

**K**ia Telluride was introduced in spring 2019 as a 2020 model, to immediate wide acclaim, which continues through today, with over 50 major-majors and countless others (see partial list on follow page). Awards and commendations generally fall into two realms—best value or just flat-out best in its category.

We've driven the Kia Telluride at a number of comparo events and have had it in our weekly fleet twice before—in 2021, an SX AWD, top trim of four at that time (eight builds with FWD-AWD on any); and in 2023, a new fifth trim, SXP (or SX-Prestige), ours with an also-new penultimate X-Line upgrade (the also-also-new X-Pro ran \$1,000 higher still), now one of five trim levels and fourteen builds.

The lineup this year is the same as last (see sidebar), in a range from just \$36,190 to the lower-mid \$50s, but this time we're driving that ultimate build—the SX-Prestige X-Pro AWD.

All have the same 291-horsepower 3.8-liter V6 and 8-speed automatic. All have three rows, with seating for seven on most, eight in two at the low end (or optionally seven in one of those). Legroom is exceptional—up to 44.1 inches in the first row, 42.4 in the second. Row three is fairly typical, especially as a midsize, at 31.4 inches. Weight, towing and fuel mileage vary only slightly across all.

Suspension, basically the same on all versions, is retuned for X-Pro. Ground clearance is 8.0 inches at the low end, 8.4 on others, including X-Pro. Approach-departure angles all are close, X-Pro the highest. Wheel size varies, most having 20-inch wheels, with 18-inchers the exception on just the base model (LX) and the two X-Pro versions (SX and SXP). On LX, it's with an eye on price point. On X-Pro, the size is with an eye on off-road capability—more sidewall for tougher duty. The X-Pro is not a heavy-armor rock-crawler, aimed rather at ad-

venturous off-pavement activities, while equally at home if it never left its duties in town.

With all those factors in mind, we kept an eye on the weather, to possibly head north for snow.

Modes include comfort, sport, smart, eco and snow, also with a differential lock. We went to sport, noting that the transmission held well in corners, seldom with lag. The turning circle is quite tight for a three-row, accomplishing easy U-turns even in places we expected three-points.

As always, there are some features we would change, though we won't nitpick those today.

The odds of springtime winter weather looked promising on a Friday afternoon. We headed north on the Beeline Highway at 2 pm, temperature 52°.

It was raining slightly, and the road surface was slick as we hit a long descent north of Sunflower. Speed demons dominated the shiny left lane, as we realized our right lane instead had a very rough

surface—but the ride in our Telluride was notably smooth, even in firmer sport mode. Nice.

By the piñons near Payson, the temperature hit 39° just after 3 pm. Did our snow foray have hope? Sunset was not until 6:30 or so, but it was very cloudy and already fairly dark. At Payson (elevation 5,100 feet), conditions were very wet, almost like fog, temperature 38°. We pushed on.

Pavement in town was rough in spots, yet our ride remained smooth and silent in sport. We tried comfort, then eco, all feeling about the same.

North of Payson on two lanes, vehicles coming the other way were starting to have slushy snow plastered up front. We still had rain, but it couldn't be far now, or it would have already washed off. Then we saw our first plow coming south.

As we finally had patchy, thin, marginal snow on the ground, we pulled in at Tonto Natural Bridge State Park, finding the park closed by 4 pm on this sloppy weather day. But the immediate area presented great dirt road challenges—mud, slush and puddles everywhere, even fully flowing water.

Without a specific mud mode, as on some, snow mode seemed our best option here. We also applied 4WD lock, an easy overlay setting.

We climbed back up onto the highway, unlocked the differential and continued north into the ponderosa forest, as the temperature hit a very promising 33° and slush started to accumulate on the road itself. Vehicles had become sparse, each seeming to be on a purposeful mission, though box trucks and others were starting to pull off. We were thankful for our Continental TerrainContact All/Terrains, better for digging through the slush and applying the traction of their treads.

We turned up Lake Mary Road with a borderline freezing temperature of 34° and borderline slush on the road, the traction danger zone. Still in sport mode, we could feel ourselves being pulled side to side a little, so we locked the 4WD again and changed down to comfort mode for good measure. And we soon found our forest road turnout, at about 7,500 feet elevation.

We had this to ourselves, with several inches of

(cont'd)



**SPECIFICATIONS**

ASSEMBLY .....	West Point, Georgia
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD .....	SKorea / US
PARTS CONTENT .....	US/Can 60% / SKorea 40%
ENGINE .....	3.8L DOHC V6, GDI dir inj, DOHC w CVVT, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE .....	291 hp / 262 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO .....	13.0:1
TRANSMISSION .....	8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN .....	full-time AWD (FWD also available on lower trims)
SUSPENSION .....	F: indep, MacPherson struts, coil springs, stblzr bar; R: indep, multi-link, stblzr bar
STEERING .....	col-mtd motor driven pwr
BRAKES .....	F: 13.4 vented; R: 120 solid
WHEELS .....	7.5x18 X-Pro black alloys
TIRES .....	P245/60 R18 Continental A/T
LENGTH / WHEELBASE .....	196.9 / 114.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE .....	8.4 in
TURNING CIRCLE .....	38.6 ft
HEADRM (F/2/3) .....	(dual snrf) 39.5 / 38.8 / 37.8 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3) .....	41.4-44.1 / 42.4 / 31.4 in
CARGO CAPACITY .....	21.0 / 46.0 / 87.0 cu.ft
WEIGHT .....	4455-4522 lb
TOW CAPACITY .....	5500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY .....	reg unl / 18.8 gal
MPG .....	18/24/20 (city/hwy/comb)
<b>BASE PRICE .....</b>	<b>\$53,185</b>
PAINT: Wolf Gray .....	495
CARPETED FLOOR MATS .....	225
CARGO COVER .....	155
CARPET CARGO MAT w seat protection .....	115
DESTINATION CHARGE .....	1365
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$55,540</b>
<i>(Price has increased slightly, see below.)</i>	

