

2020 Honda Accord

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By New Car Test Drive



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The Honda Accord, unchanged for 2020, offers an attractive mix of style, practicality, space and price. The fastback roofline is good-looking, and the rear seat offers an impressive 40 inches of legroom for four or five adults. What's more, the federal government gives the latest Accord a perfect crash-test rating, with five stars in every single test. Automatic emergency braking, active lane control and adaptive cruise control are standard on every Accord.

A 1.5-liter turbo-4 is standard, with a 2.0-liter turbo-4 available on EX and Sport models and standard on Touring. There is also an Accord Hybrid, which comes in LX, EX, and Touring.

The 1.5-liter engine makes a solid 192 horsepower, mated to a continuously variable automatic transmission (CVT), although a 6-speed manual is available. The 2.0-liter, with 60 more horsepower, can accelerate to 60 mph in about six seconds. The 2.0 comes with either a 10-speed automatic or 6-speed manual transmission.

With EPA ratings of 30 mpg city, 38 highway, 33 combined in most configurations, the Accord's gas mileage is as good as most hybrids were just a few years ago. Meanwhile today's Accord Hybrid turns in 48/47/48 mpg.

The 2.0-liter turbo-4 gets 23/34/27 mpg when equipped with a 10-speed automatic transmission in the EX, or 22/32/26 mpg in the Sport or Touring with either the 6-speed manual or 10-speed automatic.

The NHTSA gave the latest Accord a rare five stars in every crash test. The IIHS called it a Top Safety Pick, with the top “Good” scores in all its crash tests. They called the Accord’s standard automatic emergency braking system “Superior” at avoiding forward crashes at 12 and 25 mph, and at avoiding collisions with pedestrians. They called the headlights “Acceptable” or “Marginal” depending on the model.

Model Lineup

The Accord is available in LX, Sport, EX, and Touring. The LX costs \$24,800, while the Touring can cost more than \$37,000.

The LX is equipped with cloth upholstery, a 7.0-inch screen for infotainment, Bluetooth, one USB port, 16-inch wheels, and active safety features.

For \$28,700, the EX gets remote start, 17-inch wheels, blind-spot monitors, a moonroof, more durable cloth upholstery, heated front seats, a power-adjustable driver’s seat, two high-power USB ports, and an 8.0-inch touchscreen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility.

The optional 2.0-liter engine adds \$2,000. Leather seats, steering wheel and shift knob adds \$2,500, while including a power-adjustable passenger seat and upgraded audio.

The Hybrid EX costs \$30,300.

The Accord Touring can be fairly considered a luxury car. It adds adaptive dampers, 19-inch wheels, a head-up display, heated and cooled front seats, premium audio, navigation, a wireless smartphone charger, and sportier driving mode for more than \$37,000.

Exterior

In case you haven’t been paying attention, the Accord is no longer a boring sedan. It’s sinewy and sporty, and looks better than many of its rivals.

Its beak borrows from Acura, as a chrome eyebrow spans the low and wide grille, above LED headlights. On most trims, the foglights are surrounded by body colors, and on the Sport trim the chrome is replaced by black.

The fastback roofline is racy without hitting the heads of passengers in the rear, as long as it doesn’t have a moonroof (standard on the EX). The rear deck almost gets swallowed by the roofline, but from behind you can see that it’s tastefully finished with angular taillights and a small spoiler.

Interior

The cabin is impressively dressed with soft-touch materials, and real wood in top trims. The fit and finish rises to a level beyond medium-priced midsize sedan. A loaded Touring might stretch that medium pricing, but it feels like a full-blown luxury car.

The 8.0-inch touchscreen sits on the wing-like dash, giving the Accord a lower cowl and better forward visibility.

Power-adjustable front seats come in every model but the LX, and they're comfortable for long trips. The LX comes in cloth that doesn't feel especially durable, but cloth in the EX is tougher, and also heated.

For a mid-size car the Accord is big, so big it stretches into full-size dimensions. That translates into 40 inches of rear-seat leg room, as much as the Honda CR-V crossover, and 17 cubic feet in the trunk, as much as full-size sedans.

Driving Impressions

The Accord sticks to its turbo-4 engines and front-wheel drive, to go against rivals that offer V-6 engines and all-wheel drive.

The 1.5-liter turbo-4 provides decent power, especially at the low end, with 192 hp and 192 pound-feet of torque; it's mated most commonly to a continuously variable automatic transmission (CVT) although a 6-speed manual is available. When you floor it for passing, there might be some turbo lag; and it might feel a bit breathless as the speed climbs. But it happily delivers more than 30 mpg in just about every situation.

The 2.0-liter turbo-4 that is available in Sport and EX, standard in Touring, makes 252 hp and 273 lb-ft of torque. It never feels flat on its feet. It's commonly mated to a slick 10-speed automatic, although a 6-speed manual is available in Sport trims. We have a feeling that manual transmission will soon go away, as it doesn't feel much sportier than the more efficient automatic.

The Accord's variable steering is light and easy. It's quicker at low speeds for nimbleness, while slowing down at higher speeds for stability.

The standard suspension, with fluid-filled bushings and newer control arms, is tuned for comfort. It's compliant with changing road surfaces. The Touring gets adaptive dampers that toggle between Normal and Sport settings. The LX and EX don't need these adaptive dampers, but maybe the Touring and Sport models do, because their 19-inch wheels that can make the ride too stiff.

The Accord Hybrid is powered by a 2.0-liter inline-4 and hybrid batteries paired to an electric motor. The gas-powered engine makes 143 hp, but doesn't often drive the wheels.

Instead, Honda uses the gas engine to power a generator that supplies electricity to the batteries, which drives the electric motors that drive the front wheel. In some cases, the gas engine clutches in to help drive the wheels, but Honda says that's the exception.

The total system output is 212 hp, but the number that matters far more is 48 mpg combined.

In our limited tests, the Accord Hybrid is smooth and efficient, without many differences between it and the 1.5-liter turbo-4 versions. The engine can race a little unexpectedly, a byproduct of its task to feed electricity and not necessarily power.

Final Word

The Honda Accord LX offers a lot of value for its price, including all the good looks, a strong-enough engine, fabulous fuel mileage, and the active safety features. If you need the features of the EX, it might be an even better value. The optional 2.0-liter engine is a good value too. The Touring raises the price way up there, but it's still cheap for what feels like a luxury car. Last but not least is the Hybrid, which brings the price back down, while shooting the technology and gas mileage up.

by Sam Moses with driving impressions by The Car Connection