

10 Most Comfortable Cars Under \$30,000

Kelly Blue Book
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Multi-zone automatic climate control, heated/cooled seats, power window shades . . . today's mainstream cars offer more comfort-enhancing touches than yesterday's luxu-barges.

Still, the basic foundations of comfortable transportation -- road, rail or air -- are a smooth, quiet ride and a just-right seat. So those are the factors we focused on when putting together the list of the 10 Most Comfortable Cars Under \$30,000.

Not so long ago, such a list might have been populated exclusively by large, unwieldy, couch-like cars. Today, suspension and platform advancements have mitigated the compromise between ride and handling, as exemplified by the cars on our list. Not having to worry about the potentially fiery consequences of evasive action at highway speeds is a more relaxing way to get anywhere.

#1 2010 Buick LaCrosse

Buick has cornered the market on comfortable rides for years, so it's no surprise that the recently redesigned LaCrosse made our list. Aside from a spacious interior (especially in the second row) and soothing ice blue ambient lighting, the LaCrosse also employs the automaker's signature QuietTuning system -- which reduces, blocks and absorbs interior noise. Add in extras like a 384-watt Harman/Kardon sound system, eight-way power adjustable front seats and remote vehicle start, and the LaCrosse is a smooth near-luxury vehicle for under \$30,000.

#2 2010 Buick Lucerne

Think of the Lucerne as the last of the old-school Buicks. This full-size, simply-styled sedan is a remnant from an era when front bench seats were an option and isolation from the road was desirable. It may be light on driving thrills but the Lucerne is a champ in terms of comfort, with a smooth ride, soft seats and an impressively quiet interior. It may not be the most dynamically satisfying car on the road, but the Buick Lucerne is certainly one of the most comfortable.

#3 2010 Chrysler 300

The Chrysler 300 is noteworthy to most for its standout sheetmetal, but it wouldn't have been welcome in 2004 with such critical acclaim if it drove just like the other big domestic sedans of the time. The Chrysler 300 was developed during the short-lived merger of Mercedes-Benz and Chrysler, and much of its underlying architecture is based on Mercedes-Benz design and componentry. The result is a comfortably poised cruiser that's easy to drive but can also hold its own in a car chase.

#4 2010 Chevrolet Impala

The Chevrolet Impala may be a dated, rental-fleet workhorse, but it's comfortable, sizeable and affordable -- the magic formula for some buyers. We've spent several hours and hundreds of

miles at a time in the Chevrolet Impala -- as have so many rental-car road warriors out there -- and out on the open road is where it shines brightest.

#5 2010 Chevrolet Malibu

The Chevrolet Malibu boasts a quiet ride, confident handling, and a well-crafted look inside and out, giving it a level of refinement that would soothe the nerves of even the most harried road warrior. Add in available features like heated front seats, a two-tone leather-clad interior and Bluetooth, and you've got yourself a well-rounded mid-size sedan for the money. Those seeking peace of mind at the gas pump can also opt for an efficient four-cylinder engine under the hood of any Malibu trim.

#6 2010 Ford Taurus

Being a full-size family sedan, the Ford Taurus has always been described as "roomy" and "comfortable," and the current generation is no exception. With ample passenger room for five and enough cargo room for all their luggage, the Taurus continues to offer the same level of comfort that it always has, albeit with sportier looks and handling. The availability of SYNC, which makes handling cell phones and portable music devices a non-issue, only sweetens the deal.

#7 2010 Hyundai Azera

When it comes to comfort the Hyundai Azera feels like a throwback to the era when a big sedan had a soft, "boulevard" ride and nobody cared too much about going around corners quickly. The Azera is as softly suspended as your favorite easy chair, and the rear seat area has the roomy aura of a limousine. It might not excite "sport sedan" enthusiasts, but most drivers will appreciate its high overall comfort level -- like pot roast and gravy for drivers.

#8 2010 Subaru Legacy

The Subaru Legacy offers comfort in three levels. First, there is the excellent comfort of its seats and the newfound roominess of its cabin. Next, comes the car's driving dynamics which include excellent ride quality, minimal body roll and a library-quiet interior. And finally, there is the soul-satisfying peace of mind you experience from the superior road-holding and all-weather capabilities of its all-wheel-drive configuration.

#9 2010 Toyota Avalon

Take the already cushy Toyota Camry platform, expand its dimensions, add luxurious niceties like standard reclining rear seats and the result is the Toyota Avalon, a car that delivers Lexus-like comfort on a Toyota budget. The Toyota Avalon is a large and cushy sedan but, unlike your father's 1973 Ford LTD, the suspension keeps the ride from feeling uncontrolled or floaty, further enhancing the sense of comfort. For buyers who want a relaxed ride, an inviting cabin and inoffensive styling, the Toyota Avalon is a compelling option.

2010 Toyota Camry

The Camry's soft yet supple suspension coupled with plush seats helps make uncomfortable situations like slow traffic or long boring stretches of road much more tolerable. To make the

ride even more pleasant, the cabin is quiet and dual-zone automatic climate control keeps occupants at their optimal temperatures -- a great combination for any road trip, near or far.