

2021 LEXUS IS: Agility and Athleticism Expand Pure Driving Performance

June 15, 2020

Image not found or type unknown



PLANO, Texas (June 15, 2020) – Writing yet another chapter in the book of compact luxury sports sedans, the new 2021 Lexus IS was unveiled today via a unique and engaging online virtual reveal. Since its debut nearly 20 years ago in the U.S., the IS has thrived on creating exhilarating driving performance in the form of a true rear-wheel-drive luxury sports sedan. The IS has served as a whetstone to help sharpen Lexus driving performance across the lineup but, more directly, it has forged indelible bonds between driver and machine that reach into the hundreds of thousands. It's no wonder the IS has earned worldwide adoration for its extraordinary driving performance.

There may be no greater fan of IS than Toyota President Akio Toyoda, who notes the vehicle's special place in his heart during the introduction to the *Art of Lexus* book, where he credits the IS as "The car that really taught me what performance driving was, and it was the moment when my love affair with Lexus began."

The new 2021 IS, which is expected to arrive in dealerships in late fall of this year, looks to expand upon the legacy it has carved out in the compact luxury sports car segment over the previous two decades. Truly a global vehicle, it will be available for sale in approximately 40 countries around the world, including the US, Japan, and other countries in Asia.

The Lexus Driving Signature Lives at Shimoyama

From day one, the IS has left a lasting impression in the compact luxury sports sedan segment, where dynamic capability and driving performance are mandatory attributes. The 2021 IS looks to further cement the bond between driver and vehicle by providing an enhanced linear driving characteristic that provides clear and direct feedback to the driver. In order to achieve this objective, Lexus engineers needed the proper tool with which to hone the vehicle's skills.

Enter the Toyota Technical Center Shimoyama. More than merely a new test facility, this asphalt track signals a change in Lexus' product development course and speaks to the brand's commitment to its human-centered nature.

Since Lexus launched, the tactile feel, behavior, and execution for each model has been driven by the vision and efforts of the Chief Engineer. Moving forward, the efforts of the CE will be focused on elevating the vehicles to a new standard of performance and handling as developed by Lexus International President Koji Sato and Chief Branding officer Akio Toyoda. The ultimate goal is to deliver a new generation of Lexus vehicles that is more balanced, refined in control, and confident than ever before. Linear steering, brake responses, and optimized handling with exceptional ride quality is the result of heightened focus on tuning of the chassis and its interactions with the control surfaces through diligent evaluation at a test facility unlike any other.



By establishing a uniform Lexus Driving Signature across the entire lineup, the hope is to continue propelling the brand's evolution and reinforce its identity in the luxury space. This cultural shift within Lexus product development builds on the learnings and improvements seen on the F brand cars, and the latest models of the flagship vehicles (LC, LS, LX) that involve an "Always On" philosophy for continual, running enhancement. Over the past 30 years, Lexus has been defined by the detail-oriented and thoughtful nature of its products. The latest IS represents the first step down a path that has evolved into a uniquely Lexus tarmac testbed that will affect the trajectory of every Lexus product that comes next.

“What we had foremost in mind in developing the new IS was to make it a car that excelled in communicating with the driver regardless of the road conditions or driving situation,” said Chief Engineer Naoki Kobayashi of Lexus International. “We aimed to make the new IS a Lexus compact sports sedan that provides high-quality riding comfort while offering a high level of vehicle control.”

Opened in 2019, the Toyota Technical Center Shimoyama in Japan’s Aichi Prefecture is near Lexus’s global headquarters. Its country road test course is inspired by Lexus’s many years of experience driving on Germany’s Nürburgring Nordschleife, famous throughout the world for its grueling driving conditions. Much like the IS itself, Nürburgring is near and dear to Akio Toyoda’s heart since it played a key role in his quest to become a master driver. The 3.3-mile test course at Shimoyama is designed to take advantage of the local topography, and it features a nearly 250-foot change in elevation, a wide range of curves and corners, and multiple types of road surfaces. Developing the new IS in such a severe driving environment made it possible to infuse an ever-higher dimension of vehicle performance.

