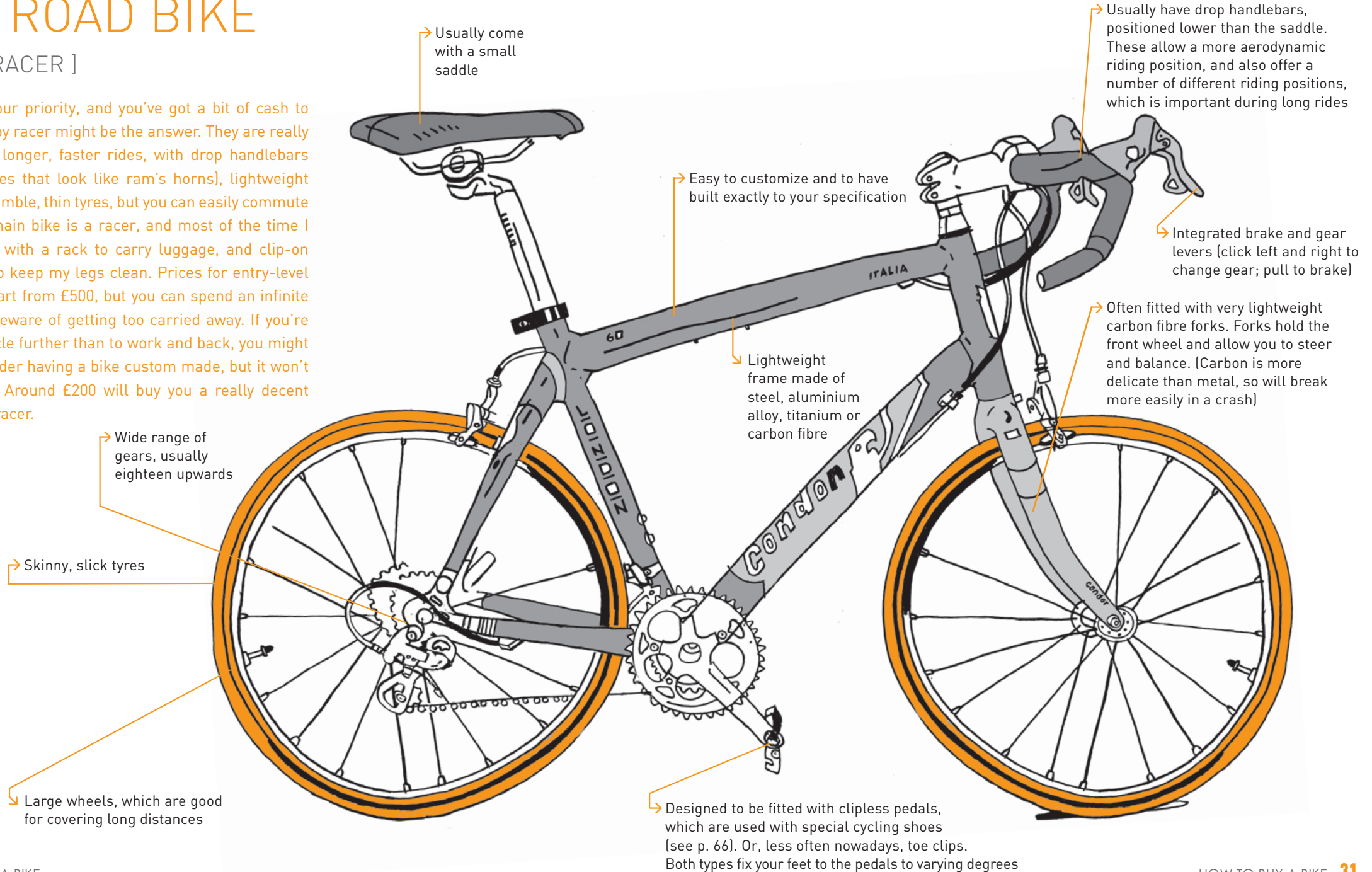


# THE ROAD BIKE

[ AKA A RACER ]

If speed is your priority, and you've got a bit of cash to splash, a nippy racer might be the answer. They are really designed for longer, faster rides, with drop handlebars (the curly ones that look like ram's horns), lightweight frames and nimble, thin tyres, but you can easily commute on one. My main bike is a racer, and most of the time I have it fitted with a rack to carry luggage, and clip-on mudguards to keep my legs clean. Prices for entry-level road bikes start from £500, but you can spend an infinite amount, so beware of getting too carried away. If you're looking to cycle further than to work and back, you might want to consider having a bike custom made, but it won't come cheap. Around £200 will buy you a really decent secondhand racer.





## CONS

- ↳ Thin, slick tyres are prone to punctures (though you can easily replace these with puncture-resistant models)
- ↳ Small saddle and drop handlebars often make for a less comfortable ride. Some people don't like stretching down to brake
- ↳ Not great in wet weather, because the mechanisms – the derailleurs gears and brakes – are open to the elements
- ↳ Skinny tyres don't cope well off-road, or even on gravel. You'll feel every lump and bump
- ↳ Not always possible to attach a rack. If that matters to you, before you buy, check there are bosses (eyelets) built into the frame to allow you to do so

You can buy road bikes off the peg from most bike shops, or more specialist outlets will customize a model for you by taking your exact measurements and aesthetic requirements into consideration.



## PROS

- ↳ Fast
- ↳ Lovely and light, so great if you have to carry up stairs
- ↳ Very efficient machines, so less hard work to pedal than other types
- ↳ Easy to upgrade and fiddle with; should last for ever if looked after
- ↳ You can use for sport (triathlons, sportives) as well as for leisure and commuting

