciting crossovers than this one, albeit for a higher price.

As a whole, though, the NX is one of the most tempting vehicles I've driven recently because of its off-the-charts logical appeal. It's a luxury car that doesn't make you suffer in some way, something difficult to find in a car market overflowing with tradeoffs.



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It stands out from competitors in other cerebral ways, too.

Lexus is known for reliability, for one thing, something rare among luxury brands. Most of them are known for creating problems for owners down the road, which is not surprising when you consider luxury cars have more features to break and more fresh technologies that haven't been thoroughly tested.



Technology takes center stage in the NX. An optional 14-inch touchscreen lets you access its myriad tech features with simplicity.

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ues tend to tank more quickly.

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A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

<p>What was tested? 2023 Lexus NX 450h+ Luxury (\$56,555).</p> <p>Options: Advanced Park (\$250), digital inner mirror (\$200), triple beam headlamps (\$850), 6.6-kW internal charging (\$800), panoramic view monitor (\$1,070), 2,000-pound towing capability (\$160), illuminated cargo sill (\$300), carpet cargo mat (\$140), puddle lamps (\$325), mudguards (\$165). Price as tested (including \$1,150 destination charge): \$61,965.</p>	<p>Wheelbase: 105.9 in.</p> <p>Length: 183.5 in.</p> <p>Width: 73.4 in.</p> <p>Height: 65.8 in.</p> <p>Powertrain: 2.5-liter engine plus electric motor (304 total system horsepower)</p> <p>Transmission: Continuously variable</p> <p>Gasoline fuel economy: 36 mpg combined</p> <p>Gas + electric fuel economy: 84 mpg equivalent</p>	<p>RATINGS</p> <p>Style: 7</p> <p>Performance: 7</p> <p>Price: 7</p> <p>Handling: 6</p> <p>Ride: 8</p> <p>Comfort: 9</p> <p>Quality: 10</p> <p>Overall: 8</p>	<p>Why buy it?</p> <p>It's a rare luxury vehicle that makes logical sense. It's spacious, solid, quiet, efficient and packed with thoughtful design and tech touches.</p>
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