Maturation of Driving Performance

With a new tool at its disposal, Chief Engineer Kobayashi’s team worked tirelessly to make the new IS the best to date. The Lexus philosophy of continuously improving meant no stone was left unturned. Countless test hours at the Shimoyama track and other test facilities were conducted on various road surfaces and conditions to identify ways to increase responsiveness and reduce unnecessary movement from unsprung mass. The “relentless pursuit of perfection” has always been a guiding philosophy for the brand, but also at stake is the mission to create a uniform Lexus Driving Signature, and that objective begins with the new IS.

One of the first things engineers targeted was enhancing body rigidity. This was done in key areas such as reinforcing the radiator side supports, increasing the number of front-side-member weld points, and optimizing reinforcement structures from the C-pillars to the sides of the roof. The increased rigidity not only helps reduce unwanted noise and vibration, but it also helps improve riding comfort and driving performance with enhanced response to steering input.

For the first time, the new IS will be available with larger 19-inch wheels to improve cornering force and provide a greater contact patch with the road. Engineers revised the suspension layout and front pickup points to help accommodate the larger tire-and-wheel package. Overall two different 19-inch wheels are available on F SPORT models, including a unique BBS wheel specific to the F SPORTs equipped with the Dynamic Handling Package. Standard 18-inch wheels will replace the outgoing 17-inch wheels on all other models.



Taking a cue from the Lexus LFA supercar, engineers took rigidity enhancements one step further by employing lighter weight hub bolts to secure each wheel to the new IS. The use of hub bolts allows for improved fastening strength and therefore an increase to rigidity to further enhance braking and handling. What's more, the move to hub bolts sheds approximately 2 pounds of total unsprung weight. The new bolts also feature a black coating so as not to draw any attention away from the attractive new wheel designs.

Complementing the enhancements to overall rigidity, multiple refinements were made to the suspension setup. For starters, engineers targeted a reduction in unsprung weight. The new IS features coil springs that are 20

percent lighter than the outgoing model. New A-arms are employed as well that feature a forged aluminum material versus the outgoing steel composition, resulting in an 18 percent weight reduction. Engineers also opted for a new material for the suspension stabilizer bar to optimize the diameter and thickness to provide a 17 percent weight reduction.

With unsprung weight reduced, engineers equipped the IS with new swing-valve shock absorbers equipped with ultralow-velocity valves in their pistons to manage oil flow in response to the most minor of road irregularities. Even when the stroke speed of the shock absorbers is low, the new velocity valves provide excellent responsiveness to apply appropriate damping force on all varieties of road surfaces. The result is consistently even ride quality. New bound stoppers are also employed to help manage the sprung weight more effectively for enhanced ride comfort.

Fast, Fun, Ferocious – Putting the “F” in F SPORT

The IS F SPORT lineup is restructured in the 2021 model year, as F SPORTs will only be offered on the IS 350 powered by the 311-horsepower 3.5-liter V6 engine. F SPORT features a host of visual and performance cues that immediately set it apart, including a unique front bumper with functional aerodynamic enhancements, rear bumper, grille surround, rear lip spoiler, rocker molding and more. Along with F SPORT 19-inch wheels, a unique center cap and larger rear tires for added performance (265/35R19), they are also equipped with a cool air intake with sound generator and an F SPORT exhaust and diffuser. In addition, unique F SPORT badges adorn the sides and rear of the vehicle as well.

Inside the new IS, stainless-steel scuff plates adorn the door sills. Eyes are immediately drawn to the stylish F SPORT front seats, especially when dressed in the available new Circuit Red option. The front seats also offer standard heated and ventilated functions. A heated leather-wrapped steering wheel with unique center ornament, perforated leather-wrapped shifter and F SPORT combination instrumentation meter await the driver, as do unique F SPORT accelerator pedal, brake pedal and footrest. The distinctive front seats offer available two-way power adjustable lumbar support as well as four-way adjustable headrests. Unique F SPORT door accents are highlighted with black geometric film window switch surrounds. Active Sound Control has been improved to further enhance the exhilarating performance notes of the V6 engine while reducing unpleasant tones.

