

Different types of motorcycles



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How in depth do you think of, and look at motorcycles? To the average person, if you were to simply say the word “ motorcycle” they would have an immediate image in their head. Two wheels/tires, a motor, handlebars, and a seat. However, it is really not that simple, especially to a motorcycle enthusiast. For most people interested in motorcycles, they would immediately associate the word with their favorite type, unless it were to come up in a conversation that has already put it into a certain context. Then you have the times when you haven’t received a particular context, and your mind begins to wonder as to what kind of motorcycle (commonly just referred to as a bike by those that ride) it could be: a cruiser, dual purpose, or a sport bike.

For cruiser bikes, which are primarily to be kept on pavement, there are still different spectrums. You can start with the very large and heavy Honda Goldwing as an example for the largest of cruisers, which has decent torque in order to be able to power the very heavy bike. It is very comfortable to ride and you sit in an upright position, has a large windscreen, and many amenities you won’t find on many other bikes like speakers for music, heaters, GPS, heated grips, and a good amount of room for storage. Scaling down a bit you have Harley Davidson models such as the Street Glide which has most of the aforementioned amenities, just scaled down in size and more easily maneuverable. Then you have the smaller series of cruiser bikes such as the Harley Davidson Sportster and the Honda Shadow, which are much more easily maneuvered, lighter, and still fairly close in power. However you do lose many of the amenities from the larger models, in

exchange for a better handling, and generally an overall better performing motorcycle.

Then you have dual purpose, also known as enduro or dual sport, motorcycles. These are bikes that can travel on pavement but have altered specifications from cruisers or sport bikes like more ground clearance, higher suspension travel, and sometimes different tires that make them more easily able to traverse off road as in dirt/gravel roads, trails, ice/snow, and even sand in some cases. A good example for the larger of this category would be the KTM 1290 Super Adventure. It has a very high seat height to make room for more ground clearance, a large fuel tank allowing you to travel longer distances, can be easily equipped with storage bags, and can have different kinds of tires depending on if it will be ridden primarily on or off road. Scaling down a bit in size you have the KTM 690 Enduro, which for most intensive purposes, is a street legal dirt bike. It can easily travel on or off road and is much more nimble, can be equipped with a larger fuel tank if needed, but lacks the optional storage capacity of the larger bike. Then you have dirt bikes like the Honda CRF450R, which legally is an off road only vehicle in its stock form, but can be modified to be legal for public roads and has superior handling to the previous bikes in this category.

Last but certainly not least is the sport bike classification of motorcycle, which can be broken down into sport, sport touring, and super sport. These are made for riding on pavement only. Standard sport bikes have a more upright seating position than super sports, but are similar to sport touring. They have moderate power, good handling, and are comfortable to ride for longer periods of time and make great bikes to commute long distances on.

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Sport touring bikes can also make good vehicles to commute on, but they generally lack on handling compared to sport bikes due to a larger chassis and heavier weight. What they lack in handling, they make up for in power. A good example of this is the Suzuki GSX-1300-R Hayabusa. When the bike was first released it was capable of over just over 200 MPH in its stock form. Now, all bikes are governed to 300 KMH or 186 MPH, which can be removed by an ECU flash. The Hayabusa has been modified by many people, and with many modifications, can make 400 to 700 horsepower depending on the modifications and is capable of over 250 MPH.

Somewhere in between the standard sport bike, and the sport touring, you hit the sweet spot with the super sport family of motorcycle. This includes bikes like the Suzuki GSX-R, Kawasaki Ninja, Yamaha R series, Honda CBR, BMW S1000RR, Ducati Panigale, and Aprilia RSV4. These are motorcycles that are made to put out a high amount of power, weigh very little, and handle very nimble. These are motorcycles that do well on the street, and are at home on the racetrack, basically being a street legal race bike.

Depending on engine class, they are capable of well over 200 MPH with modifications. They have specific racing classes and different competitions they can be used for. The well-known Moto GP, where they travel to different courses across the world to compete against one another with super sport bikes using technology that is ahead of current production motorcycles.

There is SBK, where they use current production motorcycles and modify them so they are track only vehicles. Also there is the less known Isle of Man TT, where they close off roads on an island between Britain and Ireland and use highly modified production motorcycles to race six laps on the course,

making it 226 miles from start to finish. The downside to super sport motorcycles is that these bikes do not have the storage capacity or comfort of cruiser bikes, being smaller and having a more hunched over riding position, and are not capable of the off road performance of the dual sport family.

Overall, you have the comfortable cruising bikes, the off road capable dual sport bikes, and the performance driven sport bikes. You're capable of cruising the roads in comfort with the cruising bikes, with the ability to have the space to bring along things you may need for a long trip or stay somewhere. With the dual purpose, you have the ability to travel long distances off the beaten path to places you wouldn't be able to see otherwise. Then you have the sport bike class, driven by performance, and made to ride to the extreme. I hope after reading this, you may not have the same standard view of motorcycles that most people share, and will next time when hearing something about a motorcycle, wonder to yourself, "what kind?"