**2024 KIA TELLURIDE LINEUP**

All w 3.8L V6 & 8-spd auto .....	FWD .....	AWD
LX .....	\$36,190	\$38,190
S .....	38,090	40,090
EX .....	41,790	43,790
EX X-Line .....		46,085
SX .....	45,990	47,990
SX X-Line .....		49,485
SX X-PRO .....		50,485
SX-P (SX-Prestige) .....		50,890
SXP X-Line .....		52,385
SXP X-PRO .....		53,385

**Generous**  
BY JOE SAGE





snow on the road, though we were kicking up the mud below in spots. We returned to snow mode.

When it came time to turn around, we did a five-point turn, to avoid the road's unknown edges, not helped by the rear camera image being a near-useless gloppy, drippy mess in these conditions.

More snow seemed to be moving in, but as we got back to the highway, we decided to head back down. We first unlocked the differential, also dialing it back from snow to comfort, then reengaged the differential, remembering this road had a lot of slush. Better to hit an unlikely dry patch with it locked, than a likely dangerous patch with it not.

As our slush built up, a message read, "forward side safety system limited, radar blocked." (We'd be fine, but imagine that in an autonomous car.)

It was now snowing full bore, and the road was all white. We went back to snow mode.

As the snow let up abruptly, we took the Telluride out of snow mode and went back to sport, which seemed to have no negatives in these conditions, same as everywhere. After a quick bite in Payson, we headed back down the rainy, sleety, even briefly snowy Beeline in the dark.

We often want to do the same thing with many, but are subject to our own timing as well as the whims of the weather. That said, the Kia Telluride did extremely well throughout. It's not hard to understand how it has gathered so many trophies.

The Kia Telluride, even the top trim driven here, is just 40-50 percent the cost of some competitive premium alternatives. It may have lower horsepower than the priciest, but you'd barely know it in normal use. Bottom line: as Kia constantly ups the ante in quality, content and features, they still deliver value. What's more, you won't hesitate to take the X-Pro out for a little rougher duty. ■



## KIA TELLURIDE AWARDS SAMPLING

### 2024 to date

- 2024 *Car and Driver* 10Best Trucks and SUVs
- 2024 *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Award
- 2024 *US News & World Report* Best Cars for the Money Award
- 2024 *US News & World Report* Best Cars for Families Award
- 2024 *Cars.com* Best Family Car

### 2023

- 2023 *JD Power* US ALG Residual Value Award
- 2023 *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Award
- 2023 *The Car Connection* Best Family Car to Buy
- 2023 *Car and Driver* 10Best Trucks and SUVs
- 2023 *US News & World Report* Best Cars for Families Award
- 2023 *Money Magazine* inaugural Best Autos Best Overall
- 2023 *Money Magazine* inaugural Best Autos Best Value Three-Row SUVs
- 2023 MAMA Spring Rally Favorite Family Vehicle
- 2023 *SlashGear* Best Family SUV
- 2023 Hispanic Motor Press Family Vehicle of the Year
- 2023 Rebel Rally 3rd Place Podium: X-Pro

### 2022

- 2022 *Edmunds* Top Rated Award
- 2022 *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Award Best Three-Row Midsize SUV
- 2022 *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Family Car
- 2023 *US News & World Report* Best Car for the Money Award
- 2023 *US News & World Report* Best Car for Families Award
- 2022 *Car and Driver* Editors' Choice Awards
- 2022 *The Car Connection* Best Family Car to Buy

### 2021

- 2021 *Car and Driver* 10Best
- 2021 *Consumer Guide Automotive* Best Buy Award Midsize Crossover
- 2021 *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Award Best Three-Row Midsize SUV
- 2021 *The Car Connection* Best Family Car to Buy

### 2020

- 2020 *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Award Best Three-Row Midsize SUV
- 2020 *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Award Best New Model
- 2020 Hispanic Motor Press SUV of the Year
- 2020 *Edmunds* Top Rated Award
- 2020 NACTOY Utility Vehicle of the Year
- 2020 *MotorTrend* SUV of the Year
- 2020 *Car and Driver* 10Best
- 2020 MAMA Family Vehicle of the Year
- 2020 *AutoTrader* Best New Car
- 2020 *AutoTrader* Best Car Interior Under \$50,000
- 2020 *Automobile Magazine* All-Star
- 2020 World Car Awards World Car of the Year
- 2020 *Wards* 10 Best Interiors
- 2020 NEMPA Winter SUV of the Year
- 2020 Rebel Rally 2nd Place Podium Finish: X-Cross Class

### 2019

- 2019 TxMPA Texas Off-Road Invitational Best SUV
- 2019 NWAPA Mudfest Best Mid- and Full-Size Family utility vehicle
- 2019 TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo SUV of Texas
- 2019 TAWA Texas Auto Roundup CUV of Texas
- 2019 *MotorWeek* Driver's Choice Award Best Large Utility