F SPORT models can be further augmented with the addition of a Dynamic Handling Package (DHP) that includes Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS). For 2021, engineers have optimized the damping force of the AVS system to help enhance performance. In addition, the DHP also includes lighter 19-inch forged alloy BBS wheels finished in matte black. Not only are they impressive looking, the 19-inch BBS wheels are approximately 4 pounds lighter per wheel compared to the standard 19-inch F SPORT wheel.



The RWD F SPORT models with the DHP are equipped with a Torsen® limited slip differential (LSD) that improves handling and performance thanks to enhanced traction when cornering or exiting turns. The LSD helps maintain straight-line stability as well. F SPORT models equipped with the DHP also feature drive select mode Sport S+, which provides advanced engine and transmission mapping to enhance performance. Sport S+ also adjusts the amount of EPS steering assist and damping force to deliver sportier handling to match the updated powertrain settings. Custom Mode is available on DHP models, offering multiple combinations for powertrain (Normal/Eco/Power), chassis (Normal/Sport) and air conditioner (Normal/Eco).

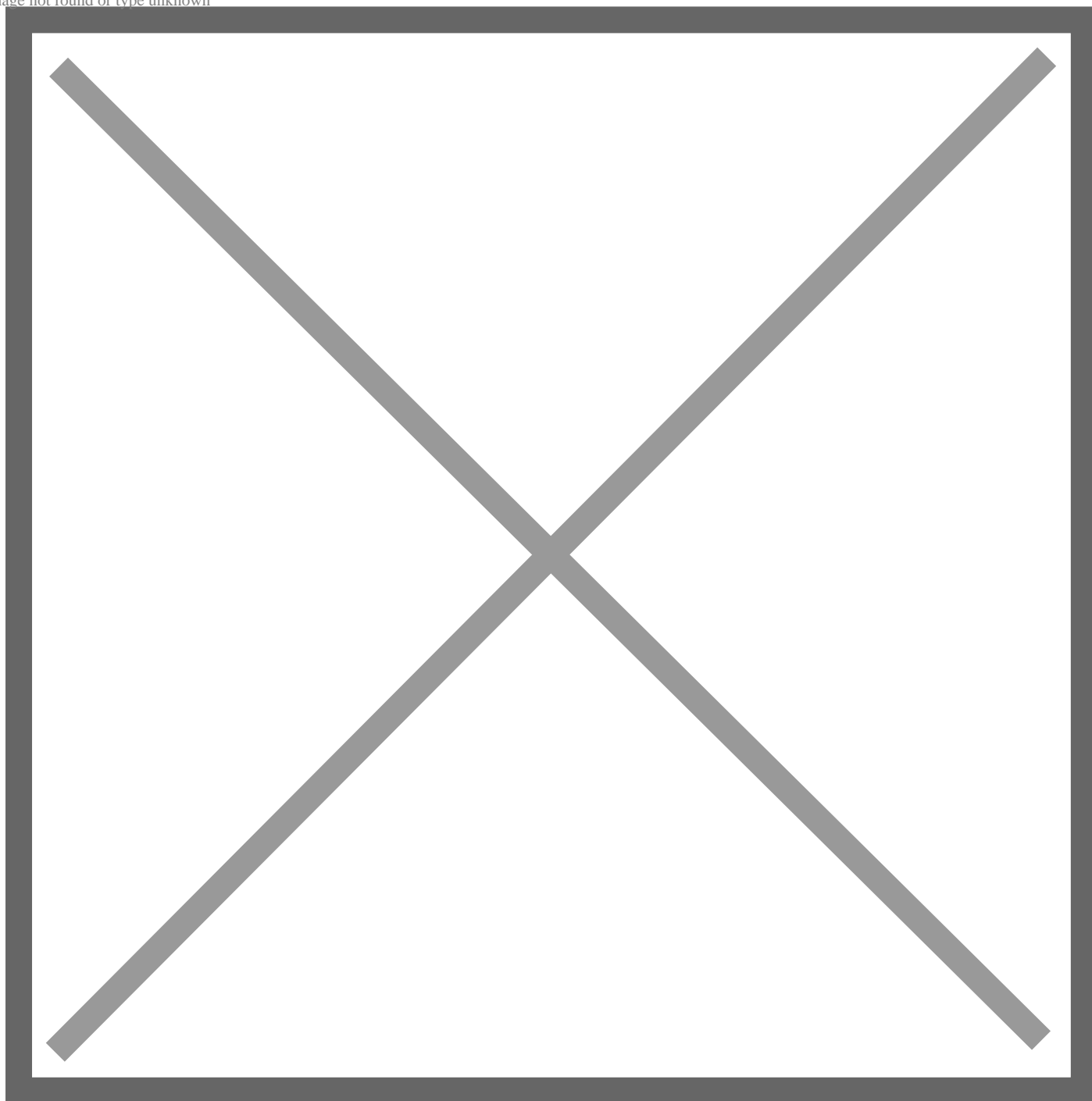
F SPORT models equipped with the DHP receive a unique carbon-fiber rear spoiler and side-view mirror caps, center console knee pad with contrast stitching, and a Lexus Card Key.

