

REVIEW: BMW R1200GS



FIRST GLANCE: Now isn't this a beautiful bike? Combine ideas of adventure and motorcycling and the BMW R1200GS is the motorcycle that comes to mind. The R1200GS is BMW Motorrad's best-selling model and has been carrying world travellers across the globe for decades.

CHASSIS AND SUSPENSION: Known for its Paralever and Telelever suspension, the BMW R1200GS is exceptionally proficient on-road. Going off-road on such a large motorcycle is daunting, but the R1200GS Adventure model adds some components for extra dirt-worthiness and greater fuel capacity to take the BMW motorcycle farther. A single-sided swing-arm and shaft drive are low-maintenance as is the air-cooled engine – an important selling point for riders who want to tour the world.

COMFORT: The motorcycle is comfortable all day in the saddle, riding alone or two-up. The seat (rider and pillion) was comfortable enough so you'd spend the whole day there and only stop to refuel or visit the little room. The handle-bar position was perfect and at no stage of my time on this bike did I feel my arms wanted to fall off. My passenger added on how comfortable the bike was and could easily sit there and take a nap.

HANDLING: The handling of the GS was effortless; as for versatility and sensibility; a competent rider aboard a 1200 GS can keep pace with most riders on sportbikes in twisties. It's tall enough to be able to see over most standard cars (a plus in thick traffic) and it's virtually bulletproof. The bike allows fitting of road friendly tyres or a set of knobbles for when you want to spend more time on dirt roads. On that subject, off-road, the GS with the right set of tyres provides you with the assurance of stability and rigidity without setting your heart off on a tangent.

It's an easy bike to toss left and right through bends and what better way to back that up with the fitted ABS and ASC (Anti Slip Control). Both can be turned off should you wish not to use it when on dirt.

COMPARISON:

Power	81kW (110hp) @ 7750rpm
Torque	120Nm @ 6000rpm
Brakes	ABS
Engine	1170cc, Twin
Drive	Shaft
Dry Weight	203kg
Seat Height	850mm
Tank	20 L
Other	ABS, ASC
Price	R147 798
Service	10 000km @ + R2800
Top Speed	More than 220km/h

PERFORMANCE: Highway cruising speeds is easy work for the GS with 4000 rpm generating roughly 210km/h in sixth gear. That engine rpm was about ideal for me, though it revs much higher, I generally shifted between 5-6K at the very latest, usually still in the fours. It's where the motor is happiest blending smoothness and torque, second gear was best for anything off-road under about 60km/h.

A larger throttle manifold and revised air intake contributes to a higher rev ceiling of 8500 rpm and a 5% boost in horsepower and torque. An electronic exhaust flap and new muffler internals gives the GS the Boxer thump, add an after-market can and this bird will sing a different tune.

CONCLUSION: The BMW R1200GS is large and in charge of the adventure touring division. Riders who can afford it will appreciate the comfort and abilities of the BMW R1200GS Adventure. Each time I'm graced with a BMW 1200 GS for a review I am swept up into giddy excitement and immediately start planning a trip somewhere.

BOTTOM LINE: If you've ridden a BMW before and a GS at that, change to a rival will be highly unlikely.

PRICE: R147 798.00 - Incl. 14% VAT



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