

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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SUV in Your Future? How to Save Money
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It is nearing the time when many people look to buy sport-utility vehicles. Who can blame them? Today's SUVs are not only reliable and refined enough to provide a slow paced fall drive but they also have the ability to tackle winter weather at its worst.

The cost of new SUVs are expensive. However, there are several used SUVs that you might want to consider. The following vehicles all have good ratings and they are available at substantial savings.

Four SUVs worth your consideration:

1. The Subaru Forester is a small SUV with one of the best all-wheel drive systems in the industry. New Forester Ls cost \$20,000-\$24,000.

You can buy (if you shop carefully) a used 2001 Forester L with 25,000-30,000 miles for about \$14,000-\$14,500. I consider this SUV to be an good value for this price. The vehicle should still have at least 6 months remaining on the manufacturer's 3 year/36,000 mile bumper-to-bumper warranty and 2.5 years remaining on the 5 year/60,000 mile power train (engine and transmission) warranty. This SUV can be driven for hundreds of thousands of miles.

2. The Toyota 4Runner been around for a long time and for good reason. It is one of America's most popular SUVs. For 2002, the four cylinder engine on the base model has been replaced with the six cylinder engine. New 4Runners cost \$25,000- \$34,000.

You can buy (if you shop carefully) a 2001 4Runner with 25,000-30,000 miles for about \$17,500-\$19,500. This vehicle should also have at least 6 months remaining on the manufacturer's 3 year/36,000 mile bumper-to-bumper warranty and 2.5 years remaining on the 5 year/60,000 mile power train warranty. The 4Runner can be driven for hundreds of thousands of miles.

3. The Nissan Pathfinder has also been a reliable SUV. New Pathfinders cost \$24,000-\$32,000.

Nissan does not quite have the name of the Toyota. Therefore, you can buy (if you shop carefully) a 2001 Pathfinder with 25,000-30,000 miles for about \$16,000-\$18,000. This vehicle should also have at least 6 months remaining on the manufacturer's 3 year/36,000 mile bumper-to-bumper warranty and 2.5 years remaining on the 5 year/60,000 mile power train warranty. This vehicle will also provide many years of dependable transportation.

4. The Honda CRV is also represents a good value in a small SUV. New CRVs cost \$21,000-25,000.

If you are on a transportation budget, you can buy (if you shop carefully) a 1999 CRV with 50,000-60,000 miles for about \$11,000-\$12,000. At this age and mileage, the vehicle will likely not include any remaining manufacturer's warranty. None the less, the CRV is quite reliable and economical to drive. This small SUV can provide years of good transportation service.

If you are in the market for a SUV, do your homework. Consult Consumer Report's vehicle (April) issue. Also, be sure to read a couple of archived new SUV 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 SUVs discussed above will be the best for you.

For example, if you prefer a SUV that can really tackle off road conditions; consider the 4Runner or the Pathfinder. However, if price is the major consideration and you do not plan to go off road, consider the Forester or the CRV. Last, but not least, if you are going to buy a 3 to 4 year-old SUV, try to get the 2000 model rather than the 199... model. Years down the road when you sell the vehicle, the 2000 model will be worth more than the "past century" vehicle.