Athletically Inclined & Designed

The bold new exterior styling of the 2021 IS not only aims for a provocative design, but its athletic silhouette is also meant to signify the agile changes that have taken place below the sheet metal. Overall, the new IS evokes lower, wider proportions. It is slightly wider, with muscular fenders that extend to enhance and accommodate the larger available 19-inch wheels and larger diameter tires. The wide and low form nods to the inherently high level of driving performance the IS possesses, but the sleek lines are also complemented with overtly aggressive sharpness carved into the side and shoulder character lines.

2021 IS Specifications

Image not found or type unknown



Starting at the front of the new IS, a newly designed spindle grille features a three-dimensional, polyhedral structure that originates from the foremost tip of the grille to emphasize a sense of presence. On F SPORT models, block forms based on a spindle motif combine with a mesh pattern to achieve a sporty impression. F SPORT models also feature a grille-bottom air intake that allows air to flow through to assist in cooling the brakes, a design inspired by the RC F. Standard IS models feature a new grille that includes mini spindles within its design. This intricate pattern required six different types of cutting tools in order to create the mold.

New slender headlamps are fitted on the IS that feature daytime running lights with a sharp L-shape signature that runs across the lateral axis just above the newly developed compact and lightweight lamp units. These new headlamps help contribute to expressing a low center of gravity through low-positioned areas around the grille, and they are matched by lowered side character lines that carry all the way through to the rear of trunk. Available triple-beam LED headlights are also redesigned to complement the low-profile hood.

New rocker panels accent the side profile of the new IS with a design that kicks up in the rear, featuring a sharper overall contour that carries into the muscular shoulders over the rear wheel wells. Gently sloped rear-quarter pillars, which help form a firm cabin silhouette that wraps around from the sides, contrast with the rear fenders to further enhance the aggressive look.

Moving toward the back of the IS, lines of the rear fenders blend into the extended, lowered rear deck to create a low stance that enhances the wider hips. The three-dimensional form of the rear deck design is created with a stamping technology called press-in mold construction. No question eyes will be drawn most immediately to the L-shaped blade-style lightbar that spans across the rear of the vehicle.

There are five new exterior colors available on the 2021 IS, including Iridium, Cloudburst Gray, Matador Red Mica, Infrared*, and Grecian Water. These new colors will be added to other popular exterior options that include Ultra White, Eminent White Pearl, Atomic Silver, Caviar and Ultrasonic Blue Mica 2.0*.

*Colors unique to F SPORT models, includes a premium paint charge of \$595

Bask in Cabin Comfort

Luxury and performance are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and yet the two live in harmony in the new IS. The interior features standard NuLuxe®-trimmed seating, with 10-way power driver and 8-way power adjustable front passenger seats, a dual-zone automatic climate control system with touch-sensitive controls, an available power moonroof, and SmartAccess with push button start.

New trim adorns each door in F SPORT models with a graphic pattern of embossed intersecting lines, representing a new form of Lexus decorative expression and Takumi craftsmanship. Decorative ornamentation is finished for the first time in Black Metallic paint, Black Geometric Film, or the unique Ash ornamentation exclusive to F SPORT models equipped with the Dynamic Handling Package. Piano Black accents also can be found on surface elements for cabin atmosphere that is both dignified and sporty. Standard NuLuxe interior color options include Black, Glazed Caramel and Rioja Red. On F SPORT packages the options include Black, Circuit Red, and two-tone White/Black, while the F SPORT Dynamic Handling Package is available in Black or Circuit Red interior.



