

Ready to tackle the trails

"GMC's newest SUV does its job capably and gently."



2017 GMC Acadia

Although we missed the first drive of the 2017 GMC Acadia, I personally had the chance to grab it for three days in Beirut. As most of you know, the GMC Acadia and the Chevrolet Traverse have always been practical as big, three-row crossovers.

They have extra-large dimensions though, positioned a bit too close to full-size SUVs, but people in our Middle East region are more oriented to crossovers than station wagons (like Europe).

The old Lambda-platform Acadia was introduced in 2007, leading the full-size crossovers at General Motors. When I jumped in it, I immediately felt that the all-new 2017 Acadia has shrunk considerably both in size and feel – my brief first acquaintance shows it to be more capable than ever – as well as much enhanced to drive.

New size, bigger advantages

The strategic re-scoping of the 2017 Acadia offers customers a mid-size crossover positioned between the compact Terrain and full-size Yukon. Depending on the model, it is available with five-, six- or seven-passenger seating, while offering greater maneuverability than the first-generation model.

“The new Acadia captures a greater feeling of refinement, in everything from the responsive feeling behind the wheel to the way passengers interact with its intuitive features,” said Rick Spina, executive chief engineer for compact and crossover SUVs at General Motors. “It’s a vehicle that offers the functionality Acadia is known for, while delivering big advantages and balance to customers’ everyday lives.”

The new Acadia is 318 kilograms lighter than the current model, which pays dividends with fuel efficiency.

A new, available 3.6-liter V6 engine is more powerful and efficient than the current model, while offering over 1800 kilograms of estimated trailering capability (with the available towing package). It is SAE-certified at 310 hp and offers a fuel consumption level of 11.2 L/100 km on the combined cycle for the FWD models and 11.7 L/100 km for AWD.

The Acadia’s new V6 features direct injection, variable valve timing, as well as Active Fuel Management (cylinder deactivation), and pairs with a six-speed automatic transmission and an electronically controlled drive mode selector.

Interior

The 2017 Acadia builds on a legacy of intuitive functionality, with new features such as a split-folding second-row seat that improves on the original Smart Slide feature of the current model. It offers greater flexibility, including the capability of the curbside seat sliding and tilting forward, even with a forward-facing child seat in place, while the driver-side section tips and slides forward for easier access to the third row.

The 50/50-split third-row seat folds flat for a completely flat load floor behind the second row and when the second row is folded, there is 2,237 liters of cargo room. Levers at the rear of the vehicle make it easier to fold the second- and third-row seats.

“GMC execs are hoping the new Acadia will seize a portion of the crossovers’ glory.”





"Acadia had a clever remodeling to further differentiate it from the full-size Yukon and improve its competitive demand with an even bigger group of prospective buyers who wanted something larger than a Terrain."

Additional solutions range from simple to technologically advanced. The rear of the center console, for example, features a unique pullout storage drawer. It is accessible to rear-seat passengers and allows items such as electronic devices and small toys to be stored out of sight, for greater security and reduced clutter.

There's also a new, standard rear seat alert that can remind the driver when an item may have been left in the second- and third-row seats. Additionally, all three rows offer USB charge ports for compatible electronic devices.

Exterior

The new Acadia offers a greater emphasis on refinement, while remaining instantly recognizable with an evolution of the vehicle's signature Commands Respect design cues such as a chrome-trimmed grille, squared off and flared wheel arches, and wraparound rear side windows with dark D-pillars.

"The all new Acadia has a very commanding presence on the road driven by muscular forms that give the vehicle a very planted and confident stance," said Matt Noone, director, GMC Exterior Design. "The new design does a great job of projecting the message that Acadia has new levels of refinement, capability and performance in store for our customers."

New dimensional grilles and wraparound headlamps – HID lamps on Denali and halogen projectors on other models – reinforce the confident, refined appearance, while standard LED signature lighting on all models reflect GMC's premium attributes. Complementing C-shape rear lighting graphics add a cohesive detail to the design.

Premium cues distinguish the Acadia Denali. Like all Denali models, it features a dimensional chrome grille, along with integrated chrome side trim, chrome-accented door handles, a chrome lower-rear fascia and specific six-spoke wheels.

Inside, all Acadia trim levels feature unique interior color and trim combinations and incorporate authentic aluminum trim.

