

What is a dual sport motorcycle?

A dual sport motorcycle is street legal, but is ridden both “on-road” and “off-road” that’s pretty much it. Motorcycles have been used to travel rough and tight terrain since they were invented; their capabilities are limited to your personal skill. What makes a bike a dual-sport? Whatever bike you choose to ride, the TIRES will be the most important. Dual sport tires are available for all rim sizes. If you want to get off the beaten path, do yourself a favor and get some appropriate tires.

If you are doing local day trips, a lighter, smaller displacement bike is ideal. If you like to travel, maybe for some weekend getaways, a larger bike is more suited for that.

Be sure to ask the seller if/when the bike has had the engine rebuilt. It’s not a dealbreaker, but they won’t tell you if you don’t ask. High performance bikes (Husky, KTM, Husaberg, Beta) are rebuilt as part of regular maintenance.

Make sure the steering head, wheel bearings, rear shock bearings, and swingarm bearings aren’t obviously worn out.

Buying a dual sport

Check the wheels for good rubber, loose spokes and damaged rims. Check the wheel hubs and rims closely for damage and cracks.

BMW R120

Take a good close look at all the engine case screws and look for pitting and corrosion in the cases around the screw heads, especially near the water pump.

Check chain, sprockets, air filter and brake pads for obvious signs of neglect.

Take a close look at the forks. If they’re leaking at all, they need immediate attention. Ideally forks should get serviced every year or so. Ask the seller about that specifically.

Check the frame closely around the welds by the footpegs and where main supports come together. If the paint is chipped off there, the frame has been flexed quite a bit. The spots that show signs of frame flex are weak and may show signs of cracks. Look CLOSELY

I like to see maintenance records, ideally people should keep track of what they do and when.

Maintaining a Dualsport bike

Change your oil often and keep your air filter, and chain clean and lubed.

Here's a few guides for the more common stuff:

Air Filter Cleaning

Carb Cleaning- [1](#) & Chain [care](#)

[Rusty Tank](#)

[Valve Adjustment](#)

Keep your fork leg

Yamaha TW200s clean. The main cause of dirty fork oil is dirt that gets pushed past the seals.

The Bike List

800cc+ Class - The big boys. The road kings. Best on gravel and fire roads

BMW R1200GS - Capable big bike, subframe can handle HUGE panniers

BMW F800GS - Ultra capable big bike

Suzuki DL1000 - Best suited for pavement

KTM 1190/1290 Adventure

Triumph Tiger 800 & 80 Honda CRF450R 0XC

Honda Africa Twin CRF1000L

400cc-799cc Class - Generally highway capable, but also very trail capable

KTM 450

and CRF450RX

Honda XR650L - Best suited for mostly off-road

- Best suited for mostly off-road
- Best suited for mostly pavement
- Similar to the w Model but better for pavement
- Best suited for mostly on-road

-530exc - Best suited for mostly off-road

- A good 50/50 bike

Kawasaki KLR650 - Cheap and cheerful

399cc AND BELOW

c (or X) are highway capable and trail capable (400 mile days are fine)

Yamaha WR250F trail bike not well suited to highway travel

Suzuki DR350

Kawasaki KLX250S & KLX250SF

Kawasaki KLR250

Yamaha XT350/XT250/XT225

Honda CRF250L

Husqvarna TE310 - Best suited for mostly off-road, will do highway as well

Dirt Riding Technique:

How is riding off-road different than riding on-road? Well, that's where things get interesting. maintaining control with questionable traction takes some getting used to. I think it's best to say right up front - GET SOME GOOD PROTECTIVE GEAR. Elbow and knee protection are very important. When riding, you typically want to use your rear brake first (unlike street riding) and be very careful about grabbing a fist full of front brake. You'll end up on the ground very quickly. You'll learn that traction is overrated and there's no rule that says the handlebars need to point where you're going. It's a wild and fun ride.

Moto-Camping:

To start off I'll divide this into three sections: The Basics, Overnight, and Multi-Day camping. What you need to bring is subjective since different people have differing expectations of comfort and "civilisation" so I will focus on a fairly minimalist approach and you can add or remove whatever you feel to better suit your camping style.