The IS features a standard 8-inch touchscreen nearly 3 inches closer to the driver for easy access to the controls. An expansive new 10.3-inch touchscreen is available on vehicles equipped with navigation or Mark Levinson with navigation. The new multimedia system features Apple CarPlay® compatibility, Android Auto™ compatibility, and Amazon Alexa integration.

With Apple CarPlay compatibility, customers can access the familiar interface from their iPhone through the vehicle's multimedia display. Simply connect an iPhone to get directions, make calls, send and receive message via Siri®, all hands free, and get access to favorite apps like Spotify, Audible® and Apple podcasts. With

Android Auto, Android users can seamlessly cast their device's interface onto the vehicle's multimedia display, play music via apps such as Spotify® and Pandora®, send messages through a range of commonly used apps like WhatsApp®, navigate with Google Maps™, and request information—all with just the sound of your voice—through the Google Assistant™. With Lexus+Alexa integration, you can bring all the convenience of Amazon Alexa on the road. Just ask Alexa for the same access to information and the thousands of skills available with Alexa at home. Listen to audiobooks, play favorite music, make lists, check the weather, get news briefings, and much more. Users can also control compatible smart-home devices such as lighting, thermostat and security systems. Offering added in-vehicle convenience, Alexa even syncs to the navigation system to provide on-the-go recommendations.

The available Mark Levinson Premium Surround Sound Audio System is also enhanced, with the previous system expanding from 15 speakers with 835 watts of power to a 17-speaker system with a new amplifier offering an impressive 1,800 watts. The new Mark Levinson system aimed to reduce interference, improve output (aided by the addition of two speakers), and improve overall sound quality with new EQ tuning. Rear surround speakers have been changed to tweeter/mid-range combination Unity speakers. The audio amplifier has enhanced Quantum Logic Surround for playback of compressed sound sources and to provide a 7.1 surround sound listening experience.

Drivetrains and Powertrains

Although, for some, the IS can only be viewed as a rear-wheel-drive compact sports sedan, others reside in climates where all-wheel-drive is a necessity. Fortunately, the 2021 IS will be available in both rear- and all-wheel drive options, and there are three distinct powertrain options available depending upon the grade.

The rear-wheel drive IS 300 features a 2.0-liter, turbocharged and intercooled inline four-cylinder engine. The 2.0-liter engine is updated for 2021, featuring an adaptive transmission control that helps determine the most appropriate gear for each driving situation based on driver input to achieve linear response. Rated to deliver 241 horsepower, the stout four-cylinder also produces a solid 258 lb.-ft. of torque across a flat torque range from 1,650 rpm all the way up to 4,400 rpm. It's not only powerful, it's efficient, too, thanks to a sophisticated Variable Valve Timing intelligent – Wide (VVTi-W) system which allows the engine to switch between the Otto and Atkinson combustion cycles to maximize efficiency. It comes equipped with an eight-speed Sport Direct Shift (SPDS) automatic transmission. It integrates an advanced G-force Artificial Intelligence (G-AI) system that monitors multiple performance parameters to determine the optimum gear selection.

For added traction in cold-weather climates, the IS 300 is also available with all-wheel drive. The IS 300 AWD is powered by a 3.5-liter V6 that delivers 260 hp and 236 lb.-ft. of torque to all four wheels through a six-speed automatic transmission. The electronically controlled all-wheel drive system is designed to help enhance traction and grip by automatically varying front-to-rear torque distribution. On dry roads it maintains a 30:70 front-to-rear torque split for maximum performance, but it's capable of sending as much as 50 percent of the power to the front wheels in certain conditions.

