MOTO PORCH

Yamaha MT-07 (FZ-07) Buyer's Kit

Years covered: 2015 to present (sold as the FZ-07 in the US until 2017)

A light, punchy parallel twin and one of the best-selling middleweights of the last decade. The engine has a good reputation. The things to watch are budget suspension, wheelie abuse and cheap modifications.

First bike? Light and easy at low speed, but the torque lifts the front wheel easily. Fine for a careful new rider; take a riding course first.

Generations

FZ-07 (2015 to 2017)
US name for the first MT-07. Basic, non-adjustable suspension apart from rear preload.

MT-07 update (2018 to 2020)
Renamed MT-07 in the US. Revised suspension and styling.

MT-07 refresh (2021 to present)
New styling, LED lighting and Euro 5 updates. Later years add a TFT dash.

Known problems by year

Soft budget suspension

Years: 2015 to 2017 most of all | Concern: low

The stock suspension is widely described as soft for heavier or aggressive riders. Not a defect, but many owners consider upgrading it. Yamaha stiffened it for 2018, though reviewers still found the rear soft.

- [ ] Check: Look for oil on the fork seals and rear shock. Expect a stock bike to feel soft and slightly bouncy. Ask for receipts for any upgrades.

Wheelie and stunt use

Years: All years | Concern: low

The torquey engine makes this bike easy to wheelie, so some have been ridden hard. We did not find a specific failure documented from this.

- [ ] Check: Look for scuffs under the tail, weeping fork seals and worn wheel and steering bearings.

Aftermarket exhausts

Years: 2015 to 2024 | Concern: low

Aftermarket exhausts can throw error codes. A slip-on usually means the stock system was cut, which cannot be undone. Ask what was changed and whether the ECU was tuned.

- [ ] Check: Ask what was changed, whether the ECU was tuned, and whether the stock exhaust comes with the bike.

Rust on fasteners, and theft

Years: 2015 to 2024 | Concern: low

A UK buying guide says owners report rust and corrosion on engine nuts and fasteners, and that many of these bikes are stolen. Conditions and theft rates in the US may differ.

- [ ] Check: Look for corrosion on the engine fasteners. Check that one key works the ignition, fuel cap and seat lock, confirm the steering lock works, and compare the VIN to the title.

Safety recalls on record

Recalls are repaired free by a dealer. Ask the seller for proof the work was done, or have a dealer check the VIN.

- [ ] 2018: power train:driveline (NHTSA #18V483000, listed for MT-07) - confirm by VIN
- [ ] 2015: electrical system:12v/24v/48v battery:cables (NHTSA #14V657000, listed for FZ07) - confirm by VIN

MT-07-specific checks

- [ ] Check the underside of the tail for scrape marks.
- [ ] Check the oil pan for dents, which can point to a crash or ground strike, and the fork seals for leaks.
- [ ] Ask what exhaust and tuning changes have been made. Ask for the stock parts.
- [ ] Expect the stock suspension to feel soft. Look for oil on the rear shock.
- [ ] Check the chain and sprockets.

Before you go

- [ ] Ask the seller not to start or warm up the bike before you arrive. A cold start shows problems a warm engine hides.
- [ ] Ask for the VIN by text and run a recall check at nhtsa.gov/recalls before you drive over.
- [ ] Ask for a photo of the title. Confirm it is in the seller's name and is not marked salvage, rebuilt or flood.
- [ ] Bring a flashlight, a rag, a tire pressure gauge, and cash or a payment plan you have already agreed on.
- [ ] If you are a new rider, bring someone who can ride the bike for you on the test ride.

Paperwork

- [ ] VIN on the frame (steering head) matches the VIN on the title.
- [ ] Title is in the seller's name, with no lien listed (or a lien release in hand).
- [ ] Title is not branded salvage, rebuilt, flood or junk.

- [ ] Seller's ID matches the name on the title.
- [ ] Service records, receipts or a logbook, if any.
- [ ] Both keys are present.

