



Car Buying Checklist

Navigate the Chip Shortage Like a Pro

30%

Price Increase Since 2020

3,000

Chips in Modern EVs

12-18

Months Wait Times

⚠️ Market Reality Check: The chip shortage has fundamentally changed car buying. Expect higher prices, limited inventory, and longer wait times. This checklist will help you navigate these challenges successfully.



Pre-Purchase Planning

- ☐ Research which models have better availability in your region
- ☐ Create a priority list: essential vs. nice-to-have features
- ☐ Set realistic budget expectations (15-30% above pre-shortage prices)
- ☐ Consider expanding brand preferences beyond your first choice
- ☐ Research certified pre-owned options from multiple brands
- ☐ Check manufacturer incentives and dealer promotions



During Shopping

- ☐ Contact multiple dealerships for current availability
- ☐ Ask about realistic delivery timeframes (get it in writing)
- ☐ Inquire about feature deletions or temporary substitutions
- ☐ Verify warranty coverage for any retrofitted features
- ☐ Document any promised future feature additions or credits
- ☐ Negotiate based on current market conditions, not pre-2020 expectations



Pro Tip: Alternative Inventory Sources

Don't just check local dealers! Some manufacturers have cars sitting at ports or distribution centers. Ask dealers to check their "in-transit" inventory or cars allocated to other dealers willing to trade.



Financial Considerations

- ☐ Get pre-approved financing from banks, credit unions, and dealer
- ☐ Factor in higher insurance costs for more expensive vehicles
- ☐ Consider gap insurance for higher-priced vehicles
- ☐ Get current trade-in value assessment (it might surprise you!)
- ☐ Budget for extended wait times if ordering custom
- ☐ Compare total cost of ownership, not just purchase price



Alternative Strategies

- ☐ Research lease options vs. purchase in current market
- ☐ Consider vehicle subscription services for temporary needs
- ☐ Explore car-sharing programs while waiting for delivery
- ☐ Investigate extended rental car programs
- ☐ Look into certified pre-owned warranties and extended coverage
- ☐ Consider demo vehicles or dealer loaner cars for sale



Smart Shopping Strategy

Timing matters: Monday mornings and month-end are often best for dealer attention. Mid-week visits typically get more focus than weekends. Build relationships with sales staff - they remember customers who are realistic and pleasant to work with.



Final Action Steps

- ☐ Create a timeline for your car purchase decision
- ☐ Set up alerts for inventory at preferred dealerships
- ☐ Prepare all necessary documentation in advance
- ☐ Have backup options ready if first choice falls through
- ☐ Schedule test drives for all serious contenders

Remember: The car market of 2025 requires patience, flexibility, and realistic expectations. Use this checklist to stay organized and make informed decisions.

© 2025 Car Buying Guide | Keep this checklist handy during your car shopping journey