

The most fuel-efficient hybrid and electric cars

April 17 2012, By E/The Environmental Magazine, Emagazine.com



Which are the most fuel-efficient hybrid and/or all-electric cars available to consumers today?

Given increased environmental awareness, high [gas prices](#) and a continually slumping economy, it's no wonder that more [fuel efficient cars](#) are all the rage these days. The best deal going may be Honda's [hybrid](#), the 42 [miles-per-gallon](#) (MPG) Insight (\$18,350). Meanwhile, the newest version of Toyota's flagship hybrid, the Prius (\$23,015), garners an impressive 50 MPG. Other solid choices include Toyota's 41-MPG Camry hybrid (\$25,900), Ford's 39-MPG Fusion hybrid (\$28,700), Lexus' 42-MPG CT 200h (\$29,120) and Lincoln's 39-MPG MKZ Hybrid (\$34,755).

For even greater efficiency and lower sticker prices, consider going electric, where you can charge your vehicle at ordinary electric outlets at home or work. Mitsubishi's new MiEV (\$29,125) electric is the most fuel efficient car available to U.S. consumers in the 2012 model year, achieving 112 "MPG-equivalent" (the U.S. Environment Protection Agency's rating for [electric vehicles](#) that swaps in electricity for gas in its calculations) and a 62 mile range per full charge - not bad considering four adults can fit fairly comfortably inside. Another option is Smart's FourTwo Electric (\$28,752), a two-seater with an 87 MPG-equivalent. And Nissan's all-electric Leaf (\$35,200) achieves 99 MPG efficiency for a range up to 100 miles.

So-called "plug-in" hybrids also allow drivers to charge their vehicles' electric batteries via common power outlets, but also can use gasoline as needed for a longer range. Though pricey at \$39,145, the [Chevy Volt](#) may save you money in the long run because it gets a whopping 94 MPG-equivalent in its preferred all-electric mode. An onboard gas generator produces more electricity as the vehicle is driven, extending the car's range with a full tank of gas to some 375 miles. Toyota released a plug-in version of its [Prius](#) (\$32,760) this year, as well. It gets 87 MPG in electric mode (but this will only get you 15 miles without gas assistance) and a respectable 49 MPG in regular hybrid mode.

Another factor to consider when deciding which of these new uber-efficient vehicles may be right for you is the availability of additional incentives. Buyers of a new Volt, MiEV, FourTwo Electric or Leaf, for example, can cash in on a federal tax credit of \$7,500 - and some states may offer additional incentives - bringing the overall cost of these cars down to within the range of similarly sized traditional car models. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) posts all of the relevant federal tax incentives online at its Fuel Efficient Vehicle Tax Information Center website. For state-by-state incentives, check out the Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (DSIRE), a free online resources

maintained by the North Carolina Solar Center and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC).

Of course, consumers don't have to go hybrid or electric to enjoy improved fuel efficiency these days. Scion's iQ (\$15,265) and Honda's CR-Z (\$19,545) each get 37 MPG out of sporty little gas-powered internal combustion engines. Kia, Toyota, Chevrolet, Hyundai and Nissan also make smaller traditional cars that get a respectable 33-34 [MPG](#) for sticker prices under \$15,000.

More information: DOE's Fuel Efficient Vehicle Tax Information Center, www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/taxcenter.shtml; DSIRE, www.dsireusa.org; Edmunds' "Decoding Electric Car MPG," www.edmunds.com/fuel-economy/d...lectric-car-mpg.html.

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