

Kyle Busch is the author of Drive the Best for the Price: How to Buy a Used Automobile, Sport-Utility Vehicle, or Minivan and Save Money. In 1991, the book's author purchased a used 1986 vehicle for \$2,600 that a private owner had driven 82,000 miles. He has driven the vehicle for over nine years and the odometer has now logged over 292,000 miles. The vehicle continues to provide for his daily transportation needs.

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Higher Fuel Prices? Wheels That Will Keep You Rolling **© 2003 by Kyle Busch**

The cost of transportation can be expensive, and higher fuel prices does not help matters. The following vehicles have good ratings, and they will help to stretch your fuel dollars.

The following are some vehicles that will help you to keep rolling longer and avoid the pump:

1. The Toyota Corolla has been around for over 30 years. During the last few years, the Corolla has become a bit larger. Expect to achieve about 30 mpg in the city and about 40 mpg on the highway with this vehicle.

2. The Honda Civic has been a stiff rival to the Corolla. The Civic has also recently grown a bit in size. The Civic is right there with the Corolla at about 30 mpg in the city and about 40 mpg on the highway.

3. The Geo Prizm will cost about \$1,000- \$1,500 less than a comparable year Corolla or Civic. The Prizm will achieve about 29 mpg city and about 38 mpg on the highway.

SUVs can really eat the fuel, however, they are convenient for hauling cargo, and they definitely have a real advantage in bad weather and off-road conditions.

4. The Suzuki Esteem wagon provides some cargo carrying ability and reasonable fuel economy. Expect to achieve about 28 mp in the city and about 37 mpg on the highway with this vehicle.

5. The Subaru Legacy wagon/Outback wagon and Forester can all carry cargo plus they have all-wheel drive. These vehicles generally have the most powerful engines out of those mentioned above. Expect to achieve about 22 mpg in the city and about 27 mpg on the highway.

If you are in the market for a vehicle, be certain to do your homework. Consult "Consumer Report's" automotive issue (April). This resource is available at most public libraries.

If you plan on buying a used vehicle, also be sure to read a couple of archived new vehicle road tests (review road tests that were conducted at the time the vehicle was new) on the used vehicle of interest in auto magazines (many are archived at your local library) or Internet sources such as "Car and Driver," "Motor Trend," "Road & Track," or "MotorWeek." Information from the road tests will allow you to zero in on which of the vehicles discussed above will be the best for you.

Last, but not least, be certain that you do not overpay to drive a fuel-efficient vehicle. For example, if you pay say \$1,500 more for a vehicle that achieves five mpg more than your current vehicle, you would need to drive it about five years to get \$1,500 in fuel savings. However, say you pay an extra \$500 for a vehicle that achieves 10 mpg more than your current vehicle. In a little over one year, you would recoup your \$500.