



Cycle's test promise

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facing bar ends, such as one of Ergon's GP range, or perhaps a pair of 'inner bar ends' such as SQ's. As it is, I preferred the Cube's flattened grips to the Trek's simple round ones. The flip side is that the more supportive Trek saddle was very much more to my liking, with the Cube's saddle overly soft. Saddles are, of course, subjective and can be easily switched.

A bike weighing around 15kg even before it's laden with kit and a not-quite-as-slim-as-before rider is never going to fly up hills. Fortunately, both bikes have low enough bottom gears that I was able to stay seated and spin comfortably even on my local double-digit inclines. On flatter terrain they suit a more leisurely pace but carry loads without complaint. Thanks to their long wheelbases, both are very stable even on fast descents, where their stiff frames and hydraulic brakes mean you can hit high speeds secure in the knowledge you can stop quickly and safely.

The Cube, with its 700C wheels and 55mm tyres, offers a regal ride: upright, comfortable and with great visibility. The Trek, with only marginally smaller wheels and slightly narrower tyres, is similar. Both bikes' tyres feature smooth central treads for lower rolling

Other options



GIANT TOUGHROAD SLR2 £1,299

A little dearer but you get an aluminium frame, wide-range gears, hydraulic disc brakes, wide tyres and the capability to fit racks and mudguards. giant-bicycles.com



SURLY BRIDGE CLUB £1,750

Surly's off-road-oriented steel tourer comes with a Shimano Deore 1x drivetrain, Tektro hydro brakes and WTB rims and 27.5x2.4in Trail Boss tyres. surlybikes.com

resistance on tarmac, with grippier shoulders for off-road duties. In typical European style, they both have reflective strips, which I always like to see. The Cube's Schwalbes are more expensive than the Trek's Bontragers and they're also tubeless ready, as are the Cube's rims, which may be a selling point for some. The Trek's tubes have Schrader valves and rims drilled for their larger diameter stems, though you could always convert the rims to Presta valves with grommets if you wanted to. ●

Verdict

The Cube Travel and Trek Dual Sport 2 are two very well-equipped and evenly matched bikes. Both have first-class braking, good wide-range gearing and ample long-distance comfort. I preferred the smaller steps between gears provided by the Cube's old-school triple but other differences – the Trek's firmer saddle, the Cube's comfier grips – are minor. Both bikes would be fine for touring, commuting and leisure riding over the very worst British roads as well as on unsurfaced routes. They're good value already at less than £1,000, but could be obtained for even less through the Cycle to Work Scheme.