



# Motorcycles

# Freedom and Exploration

Ever wondered why that rider who just passed chose to become a motorcyclist?

This open and exciting form of transportation helps people reconnect with the fun of driving all over again, while saving a little money, too. Each ride is its own unique, thrilling experience.

## RECONNECTING WITH LIFE

When we confine ourselves inside a passenger vehicle, we tend to miss out on the wonders that surround us. Riding a motorcycle, on the other hand, allows us to notice the finer details of the scenes before us and feel the rush of the wind. Every twist in the road becomes another unforgettable moment. This lifestyle is often linked to discovery, since motorcycles can access areas that other vehicles might not be able to reach. But even if you stick to city streets and familiar routes, few activities can make you feel as invigorated as riding a motorcycle does.

## SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The communal aspect of motorcycling is a huge draw for many. Riding requires a set of special skills and that brings a sense of achievement. The same feeling accompanies the completion of your latest journey.



© ADOBE STOCK

Motorcycle maintenance is a distinct art, as well. Once immersed in this special community, you become tight-knit with other riders — even if they start off as strangers. When you meet fellow enthusiasts, you recognize the effort they've invested, too. You can

recount stories from your travels, share practical advice for bike upkeep and discuss plans for future adventures.

## SAFETY FIRST

It's important to acknowledge the risks involved. You don't have the protection of a

car or truck's metal frame during a crash, so drive safely. Use all recommended safety gear and be aware of poor road conditions or inattentive drivers.

Consider enrolling in a safety course, particularly if you're new to riding.

## BIG SAVINGS

Motorcycles represent more than just a means of adventure. They're a reliable way to save money. In comparison to standard vehicles, you will see significant savings on gas. Both maintenance and insurance can be less expensive.

# Before You Buy

There are few things more exciting than hopping on a motorcycle for a ride.

However, there are important safety risks that accompany that ride. Motorcycles have become increasingly common, but so have distracted drivers. This can be a very dangerous mix out on the road, so drive defensively and stay aware.

Adopting all suggested safety precautions can keep you safe. That includes honestly evaluating your riding skills. Consider taking a riding course or a refresher one, if needed. Before each ride, conduct a thorough inspection of the bike. Drive defensively, assuming that other motorists don't see you on the road. And always wear a helmet.

Here are some other key suggestions:

## GETTING STARTED

The best guidance for new riders is to steer clear of bikes that are too advanced for their abilities. Generally, it's best to start with smaller, more manageable motorcycles and then gradually advance to larger models.

Experiment with different motorcycles to find one that suits you well. Check customer reviews on manufacturer sites and forums. Seek advice from more experienced riders, since they'll have valuable insights. Soon, you'll know just the right bike to ride.



© ADOBE STOCK

Once the motorcycle is home, don't rush out onto the street. Become familiar with your route, prepare for possible obstructions or traffic, and be ready for any weather changes.

## THE SMART CHOICE

Research shows that wearing

a helmet is a smart choice, whether the law requires it or not.

Many riders don't and that leads to unnecessary fatalities each year. Those who survive accidents without a helmet on are still at a higher risk of suffering serious brain injuries.

States that repealed helmet

laws saw motorcycle deaths rise dramatically, ranging from a 20 to 30% increase. Modern helmets boast lots of new designs and technologies and have never been safer or more comfortable to wear. Choose a light-colored helmet to make you more visible to other drivers.

## OTHER TIPS

For added safety, wear long pants, gloves, long sleeves and boots that cover your ankles.

Always thoroughly inspect the bike before you ride. Make sure your headlight is operational — and keep it on, regardless of the time of day.

# Consider All the Options

Before purchasing a new bike, consider several important factors.

What's its purpose — providing transportation to work or going off-road? Will it just be you, or will there be other riders on board? How much power do you need? And then, of course, there's the cost.

## STANDARD BIKES

In some cases, your budget may be the most important consideration. Standard motorcycles represent the most budget-friendly option, because of their low gas usage and easy upkeep. These bikes typically feature straightforward aesthetics and boast medium-sized engines. They come with user-friendly frames, upright handlebars and seats, and foot pegs that are easy to reach. They are an excellent choice for newcomers and for individuals who do not intend to ride regularly or over long distances.

