

2024 Mazda 3...

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The base Mazda 3 sedan, called the 2.5 S, is powered by a 2.5 liter four-cylinder engine that makes 191 horsepower and 186 lb-ft of torque. If you want class-leading performance, opt for the 2.5 Turbo where the 3 gets a 2.5 liter turbocharged four that makes 227 hp and 310 lb-ft of torque (both those numbers go up to slightly when using 93 octane gasoline). As a bonus, the 2.5 Turbo comes standard with all-wheel drive (it's an option on the 2.5 S) - perfect for those who live in cold climates - or if you simply want a better handling vehicle.

With the turbocharged engine, the Mazda 3 can turn in some impressive numbers. 0 - 60 mph in just 5.6 seconds and can hit the 1/4 mile in just 14.1 seconds. Yet on top that, it can still bring in a combined EPA rating of 27 mpg (23 mpg city, 32 highway). Mighty impressive numbers.

Engines and numbers aside, the Mazda 3 continues as before. Its interior uses an intuitive, driver-oriented dashboard and console that not only makes the 3 feel sporty and more expensive than its price tag would lead you to believe, but it's well thought out - with every control, switch and dial within easy reach and all are simple to use. And it's all done in a clean, uncluttered fashion, which adds a sense of elegance to the cabin.

But my favorite feature of the Mazda 3 has always been how enjoyable it is to drive - and with the turbocharged engine, it makes it especially fun. The Mazda 3 has always been a good handling car - with precise steering and a firm - but not jarring - suspension, it's a real joy to take into turns. And with all-wheel drive and plenty of power from the turbocharged engine, it's even better. The power is great (it's very linear, without the surge that might be expected in a turbocharged car) and the engine note has a little snarl to it, something I've always found Mazda's to lack. The automatic can be a little slow to shift at times, but shift paddles do help solve that.

The 3 with its base engine continues to compete with the likes of the Honda Civic, the Toyota Corolla and the Hyundai Elantra. But the injection of the zoom-zoom factor with the turbocharged engine, the Mazda 3 can compete with the likes of the Civic Si.

With the price of everything going up these days, cars included, the MSRP of my fully loaded Mazda 3 2.5 Turbo with all-wheel drive comes in at \$37,210. For a handsome, athletic, and nicely equipped vehicle, the Mazda 3 sedan give drivers a lot of car for the money - and best of all, an alternative to the small, boring sedan.

-- Christopher A. Randazzo

By The Numbers:

2024 Mazda 3 2.5 Turbo Premium Plus

Base Price: \$35,450.00
 Price as Tested: \$37,210.00
 Layout: front-engine / all-wheel drive
 Engine: Skyactiv 2.5 liter turbocharged
 4-cylinder
 Transmission: 6-speed automatic
 Horsepower: 227 hp
 Torque: 310 ft/lb
 EPA Fuel Economy: 23 city / 32 highway mpg

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