



THE DUTCH BIKE

[AKA THE VINTAGE BIKE, UPRIGHT BIKE, SIT-UP-AND-BEG BIKE, UTILITY BIKE OR THE ROADSTER]

If you are looking for a stylish, traditional bike to ride to work or to the shops, the Dutch bike might just be for you. Until recently, it was difficult to get hold of one of these retro beauties, but now even the big chains are selling them. Expect to pay £250–£750 for a new model. The big downer with these bikes is their weight. Many weigh 20kg (44lb) or more, which is fine for barrelling along a flat road but hard work up hills and a real pain if you don't live on the ground floor. More modern-looking models – such as those made by Germany's Fahrrad Manufaktur – are a lot lighter, so shop around if weight is an issue.

PROS

- Comfortable to ride over short distances
- Upright position gives a great view of the road
- Beautiful to look at
- Good for carrying stuff
- Perfect for short commutes, as they are often fitted with a chain guard, dress guard and mudguards to keep your clothes clean
- No crossbar on the women's version, so you can mount the saddle in a skirt without showing the world your knickers
- Most use hub gears, which are hidden inside the wheel hub, making them less sensitive to the elements. Hub gears can be changed when you are freewheeling or stationary, which is often easier for less experienced riders
- Very sturdy machines, which can cope with gravel, grass and potholes

CONS

- Often reeeeeeally heavy, so bad news if you have to carry it up stairs and almost impossible to hang up on a wall as storage
- Slow and hard work going up hills
- With many brands, you're paying more for the look than for the components
- Hub gears are very difficult to fix yourself
- Many don't have quick-release wheels, so it can be a trial fixing punctures
- Very big frames and wide handlebars take up a lot of space, so bad if your only safe storage option is a narrow corridor

BRANDS TO LOOK OUT FOR INCLUDE:

- **Azor** (Dutch): www.azor.nl
- **Batavus** (Dutch): <http://uk.batavus.com>
- **Bobbin** (British): www.bobbinbicycles.co.uk
- **Electra** (American): www.electrabike.com
- **Fahrrad Manufaktur** (German): www.fahrradmanufaktur.de
- **Gazelle** (Dutch): www.gazelle.nl
- **Pashley** (British): www.pashley.co.uk
- **Retrovelo** (German): www.retrovelo.de
- **Velorbis** (Danish/German): www.velorbis.co.uk

