



Motorcycles

A motorcycle is a two-wheeled motor-driven road vehicle without pedal propulsion. The first motorcycle was invented in 1867 in the USA by Howard Roper. It was a two-cylinder steam-engine motorcycle powered by coal. In 1885, Gottlieb Daimler devised the first gas-engine motorcycle. It consisted of an engine attached to a wooden bike. Daimler employed a new engine invented by the engineer Nicolaus August Otto in 1876, the four-stroke internal combustion engine.

In 1903, William Harley and his friends Arthur and Walter Davidson founded the Harley Davidson Motor Company. Their motorcycle had a quality engine, so it could prove itself in races, though the company planned to manufacture it as a transport vehicle. The first Harley Davidson was sold in Chicago, and in the 1920s Harley Davidson became the largest producer of motorcycles. From the 1960s to the 1990s the two-stroke motorcycle became popular.

Today motorcycles are reasonably popular transport vehicles especially among young people. Major manufacturers are Honda, Harley Davidson, Suzuki, Kawasaki, and Yamaha.

Nowadays motorcycles can also come with GPS systems and many more options.

With the rise in gas prices, many people are using motorcycles as their primary vehicle during warm weather.



ACTIVITIES

1 Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is a motorcycle?
- 2 What did Roper invent?
- 3 What were the main features of the first Harley-Davidson motorcycles?
- 4 Who invented the gas-engine motorcycle?
- 5 Why are motorcycles becoming more and more popular?