

Types of Motorcycles



Street Motorcycles – These are motorcycles designed for paved roads. They feature smooth tires with a light tread pattern, and most are capable of speeds up to 100 mph.

Cruisers – These motorcycles mimic the style of American machines from the 1930s to the early 1960s, although they have benefited from advances in metallurgy and design. The riding position always places the feet forward, and usually the hands are up and the spine erect or leaning back slightly. Some riders find this more comfortable for long-distance riding. Some cruisers may have limited turning ability because of low-slung design.

Sport Bikes – Sometimes called performance bikes or “crotch rockets,” sport bikes are typically much smaller and lighter than cruisers and are essentially consumer versions of the motorcycles used in production-based forms of motorcycle sport road racing. The bikes are designed to emphasize speed and handling. The riding position places the feet toward the back, the hands low, and the spine inclined forward. Sport bikes are capable of high speeds, with great stability in corners. They can be difficult to manage by the inexperienced.

Touring Bikes – Although any motorcycle can be equipped for touring, manufacturers have created specific models designed to address the needs of long-distance touring and commuting riders. Touring bikes typically

have large wind screens, offering greater protection against wind and weather, large capacity fuel tanks, and a more relaxed, upright seating position than sport bikes.

Naked Bike – Also known as a standard, or street bike, this is the basic motorcycle stripped down to its fundamental parts. The emphasis is on function, performance, and ergonomics, rather than aerodynamic body panels and exaggerated riding positions common on sport bikes. These bikes are good for beginners, since they don’t have much plastic to get scratched up in falls.

Scooter – Motor scooters are similar to motorcycles and are also designed to be ridden on the road. Scooters usually have smaller wheels, automatic transmissions, small engines, and a step-through configuration, allowing the rider to sit with both feet on a running board and knees together. Scooters are seen all over the roads of European countries.

Off-Road Bikes – There are several different types of off-road motorcycles designed and specialized for specific functions. They are typically light weight and have smaller engines than road-going bikes. They have high ground clearance and a simple, rugged body construction. Their large wheels have knobby tires, often clamped to the rim with rim-locks. Off-road motorcycles are usually specialized for a variety of off-road motorcycle sports. ■