The Basics - The basics needs of life are pretty damn simple: food, water, and shelter. Food I will cover in the two sections below as the kit for overnight and multi-day will vary significantly, but it's never a bad idea to have a few energy bars on hand just in case.

As for water always carry at least a day's supply of clean water on you as a backup, in moderate climates this usually means two (2) liters but as temperature and exertion increase so do your hydration needs. Beyond that the local availability of fresh water and the expected duration of the trip will determine what you need to bring, at the very least it's great to have a few iodine tablets on you to help make local water safer if the need arises.

Shelter needs on the other hand don't change much from a night in the woods to a month in the woods. At the most basic a tarp/bivy sack, and a sleeping bag will do in many climates. A great alternative to the tarp/mat is a hammock tent as they pack to a very small size and provide great weather protection, but they do need two sturdy anchors to work properly so they are of limited use in some areas. Ideally pack a tent, they can try to find a camp in the bush as it's very hard to tell a great camp from a be had very cheaply at places like Wal-mart but generally

speaking the cheaper the tent, the heavier/bulkier it is and the less weather protection it provides. Choose accordingly. As an added note always try to set up camp before it gets dark, this is especially important when dangerous one with just a head light.

Overnight - For overnight trips it's often preferable to make some food before you leave and just pack it with you. This means you don't have to carry a stove, cooking utensils, dishes/pots greatly reducing the load you have to carry which makes life more pleasant. Pretty much anything that would be good for a picnic would be good here.

As for water on an overnight stay the simplest solution is to simply pack it in. This way you don't have to worry about filtering it or anything like that, as a general rule pack 2 liters per day per person so 4 liters for a Friday morning to Saturday evening for example. However this varies Wildly by Climate. Prepare to pack 6+ liters a day in the desert etc.

For overnight trips you can often do with large/cheap tents as you need to carry a lot less elsewhere in your kit, on top of that since you only need to put it up and take it down once so you won't get tired of it quickly enough for it to be an issue.

Multi-Day - On trips where you will spend multiple days away from civilization, packing compact and easy to prepare meals will make your life a hell of a lot easier. Planning each days meal before you leave will help a lot in avoiding packing too much food or too little. As a general rule bring 1 days worth of extra food just in case. A bag of granola premixed with milk powder is a good example of this as its compact and nutritious. One option for cooking is to [build a cooking fire](#), this can be a great option especially for shorter trips in the woods. The main things you need to think about to do this is A) Will you have enough dry wood along the way to build a fire easily? and B) Is it safe and legal to do so in that Area/Season. The more common option is to bring a stove. There are many styles of stoves to suit different camping styles and budgets, for a minimalist stove you can buy an alcohol stove the advantages of this are extreme light weight, price, and compactness, the disadvantages are that they are inefficient requiring you to pack more fuel for a trip thereby partially or fully counteracting the weight and size benefits of the stove itself. Alcohol stoves also burn at a fairly low temperature requiring longer times to boil water or heat up a frying pan, this requires more fuel and exacerbates the inefficiency. On top of all this the flame is not adjustable. Propane stoves are a great middle ground, they are quick to heat up, medium weight, adjustable, and cheap. However as you get further and further away from civilisation finding fuel for them can go from easy to impossible. The Ideal stove is a multi-gas stove. These can burn Kerosene, Gasoline, White Gas, Alcohol, and even some oils. The disadvantage of these tend to be cost and weight. Usually requiring pumping to pressurize the fuel bottle and time to heat up properly before the fuel vaporizes pre-ignition. However the ability to use gasoline if needed goes a long way in making up for these shortcomings as you will always have it available if you need to boil water for drinking.

Water on long trips is totally dependant on climate. In the rain forest in spring you often only need to bring a water filtration pump and a few water bottles. As you get into drying climates your hydration needs increase as your supply ability decreases. Plan accordingly.

For multi-day trips a good tent will can make or break a trip. I personally love my MSR

Hubba Hubba as its light weight(~2 kg/~4 pounds) and is a two man tent which I far prefer to one man tents in terms of comfort and space to keep gear dry and safe. It also has the benefit of sleeping two people if need be. However it is expensive, you can probably get an approximate 3rd equivalent for around \$100 if needed. Things to watch out for: You want the fly of the tent to come down past where the waterproof base turns to mesh/lighter fabric, this is often not the case on cheap tents and if there is ever a storm you will wake up cold and soaked. Look for at least a 3 season tent unless your climate dictates otherwise. These should be just as storm proof as a 4 season while being lighter and far cooler for the summer months.