Safety and connectivity technologies

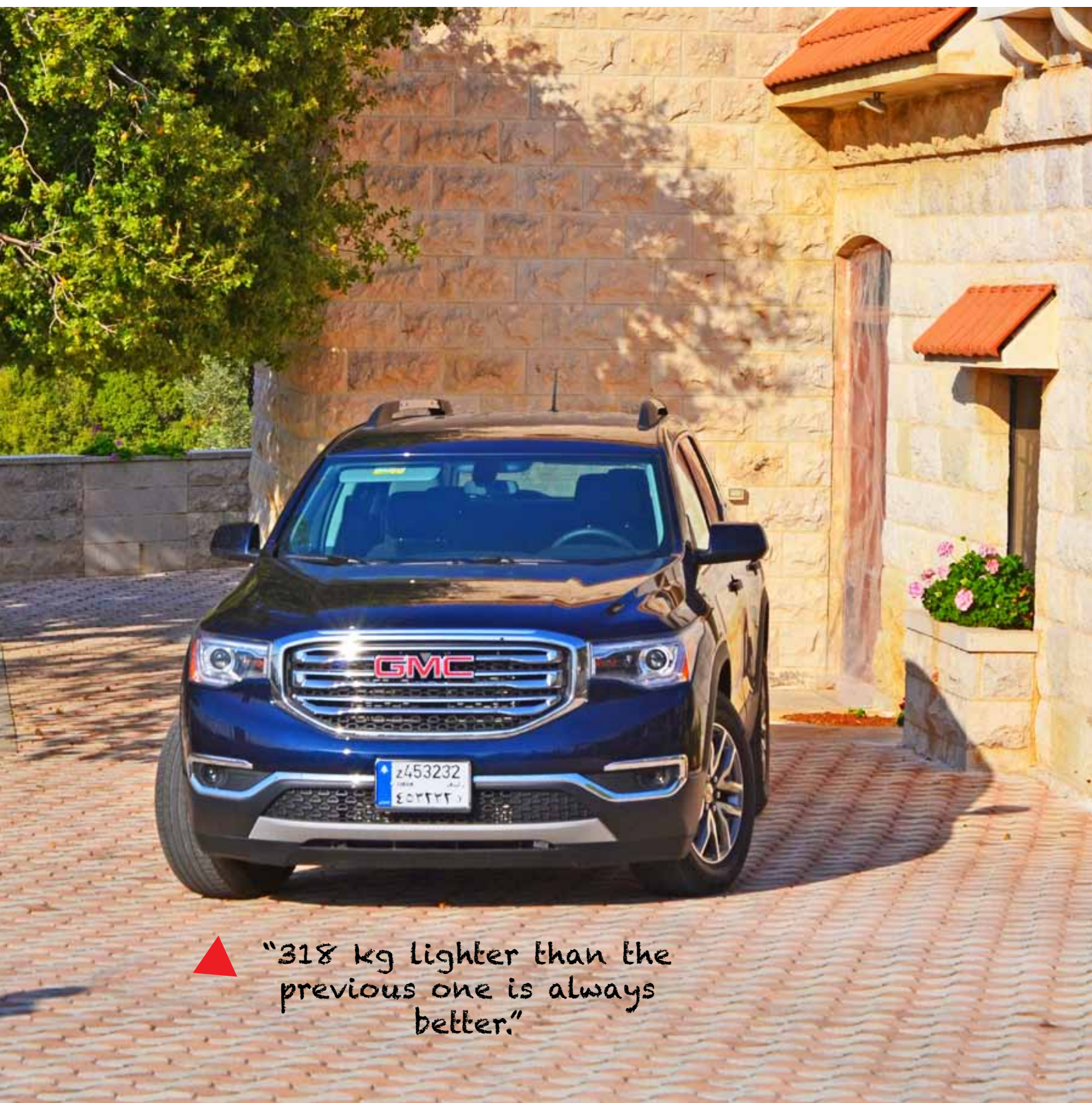
As a contemporary crossover designed for families on the go, the 2017 Acadia offers the latest active safety features to protect them, as well as the latest technologies to keep them connected.

The active safety features are designed to help make drivers more aware of their surroundings and potential crash situations. They are available depending on the model and include:

- New Front Pedestrian Braking
- New Low Speed Forward Automatic Braking (standard on SLT-2 and Denali)
- New Forward Automatic Braking (available on Denali)
- New Following Distance Indicator
- New IntelliBeam automatic headlamp high-beam control
- New Surround Vision camera system
- New Safety Alert Seat
- Forward Collision Alert
- Lane Keep Assist with Lane Departure Warning
- Lane Change Alert with Side Blind Zone Alert
- Front and Rear Parking Assist.