## TOURING OPTIONS

On the other hand, if long journeys appeal to you, a touring motorcycle might be the best fit. These bikes are designed with a classic upright seating position and larger engines to enhance fuel capacity. They offer additional storage solutions. Touring bikes frequently include substantial fairings in the front, which are meant to protect against



© ADOBE STOCK

wind and rain. Just keep in mind that they're generally much larger in size — with a higher cost, as well.

## CRUISERS

Cruisers are recognized for their plentiful low-end power, thanks to a V-twin engine. They're complemented by high handlebars and foot pegs located forward. But these

motorcycles can present a greater challenge for novice riders because of the laid-back seating position. They can be tricky to handle in poor weather conditions.

## SPORT MOTORCYCLES

Craving additional speed? Sport bikes could be what you're looking for. These models come with powerful

engines and lightweight frames that allow for quick acceleration. The positioning on these bikes is typically more parallel, reducing wind resistance. That means the handlebars may be positioned a bit farther away.

## OTHER BIKES

Adventurers in search of off-road capabilities enjoy

dual-sport motorcycles, often known as adventure-sport or dual-purpose bikes. These legal road dirt bikes are made to handle rougher terrains. Their lightweight design and smaller engines make them ideal for newcomers.

If you primarily ride in urban areas, it may be wise to explore lightweight models like mopeds and scooters.



© ADOBE STOCK

# Time to Get Out There!

There's only so much motorcycling you can do near and around your home base, no matter how picturesque your town happens to be.

Here are five great rides to consider. On a bike, you'll experience them in a whole new way.

## **PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY (California)**

**Distance:** 650+ miles

**Route:** Leggett to Dana Point, California

**Tips:** Expect heavier traffic near California's major cities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco. Starting early can help you avoid traffic, but there is the risk of coastal fog.

Be aware that this can gather quite suddenly, limiting visibility. Check road conditions online before you

ride, since landslides are also possible.

**When to ride:** Spring and fall, when there are fewer tourists and the weather is milder

**Find out more:** <https://www.roadtripusa.com/pacific-coast>.

## **GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD (Montana)**

**Distance:** 50 miles

**Route:** From West Glacier to St. Mary, Montana

**Tips:** Pre-planning is key, since this road is only open for a short period in the summer because of regular snowfall. Be prepared for narrow lanes and steep drop-offs in this mountainous

region.

**When to ride:** July to early September; ride early and you'll catch the incredible morning light.

**Find out more:** <https://www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/goingtothesun-road.htm>.

## **BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY (Virginia to North Carolina)**

**Distance:** About 470 miles

**Route:** From Waynesboro, Virginia, to Cherokee, North Carolina

**Tips:** The weather at higher elevations can be quite unpredictable, with sudden rain showers.

It can also get pretty chilly, even during the summer months. Watch for wildlife, particularly in the early mornings and evenings. There aren't many gas stations, so fuel up when you see one.

**When to ride:** Find stunning foliage in autumn and comfortable conditions in late spring

**Find out more:** <https://www.nps.gov/blri/index.htm>.

## **ROUTE 66 (Illinois to California)**

**Distance:** About 2,450 miles

**Route:** Chicago, IL, to Santa Monica, CA

**Tips:** Research is critical because the original roadway is now fragmented, leaving some segments unmarked or in poor condition. Best to stick to the most-used sections where you can embrace the experience. Make time to stop at the unique roadside attractions along the way.

**When to ride:** Spring or fall

**Find out more:** <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/travelroute66/index.htm>.

# The Latest Cool Gadgetry

Cars and trucks now come with impressive technology as standard equipment, and in some cases, the same advancements have taken place in motorcycle manufacturing.

There have been big leaps forward in rider safety. Other new gadgetry is simply meant to improve the overall riding experience. Here's a look:

## SAFETY FEATURES

A big focus on improving the safety of motorcycle riders has led to advanced airbag technology, better lighting and new communication systems. The goal with all of them is to reduce the number of motorcycle-related crashes, injuries and fatalities. There are still thousands of rider deaths a year. These advancements are designed to reduce those numbers.

## UPGRADED HELMETS

Significant progress has been seen with Bluetooth-enabled helmet systems. The helmets are designed to accommodate communication devices, allowing riders to talk safely with one another — either in pairs on a single bike or within a group of riders. The system's high-quality audio makes it easier to receive critical fuel or



© ADOBE STOCK

maintenance alerts over road sounds and the wind. Riding gloves are now available that provide fingertip control of headsets and cameras. Some even offer audio and video recording capability, so motorcyclists can capture their riding adventures from either their helmet or a mounted camera.

