




Best compact e-bikes: practical machines for city living

Compact e-bikes are an emerging category with immense practical value in the city

 by [Myles Warwood](#)

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Little wheels have become a big trend for e-bikes, helping them squeeze into the lives of space-strapped riders. Compact e-bikes provide a space-saving solution for someone who wants to commute by bike but lacks storage for a full-sized e-bike. Compact e-bikes can also be folded to make them even more accessible to store. But just because their wheels have shrunk, don't imagine these nippy little bikes provide diminished performance or comfort.

With most models using voluminous tyres, comfort and grip can be improved over a standard-size wheel. They're also incredibly fun to ride, making them the perfect match for the latest motor and battery tech.

Things to remember with compact bikes is their range can be less than that of your more regular e-bike – due to the size of compact e-bikes, finding somewhere to house a larger battery can be difficult. However, they can be an excellent option for buzzing about town. Motors can also be smaller, meaning they harness less power. This means that you may notice carrying items on your panniers more. However, they should give you enough power to negate the additional weight.

The top-end prices will deliver disc brakes, more powerful motors and bigger batteries, while the bottom end of the price bracket will have rim brakes with the opposite in batteries and motors. Our advice would be to buy to your budget for what you need. Integrated accessories are always excellent. Look out for these.

Best compact e-bikes

Volt Lite Electric Bike



£2,599 (RRP £2,899) | [VIEW OFFER](#)

[Volt's Lite Folding Electric Bike](#), reviewed by [Cycling Electric](#), brings stylish simplicity and practicality to the urban commuting scene. With an emphasis on ease of use, the Lite folds down swiftly, ideal for commuters frequently hopping between trains, buses, or compact car boots. Despite its portable design, it boasts a robust and sturdy aluminium frame, ensuring durability and a confident riding experience.

Equipped with a discreet yet punchy SpinTech 250W rear hub motor, the Lite offers smooth assistance that blends seamlessly with your pedalling efforts. Its 374Wh battery is neatly concealed within the frame, providing a substantial range of up to 50 miles per charge—more than enough for daily commuting and weekend exploring.

With an adjustable riding position, ergonomic grips, and premium puncture-resistant tyres, this compact electric bike offers exceptional comfort. Safety is also prioritised with powerful Tektro hydraulic disc brakes, ensuring responsive stopping in all conditions. The Volt Lite perfectly balances portability, performance, and affordability, making it an outstanding choice for city riders.

Pros

- Quick and simple folding mechanism
- Comfortable riding position with ergonomic design
- Excellent range and battery integration

Cons

- Compact wheels less suited for rough terrain

Specifications

- Motor:** SpinTech 250W rear hub
- Battery:** 374Wh integrated
- Range:** Up to 50 miles
- Frame:** Aluminium
- Brakes:** Hydraulic disc
- Gearing:** Shimano 8-speed
- Wheels:** 20-inch

Frequently Asked Questions

What are compact e-bikes, and how do they differ from standard e-bikes?

Compact e-bikes are smaller, more lightweight versions of standard electric bicycles. They often feature foldable frames, making them easier to transport and store in tight spaces. Unlike their larger counterparts, compact e-bikes are designed for convenience and ease of use in urban environments, without sacrificing performance and range.

How far can a compact e-bike travel on a single charge?

The range of a compact e-bike depends on various factors such as battery capacity, rider weight, terrain, and assistance level. On average, compact e-bikes can travel between 25 to 50 miles (40 to 80 kilometers) on a single charge. Some models may offer extended ranges with larger batteries or more efficient motors.

How long does it take to charge a compact e-bike?

Charging time for compact e-bikes can vary from 3 to 6 hours, depending on the battery's capacity and the charger's output. Some e-bikes come with fast chargers that can significantly reduce charging time, making it more convenient for daily use.

Are compact e-bikes allowed on public transport?

Rules regarding e-bikes on public transport vary by location and the specific transport system. Generally, compact e-bikes, especially foldable ones, are more likely to be accepted on public transport due to their reduced size and portability. It's always best to check with local transport authorities or specific transport system policies before travelling.

Can compact e-bikes be used for off-road riding?

While compact e-bikes are primarily designed for urban commuting, some models are equipped with features suitable for light off-road use, such as gravel paths and park trails. These might include more robust tires, suspension forks, and stronger frames. However, they may not be as capable as specialized off-road e-bikes for more challenging terrain.


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Myles Warwood is an Editorial Assistant at Cycling Electric Magazine. He has been riding bikes for as long as he can remember and writing about them for just as long. His passion is to give people active travel options and boost their rides.

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