An available Tow Vision Trailing system helps make hitching easier by employing a rear-vision camera with dynamic guidelines to help line up the Acadia's hitch with the trailer, as well as offering views of the trailer while driving.

Moreover, when it comes to connectivity, the Acadia is plugged in with available phone integration technology through GMC's available IntelliLink system, making it easy to connect to some of the features smartphone users rely on most.



▲ "318 kg lighter than the previous one is always better."

Driving dynamics

Built on a new, lighter body structure, the 2017 Acadia's driving dynamics are more responsive, while its shorter length and narrower width enable greater maneuverability, for easier turning in parking decks and easier parking in home garages.

The body structure incorporates press-hardened, high-strength steels, which allowed thinner components in some areas offering comparable or better crash performance than conventional materials. They also help reduce the base curb weight by 318 kilograms (compared to the current model).

New splayed front frame rails also contribute to crashworthiness. They flare outward to provide effective folding and crushing performance during small overlap frontal crash situations.

The new Acadia retains a front-drive layout with available all-wheel drive. All models feature a new drive mode selector, which allows the driver to alter chassis and powertrain attributes to suit a variety of driving conditions. Front-drive models offer Normal (2x4), Snow, Sport and Trailer/Tow modes, while AWD models offer 2x4 (AWD disconnect), 4x4, Sport, Off Road and Trailer/Tow modes.

The AWD disconnect mode effectively disconnects the rear axle from the drive system to save fuel. On-demand AWD capability can be reapplied on the go by switching the drive mode selector to 4x4 mode.

Additional chassis and driving dynamics features include:

- MacPherson strut front suspension
- Five-link rear suspension
- Rack-mounted electric power steering system
- Four-wheel disc brakes with Duralife rotors
- Electronic park brake
- Available electronically controlled continuous damping system.

All Terrain version

The new All Terrain model matches distinctive design elements with enhanced off road driving ability. At the heart of the Acadia All Terrain's capability is an advanced AWD system with Active Twin Clutch, which optimizes traction for every condition it encounters. It is engineered for optimal performance in a wide range of slippery conditions ranging from wet to ice and loose surfaces.

It also has a specific All Terrain mode in place of the Off Road mode on the drive mode selector, which works with the model's exclusive AWD system to offer enhanced hill-climb capability.

All Terrain models are distinguished from the rest of the Acadia lineup with a body-color grille surround, black chrome trim and unique wheels. Inside is exclusive five-passenger seating, dynamic All Terrain interior accents and covered storage bins in the rear cargo floor in place of a third-row seat.

The 2017 GMC Acadia will be produced at General Motors' Spring Hill (Tenn.) assembly facility, with globally sourced parts.

Driving impressions

How does it drive? I can tell you that it is not the best of the best driving you will ever experience, but it gave me a completely different feeling than the previous generation. Mostly what I have to say are positive things about this new and improved SUV. I truly appreciated the Acadia's comfortable ride and noted its greater agility due to its lighter weight. First of all, the steering is firm and responsive and there is very little body roll. Second, the attractive interior has lots of different trims and lots of storage, including a space to store the key. Third, the infotainment system is top-notch to me in terms of familiarity. The Acadia is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

2017 GMC Acadia

Words: Issam Eid

one word:
carrier

▲ **Pros:** Comfortable ride, quiet and upscale cabin, pleasing road manners for such an SUV, attractive new design, fuel efficient, fits better in garages

▼ **Cons:** Cargo volume is a bit smaller than some rivals; prices rise pretty quickly once options are added

Rivals: Mazda CX-9, Honda Pilot, Hyundai Grand Santa Fe, Toyota Highlander, Ford Explorer, Nissan Pathfinder, Dodge Durango

Although my journey was kind of quick – three days – the Acadia is GMC's mid-size crossover that fits between the compact Terrain and the full-size Yukon. The formerly larger Acadia has now become smaller (the SUV now weighs 317 kg less than before), more fuel efficient, and seats up to seven passengers. Check out your nearest dealership in the region and book your test drive.

Specifications

Engine	3.6L V6, 310 hp @ 6,600 rpm, 368 Nm @ 5,000 rpm
Transmission	FWD/AWD, 6-speed automatic
Performance	0-100 km/h: 7-9 sec, top speed: 185 km/h, fuel consumption: 11.2 L/100 km (FWD), 11.7 L/100 km (AWD)
Chassis	1,794 kg (est. – FWD) / 1,995 kg (est. – AWD)

Overall Rating ★★★★★

◀ "Now shorter in length and considerably lighter, this new Acadia feels sportier than its predecessor," said Issam.