## BRAKING SYSTEMS

Studies indicate that the anti-lock braking system plays a vital role in enhancing safety, but for many years this vital technology was more often found in cars and trucks. Today, more and more bikes are being made with ABS functionality. It's making a huge difference: Recent research shows

that motorcycles equipped with ABS are around 40 percent less likely to be involved in fatal accidents. If anti-lock brakes aren't standard on a motorcycle, most leading manufacturers now provide it as an option.

## IMPROVED LIGHTS

Adaptive headlights are also making the road much safer

for motorcyclists. These headlights adjust based on the lean angle of the bike. That helps to illuminate previously unseen parts of the road during night rides. LED brake lights are more easily noticed. That visibility is especially important because motorcycles can decelerate quickly, and distracted drivers may not react in time.

# Safety Starts With a Helmet

Statistics show that helmet use prevents thousands of deaths each year in the U.S.

Yet many riders don't take advantage of this widely available protective gear. Recent advancements mean they've never been more comfortable to wear. They can even be outfitted with cool communication and Bluetooth technology.

## INSIDE THE NUMBERS

As exciting and fun as they are to drive, motorcycles carry inherent risks simply because of their open design. That's why riders have a risk of fatality that is about 30 times higher per mile than those in passenger vehicles. Simply wearing a helmet can lower the chances of suffering head injuries by around 70 percent, while decreasing the likelihood of death by more than 40 percent. Even though some states have repealed helmet laws, riders who do not wear helmets face a much higher risk of injury or death. States without universal helmet requirements consistently report higher fatality rates.

Those preventable injuries come at a cost, contributing billions of dollars in health-care expenses each year.

## SIZING YOUR HELMET

Helmet sizes follow familiar ranges such as small, medium, large and extra-large, but proper fit involves more than

choosing a size. A helmet needs to fit snugly around the cheeks and neck to provide protection on impact, making an in-person fitting important before purchase. Cheek pads should rest comfortably against the face, with no gaps at the brow or temples. The neck roll should sit securely

without pushing the helmet away from the head.

For full-face helmets, the front should clear the nose even when pressure is applied. Once secured, the strap keeps the helmet stable and properly positioned. A well-fitted helmet allows slight movement from side to

side and up and down, with the skin moving along with it, while still maintaining a close, consistent fit.

## NEW INNOVATIONS

The technology around motorcycle helmets has significantly improved in recent years. Newer models come

packed with sophisticated features aimed at enhancing safety and enriching your riding experience. These helmets can connect to your phone for hands-free calling and use Bluetooth for music playback. Some even prevent the motorcycle from starting if the helmet is out of range.



# Turning Passion into a Career

Motorcyclists are a different breed. The experience itself is unique and the machines require specialized knowledge of their quirks and inner workings.

This tends to create a distinct culture, with its own sense of community and tradition. If you've been a part of this lifestyle for long enough, you've probably developed special knowledge that would help others. You might just be able to turn your passion into a new career.

## GUIDE

New riders will always need help finding the best places to go, but even experienced riders may not know every detail about the local area. Consider becoming a tour guide to fill this void. You could convert your deep experience with motorcycles into a potential source of income. Show fellow riders around local attractions, explaining their historical context, or lead long-distance rides that highlight the region's inherent beauty. You could warn riders away from places where it's more treacherous for bikes. Just first verify whether licensing or insurance is required.

## DETAILER

Motorcycles that are ridden regularly accumulate dirt and



© ADOBE STOCK

grime, especially when stored outdoors. Detailing these machines requires an understanding of their materials, components and finishes, creating an opportunity for specialized service. Professional motorcycle detailing has emerged as a niche that values precision and familiarity with rider expectations more than

formal training alone.

A well-executed job builds trust within the riding community, where word-of-mouth recommendations carry significant weight. Visibility at motorcycle rallies, bike shows and related events can further expand a client base, particularly when paired with simple promotional materials such as

business cards.

## INFLUENCER

The internet has made it easier than ever to share your extensive knowledge about motorcycles, helmet technology, popular bike-related events, cool travel destinations and the latest riding and maintenance tips. Start your

own motorcycle-related channel and build an audience of fellow enthusiasts. Once you've become a popular spot for advice, you can monetize your work through paid advertising. Who knows? You might end up doing this full-time, but without having to adhere to a regular 9-to-5 job's conventional schedule.