

# THE MOUNTAIN BIKE

Designed for going off-road, mountain bikes nevertheless remain popular as commuter bikes. They have sturdy frames, flat, knobby tyres, powerful brakes and are very easy to manoeuvre at low speeds. They are cumbersome beasts, however, and come fitted with all sorts of bits and bobs you'll never need on the road. The cheapest models on the market come in this category. You can spend as little as £70 on a new – but seriously suboptimal – machine in supermarkets, as you will shortly see; but for something half decent that could actually cope off-road, you're looking at spending at least £400. If, realistically, you aren't going to do any actual mountain biking, resist a machine with loads of suspension and other whistles and bells. If you want to go off-road, you will need a bike with 'full suspension' on both front and rear, or just a 'hardtail' (no rear suspension). Full suspension bikes are usually more comfortable and easier to control compared with hardtail machines, though they are heavier, require more maintenance and cost quite a bit more.

## PROS

- Easy to ride
- Can be very cheap
- Good for rough terrain
- Cope well with potholes and the like
- Can be used for commuting as well as off-roading on the weekend

## CONS

- Cheap models are rubbish
- Often very heavy
- Thick tyres make for a slow ride
- Not always possible to attach pannier rack, basket, etc.

