

What you should know *before* Riding a Royal Enfield in India!

INTRODUCTION-:

This summary in the form of an FAQ are pearls of wisdom compiled from over 40 years of Andy's personal experience of riding Enfields in India vis a vis riding abroad, coupled with the experience of thousands of IndiaBikes.com customers over the last 25 years. Take a moment to read this.. we assure you that you will find it useful. It is in the form of simple question and answer and is in English.

Who is Andy?: The author of this FAQ, Founder CEO of IndiaBikes.com, Andy has a world record of riding around the world on a 110cc motorcycle covering 19 countries and 4 continents with a pillion passenger in 1995 and has covered 1.2 million kilometers on motorcycle in his 40 year career as a motorcyclist. His world tour bike adorns the National Heritage museum in New Delhi as a National heritage.

AND THE FAQ:

1. *At what speed should I ride the Royal Enfield in India?*
 - a) Throttle should be less than 30% of full at all times to avoid engine overheating.
 - b) Enfield Classic 500 EFI you can have avg speeds of 80kmph
 - c) Enfield Classic 500 carburetor version average speed is 70-80kmph.
 - d) Avoid low speeds in EFI versions and avoid high speeds in Carburetor versions.
 - e) In hilly region EFI is a dream bike as the computer adjusts the air fuel mixtures automatically but in the carburetor versions you need to keep adjusting the air mixture screw below the carburetor.. tightening when u want to reduce petrol as you climb higher and loosening when you climb lower.
 - f) What happens if I forget to do that? You foul your plug, your bike loses power and you have a bad time cleaning and changing spark plugs.. 1 half turn tightening i.e 180 deg for 1000ft ascent is a thumb rule.
2. *Which side of the road should I ride on?*
 - a. LEFT. Generally.. but expect to find people coming from the opposite direction many a time especially if the road has a central divider. They do so to not go around to the next gap to come on the right side.
3. *Should I drive with headlights switched on in the daytime?*
 - a. No, in the BS3 version you will soon have to kick start as the battery will drain. In BS4 versions its always on and alternator is enhanced to handle that load.
 - b. Its' not a legal requirement unlike in other countries.
4. *What should I do in case of breakdown on the way?*

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- a. Use the nearest Royal Enfield authorized service center if you have a EFI model. For carburetor versions any roadside mechanics (there are plenty) can do it.
 - b. In case it's far away, hail a tempo (small truck) lift the bike on that to take you.
 - c. In case of small problems there are roadside mechanics almost everywhere and they know Enfields well .. it being the oldest model motorcycle on the road in India. (without much change for the last 70 years).
 - d. In case you have RSA on your bike call the RSA helpline no provided.
- 5. What should I do in case of puncture?**
- a. There are roadside puncture repair shops everywhere, use one of them. Look for a yellow tube hanging from a tree.. the universal Indian signpost of the ubiquitous puncture shop!
 - b. Please make sure that when they remove the wheel it's fitted back the same way. ie the castle nut should be on the same side that it was. Castle nut - make sure has the cotter pin is put back (in case you miss this the axle nut will come loose!).
 - c. Never let the guy bang/hammer the wheel bearing. That's the end of the bearings.
- 6. Should I use direction indicator for turning?**
- a. Yes definitely.
 - b. Additionally .. hand signaling will help.
 - c. *But first check for traffic in the rear view mirror!*
- 7. Daily checks & good riding habits:**
- a. Check engine oil (oil level glass on the right side cover near the brake lever). Top-up if necessary. Enfields are thirsty... gulping a lot of oil, so check daily or every 500 kms whichever comes earlier. Keep topping up! Roughly 250ml to 400ml for every 1000kms! Very thirsty buggers.
 - b. Check tyre pressure.
 - b.i. 24 to 30 Psi front wheel
 - b.ii. 35 to 38 Psi rear wheel for two with luggage is correct.
 - c. Have a nut bolt tightening / chain tightening / greasing session every 1000 kms.
 - d. Visually inspect tyres for nails stones and cracks every morning.
 - e. Chains are notorious items.. which loosen itself every 1000kms! So tighten 'em and spray lube 'em.
 - f. Dont use side stand if you can avoid it. Definitely center stand for the night halts. When you use side stand you will soon see see engine oil seeping from the gear shaft.
 - g. Clutch: At traffic lights wait in neutral. Wait in clutch pressed state and you are looking at changing clutch plates often.



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- h. Gearing down. Gear down when you are slowing down to bring to neutral before you come to a complete stop. Else you are looking at lots of maneuver to rock the motorcycle to bring her to neutral. The old model had a neutral finder lever to do that but the new ones don't.

8. *Self vs kick start:*

- a. Kick start is the best way to start regardless of the bike having self-start or not.
- b. Never self-start when cold. ie the morning's first start and all cold starts should be kick start.

9. *How often should I rest on the highway?*

- a. You should rest whenever **you** want when riding a Enfield Himalayan (has a oil cooling radiator), A Classic 500 model (air cooled) needs a rest every 100-150 km on highways and more frequently in hilly terrain.
- b. The overheat thumb rule - if you feel the engine heat in your legs - that's the time to give her a rest, regardless of the kilometers covered from your last rest.
- c. Give her rest if you find that the throttle response has dulled or you need to throttle her more than 40% or the engine is knocking or sounding/smelling strange.

