

Manufactured from 1978 to '80, the Suzuki GT50 is one of the lesser known Suzuki bikes. Known as the RG50 in Japan, this simple two-stroke motorcycle was also sold in other parts of the world under the names X-1 and ZR50. Adding to the confusion, the GT50 specifications were also modified for export to certain countries. For example, in Holland all 50cc two-wheelers were classified as mopeds and were required to have pedals. In other countries, the engine output had to be restricted to keep speeds under 30mph. As a result, existing GT50 motorcycles often have a wide range of power and fuel efficiency figures.

One surprise in the Suzuki GT50 was that it came with just one seat for the rider, which was unusual for 50cc bikes in the 70s. The engine of the GT50 carried no surprises for motorcycle enthusiasts interested in 1970s Japanese commuter bikes. It was a straightforward 49cc air-cooled engine that provided a respectable 6.3bhp at 8500 rpm. Since the Suzuki GT50 weighed only about 140 pounds, this was more than enough to allow a single rider a zippy ride around town or city roads. However, the GT50 was defiantly not intended for use on motorways or for touring. The 5-speed transmission gave riders greater control over engine power, allowing for improved fuel efficiency.

In 1979, Suzuki introduced the GT50P Special model, with the key difference being that it now had a more traditional two-person seat and alloy wheels instead of wire rims. Other than that, model specs remained the same as the Suzuki GT50. All GT50 models carried conventional 2.50-17 tyres, with a single disk brake for the front wheel and drum brake for the rear. Riding quality was fair on good city roads, but fairly poor off road.

Today, the Suzuki GT50 is rarely seen on UK roads, though you can still find a few die-hard enthusiasts keeping models running in prime condition. Genuine spare parts can be very difficult to find, though some are still available with expert dealers. One great feature of the simple engine and chassis design of the GT50 is that it can be easily restored or modified. For example, many younger riders take the one-seat design and convert it into a reasonably good motocross bike. As with any classic Suzuki motorcycle, you can still find enthusiasts who want to buy old or well-restored models for their private collections.