Detailed bike information:

- [KLR 650](#) - Commonly considered to be the best all-rounder for the price, the KLR is rugged, reliable (doo-hicky notwithstanding), and surprisingly capable in the right hands. Made for the highway and logging roads, its large gas tank, comfortable ergonomics, simplicity of design, ease of maintenance, and good fuel economy (~55 mpg/~4.5 L/100Km) make it a near perfect "Adventure Tourer". It's capable of, but not ideal for, fairly rugged off road adventures with a strong frame and decent suspension travel - however, it is not a dirt bike. Often seen on 'round the world expeditions, the KLR is also an excellent choice for for the occasional weekend adventure. Older models can be had quite cheaply if you spend the time to look around and are willing to travel. The KLR 650 is an affordable Swiss army knife of motorcycles...if it were any bigger, you wouldn't want to take it off road, and if it were any smaller, you wouldn't want to take it on the freeway.

- A perfect starter bike in my view (hence why I bought one as my first and current bike!), it's small, lightweight, nimble, and reliable. Its advantages are its fuel economy (~55 mpg/~4.5 L/100Km), light weight at ~145 kg(~320 lbs), and versatility as it can do pretty much anything you throw at it if the rider is good enough. It's good/great off road and around town under ~90 kph(55 mph), but above that it starts to get buzzy due to low gearing. Gearing can of course be changed but at the cost of torque which compromises your off road ability. Its main disadvantages are its fairly low power(not such an issue for a beginner), fairly frequent oil changes (every 1000-4000 Miles depending on who you believe), poor highway comfort, and narrow and hard stock seat.

- [KLX 250](#) - The Kawasaki KLX250 comes in two styles. The KLX250S is the traditional 17-rear/21-front dual sport, and the KLX250SF is the "supermoto" version with 17-inch street rubber both front and back. These bikes are extremely forgiving of new riders, inspiring confidence with easy ergonomics, low weight, and relatively low seat height. Their long production run means ample parts and accessories. The .KLX250SF is arguably the best commuter bike on the market for those that want to get off asphalt from time-to-time, while the 250S is the quarter liter choice for a lot of experienced

off-road riders; and with good reason. H ays, and should not be.

- [DR 350](#) - The Suzuki DR 350 came in two major trim levels, the off-road oriented standard model, and the 350S model, which came equipped with all the necessary road going electronics. Both bikes came equipped with the same 349cc OHC motor, with an output of around 30 HP and 22 ft. lbs. The standard model had mirrors as well as a license plate bracket, later year models would do away with turn signals as well. The standard model was oriented for hard maneuvers at only 286 lbs wet (more for the SE models). A head tube angle of 27° gave an ideal suspension geometry for stability and control off-road. Front suspension travel is 270mm (10.6") and rear suspension travel is 280mm (11"), although the suspension travels much, it is often found to be too soft and bottom out easily. As mentioned the seat height is rather high at 35 inches, models with the height adjustment could only drop 1.4 inches. As with other dual sports in the sub 500cc range, this bike is not a joy on long highway journeys, although it will cruise at 85 mph without error, it's simply not comfortable. To add my personal experience, the bike is a hard start when cold, but very easy when warm. I average 55-60 mpg while riding to enjoy it. I do find the gas tank to be a bit too small at only 2.4 gallons. As well many if not all dr350's suffer from clutch drag which makes it almost impossible to find neutral while stopped. (If you have questions about dr350's look for felixwankel). The carburetor, which although less thirsty, allowed the bike to stall while in air. After numerous complaints to Suzuki about a high seat (35"), Suzuki introduced a height adjustment system on bikes made in 1992 (Bikes manufactured in 1991 and sold as a 1992 model DID NOT have this feature). Starting in 1994, Suzuki added an electric starter to the 350S and renamed it to the 350SE; however, with the electric starter came bloat. The bike gained around 30 pounds as a result of added convenience. The 350 has a 6 speed transmission with rather short first gears which allows full use of all 30hp.

For the time being I will keep the FAQs as on document but once it's a bit more complete I will divide it up into the various subjects and post each in the sidebar separately.