10. *Drive carefully and wear protective gear... especially helmets:*

- a. In most states in India it is compulsory to ride a motorcycle with helmet for both rider and pillion. Regardless Indiabikes advocates motorcycling safety and recommends that you ride only with helmets and other protective gear.

11. *Look out for cows, dogs and people!!!*

- a. Look out for stray cows on the road.
- b. Since they are revered as bovine Gods in India no one hurts them thereby over time they have become very bold and ignorant of traffic movement.
- c. Hitting a cow is like hitting a brick wall... you and motorcycle will get hurt. Dogs are more careful creatures and by and large are benign and will scamper off.
- d. However on early morning starts .. street dogs have a habit of barking at you and sometimes take a snap or two at your ankle. Usually opening up your throttle and a well aimed kick at the nose will immediately discourage him and his aspiring buddies. Animal lovers, sorry for this suggestions but being bitten in the ankle by a street dog (common with many a slow Enfield rider) with or without rabies certainly means end of your trip and many painful anti rabies injections!

12. *When in two lane highway (without divider in between):*



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- a. Always give way to oncoming overtaking traffic.. who may be actually occupying your lane! Get off the road in that case if you can or slow down to a halt if you find a ditch besides the road and you can't get off.
 - b. On the highway.. **Might is right** so the bigger vehicle always bullies the smaller ones. Beware of the monsters like Volvo buses.. they have 6 headlights and can overtake most small cars and motorcycles on the road. Their cruise speeds are much in excess of our Enfields' so give way when you see 'em either in your rear view mirror or in front of you. They are notorious as they have a schedule to live up-to and won't mind brushing past you touching your rear view mirrors at 160 kmph!
 - c. When you are overtaking make sure you are clear of oncoming traffic. Remember Enfield's are not fast Jap bikes and they take a long time to overtake!
 - d. When you are overtaking others (Classic 500EFI & Himalayan) dart in and out quickly. Your vehicle has the omph to do it. Carburetor 500's wait your turn be patient.
13. **Fill up:**
- a. as soon as you hit reserve (less than 1.25lts left)
 - b. a little less than the brim to prevent spilling petrol every time you hit a pothole!
 - c. When full don't use side stand.. petrol will drip out of the cap onto your hot engine and you are looking at a potential fire hazard situation.
14. **No highway toll for bikes:Yahoo!!**
- a. So take the extreme left lane for every toll booth on the highway & bridges and pass-by without paying a single penny.
 - b. Exceptions:
 - Kolkata-Koyna expressway
 - Delh-Agra-Lucknow Yamuna expressway.
15. **Not a Jap rubber burner!**
- a. Enfield's should not be revved high - you are looking at costly engine seizures and piston melt-outs! Enfield's are not fast - go easy.
 - b. Enfield's are meant to go slow and steady mile after mile for thousands of miles. without a murmur as long as you rev slowly and take frequent rests to cool her down. Don't keep the clutch pressed in traffic lights.
16. **Petrol/Oil:**
- a. Fill high octane (Super/Premium) when you can. Classic 500EFI needs **clean** and good petrol. Bad/dirty petrol means injector cleaning/replacement & fuel pump failures. No one guarantees these items ..neither Enfield nor us. We can show you how to clean injectors but you need patience and some mechanical knowledge.
 - b. Fill from cities rather than village petrol pumps (dirty & kerosene mix).
 - c. Oil is 15w50 for engine oil top up. Synthetic is far superior.



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- d. For the Classic 500EFI you need 15w/50 about 2.5 liters for full change.
- 17. **Carry these documents:(legal requirement)**
 - a. BIKE- PUC original / RC book copy / Insurance copy.
 - b. RIDER - Valid Driving License & IDP (if you have) original
- 18. **No Expressway use:**
 - a. Bikes (even 500cc ones) are not allowed on some expressways in India.
 - b. Every expressway has an older National Highway too nearby going the same place .. so take the older National highway.
 - b.i. Exceptions:
 - Mumbai - Pune route the NH4 & Expressways merge at Lonavala for a few kilometers.
 - Kolkata Koyna expressway bikes are allowed.
 - Delhi Agra Lucknow Yamuna expressway.
- 19. **Enfield Classic (EFI VS Carburetors):**
 - a. EFI (Classic 500 & Himalayan) rides well, overtakes easily and goes fast. However they need clean high octane petrol. They idle at a higher speeds which means brake shoes wear out as not much of engine breaking available. They are jerky at low speeds and foul plugs easily. Are more thirsty than carbs.
 - b. Carbs ride slower, takes time to reach 80kmph and idle slower. They idle slower you can use engine braking and don't foul plugs easily. Gives 10% better mileage. Carbs cruise at 70kmph EFI at 80kmph and take almost 50% more time to reach there. Carbs give better mileage than same cc EFI. EFI's are a dream on hills no need to adjust air screw like on the carburetor versions.

Hope you found it useful. Best of luck and have a happy safe ride!

Rubber side down!

Andy, The biker, IndiaBikes.Com