For buyers who crave maximum power, there's the IS 350 in either rear-wheel drive or all-wheel drive powered by a 3.5-liter V6 that produces 311 hp and 280 lb.-ft. of peak torque. The rear-wheel drive model uses the same eight-speed Sport Direct Shift automatic transmission found in the IS 300 RWD, while the AWD version sends power through a six-speed automatic. If there's any question about the performance-minded nature of each vehicle, look no further than their 0-60 times, as the IS 350 RWD covers the ground in 5.6 seconds while the IS 350 AWD goes from 0-60 mph in 5.7 seconds.

Enhanced Lexus Safety System+

The standard Lexus Safety System+ (LSS+) found on the new IS receives additions for 2021 in the form of the new LSS+ 2.5. A number of key features that are part of the Lexus Safety System+ have been enhanced, along with the addition of a few key features.

For starters, the Pre-Collision System (PCS), which include Frontal Collision Warning (FCW), Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB), Pedestrian Detection and Bicyclist Detection, features an enhancement to the single-lens camera and millimeter-wave radar elements to expand the response range. By enhancing the radar and camera capabilities it is now possible for the system to help detect not only the vehicle ahead but also a preceding bicyclist in daytime and even a preceding pedestrian in daytime and low-light conditions. At intersections, the system has improved recognition of an oncoming vehicle or pedestrian when performing a left-hand turn and may activate typical PCS functions if needed. Additional PCS functions include Emergency Steering Assist (ESA), which is designed to assist steering within the vehicle's lane as cued by the driver.

All-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC) can be activated above 30 mph and is designed to perform vehicle-to-vehicle distance controls down to 0 mph and can resume from a stop. DRCC also includes a new feature that allows for smooth overtaking of slower vehicles. If traveling behind a vehicle traveling slower than the preset speed, once the driver engages the turn signal the system will provide an initial increase in acceleration in preparation for changing lanes; after changing lanes, the vehicle will continue acceleration until it reaches the original preset driving speed.



Lane Departure Alert is designed to help notify the driver if it senses the vehicle is leaving the lane without engaging a turn signal via steering wheel vibrations or audible alert. When DRCC is set and engaged, Lane Tracing Assist (LTA) is designed to provide slight steering force to help steer to the center of the lane to assist the driver with staying in the lane using lane markers or a preceding vehicle. LTA alerts the driver with a visual warning and either an audible alert or steering wheel vibration. In the new IS, the lane recognition performance, which makes LTA possible, has been improved with enhanced recognition of line and road edge, lateral G performance, and enhanced control and stability after lane change.

Additional LSS+ 2.5 features include Intelligent High Beams, which detects preceding or oncoming vehicles and automatically switches between high beam and low beam headlights. Road Sign Assist (RSA) is designed to acquire certain road sign information using a camera and navigation maps and displays them on the multi-information display (MID).

To help IS drivers change lanes with confidence, the standard Blind Spot Monitor is designed to help detect and warn you of vehicles approaching or positioned in the adjacent lanes. Standard Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA) can offer added peace of mind by helping to detect vehicles approaching from either side while backing out with a visual and audible warning.

Explore More with Lexus AR Play App

In support of the launch of the new 2021 IS Lexus has unveiled the [Lexus AR Play](#), an immersive augmented reality app that allows users to explore the vehicle on their smart phone or tablet.

The app allows users to preview the vehicle in an interactive way, with the ability to virtually walk around the new IS, zoom in and out, and explore 360-degree exterior and interior views. The IS can be personalized with eight different colors, open and close the doors and trunk, explore vehicle design and features, and even virtually drive the IS in augmented reality like a remote-controlled car.

The Lexus AR Play app is now available for download for iOS and Android devices in the App Store and Google Play.

Lexus Enform for Safety and Convenience

Lexus Enform Safety Connect comes with a three-year trial with access to Lexus Enform response centers 24/7/365. With Lexus Enform Service Connect, complimentary for the first 10 years, the vehicle can send alerts for specific factory recommended maintenance while simultaneously alerting a preferred Lexus dealer. In addition, the Lexus App allows guests to do everything from starting their vehicle remotely with a smartphone, to contacting dealers for a service appointment, and much more. With an active subscription, the Lexus App dashboard provides a personalized view of convenient vehicle and connected service information, including the Vehicle Health Report, scheduled maintenance and vehicle health alerts. Guests also can manage their subscriptions right from the palm of their hand.