2026 Mazda MX-5 Miata – year-around fun!



For three decades now, the Mazda MX-5 Miata has been the go-to car for enthusiasts who want a sporty, simple, affordable, no-frills roadster. The current fourth-generation Miata is easily that. It comes in two flavors - as a soft-top and as a retractable fastback (RF). But while the RF makes the Miata more livable, it's the soft-top that accounts for more than 60 percent of its sales. This week, Mazda has me in a soft-top MX-5 Miata, reminding me just how fun a car it is.

Little is a great way to describe the Mazda MX-5 Miata. Everyone knows Miata's are small, but in a world of big trucks and SUVs, stepping into a Miata really emphasizes just how little it is. In fact, this fourth-generation Miata is nearly the same size as the original 1990 model.

Powering every Miata is a 2.0 liter four-cylinder rated at 181 hp and 148 lb-ft of torque. Not a lot of power, but not much is needed for a vehicle that tips the scale just under 2500 pounds. A six-speed manual transmission is standard, with a six-speed automatic with steering-wheel-mounted shift paddles available as an option. And as it has been from day-one, the Miata continues to send that power to the rear wheels.

Inside, the Miata welcomes its driver and sole passenger with a snug and cozy cabin. The main gauges are the conventional analog style and are easy to read. The control layout is like that found in other Mazda's and works well. Cupholders are the install-them-yourself type - and they take up arm space on the center console. After my first drive, I tossed them in the trunk. And that little trunk, it's good for a few bags of groceries or a tote bag or two - just not both at the same time. The thing to remember is that the Miata is a car to have fun in, not one to tackle a day's full of errands in.

And having fun is what the MX-5 Miata does best. With its six-speed manual gearbox, like the tester has, the Miata is very engaging to drive - which is really what the car is all about. The gear ratios are set up to keep the engine within its torque band, making excellent use of the engine's power. And the Miata loves to sing its song all the way up to the redline and sounds great doing so. The Miata has never been a super-fast car, but it's no slouch either - able to hit 60 mph in about 6.5 seconds. Overall, the Miata has always been a car that proves you don't have to have tons of power to have fun.

The Mazda MX-5 Miata is available in three trim levels. The base Sport equips the Miata with 16-inch wheels, keyless entry with pushbutton start, cloth seats and an 8.8-inch touchscreen infotainment system. The Club is the performance version of the Miata. Although the powertrain remains the same, the Club is fitted with 17-inch wheels, a sport-tuned suspension, a limited slip differential, a rear spoiler and a shock tower brace. If you want more creature comforts, the Grand Touring is the way to go with leather interior, automatic climate control, a navigation system and adaptive cruise control.

As much fun as the Miata is, I have yet to mention its convertible top, the car's main feature. The manual top is exceptionally easy to use - flip a latch above the windshield and push the top over your shoulder. The entire transformation can be done without leaving the driver's seat.

Looking back, the Miata hasn't changed much since 1990. Sure, it looks a little different and has gained some nice features and more power. But deep down inside, it's still the same little 2-seater from Mazda that we have come to know and love - and will continue to do so. Pricing for the 2026 Mazda MX-5 Miata starts at $32,700.

-- Christopher A. Randazzo

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