Walkaround

- [ ] Tires: check tread depth and the 4-digit DOT date code (week and year). Tires older than about 5 to 6 years should be replaced regardless of tread.
- [ ] Chain and sprockets (if chain drive): hooked or pointed sprocket teeth, kinked or rusty links, or a chain that pulls far off the rear sprocket mean replacement soon.
- [ ] Brakes: pad thickness, rotor grooves or lip, and brake fluid color (clear to light amber is good, dark brown is overdue).
- [ ] Fork tubes: look for oil on the tubes or below the seals, and pitting on the chrome.
- [ ] Drop damage: scuffed bar ends, levers, footpegs, mirrors, engine covers, frame sliders and the tank. Bent levers or a crooked handlebar mean it went down.
- [ ] Frame and subframe: cracks, kinks, fresh paint or welds near the steering head, footpeg mounts and swingarm pivot.
- [ ] Leaks: oil or coolant under the engine, around the cylinder head, the water pump and the drain plug.
- [ ] Fluids: oil level and color in the sight glass or dipstick. Milky oil can mean coolant mixing in.
- [ ] Steering head bearings: with the front wheel off the ground (or a friend leaning the bike back), turn the bars slowly. Notchy or a center detent means worn bearings.
- [ ] Wheel bearings: grab each wheel top and bottom and try to rock it. Any clunk means worn bearings.
- [ ] Electrics: headlight high and low, brake light from both the lever and pedal, turn signals, horn, neutral light, kill switch and side stand switch.
- [ ] Modifications: aftermarket exhaust, intake or wiring. Ask what was changed and whether the fuel system was tuned to match.

Cold start

- [ ] Feel the engine before starting. If it is already warm, ask why.
- [ ] Starter should spin the engine briskly. A slow crank points to a weak battery or charging problem.
- [ ] Watch the exhaust on startup. Blue smoke means burning oil. White smoke that does not clear after warm-up can mean coolant.
- [ ] Listen for knocking, loud ticking or rattles that do not settle as it warms up.
- [ ] With a multimeter: about 12.6V at the battery engine off, and roughly 13.5V to 14.5V with the engine at a fast idle. Outside that range, suspect the charging system.

Test ride

- [ ] Clutch: in a higher gear at low RPM, open the throttle firmly. If RPM rises but speed does not, the clutch slips.
- [ ] Shifting: every gear, up and down. Watch for false neutrals or jumping out of gear.
- [ ] Brakes: firm lever and pedal, straight stops, no pulsing.
- [ ] Handling: no wobble or pull with relaxed hands on a straight road.
- [ ] Throttle: smooth pickup, no stumbling, and the throttle snaps closed on its own.
- [ ] After the ride: look under the bike again for fresh leaks and check that the cooling fan runs when hot (liquid-cooled bikes).

Questions to ask the seller

- [ ] How long have you owned it, and why are you selling?
- [ ] Has it ever been dropped, laid down or in an accident?
- [ ] Do you have service records? When was the last oil change?
- [ ] When were the valve clearances last checked?
- [ ] How old are the tires, chain and battery?
- [ ] What modifications have been made, and do you have the original parts?
- [ ] Have all recalls been done by a dealer?
- [ ] Is the title in your name, and is there a loan on it?
- [ ] Has it been stored outside or through winters without being ridden?

Red flags: walk away if you see these

- The title is not in the seller's name, or the VIN does not match.
- The seller warmed the bike up before you arrived and will not let you see a cold start.
- The seller refuses a test ride with cash in hand or a second rider present.
- Fresh paint, new levers and new mirrors on one side only (a hidden crash).
- Milky oil, steady blue smoke, or a clutch that slips on the test ride.
- A story that changes when you ask the same question twice.

Price worksheet

List 5 to 10 comparable bikes (same model, similar year and miles) before you go.

Listing / source	Year	Miles	Asking $	Notes

Costs this bike will need soon (tires, chain, brakes, service, recall work, damage):

Listing / source	Year	Miles	Asking $	Notes

Negotiation script

- Before you go, find 5 to 10 comparable listings (same model, similar year and miles) and note their asking prices on the worksheet.
- Write down every item from your inspection that will cost money: tires, chain and sprockets, brake pads, overdue service, recall work, damaged parts. Get a rough price for each.
- Open with the facts, not a lowball: "It needs tires and a chain soon, which is about $X. Comparable bikes are listed at $Y. I can do $Z today."
- Stay quiet after your offer. Let the seller answer.
- Decide your walk-away price before you arrive and stick to it. There is always another bike.

Important

This kit helps you ask better questions and spot common problems. It is not a mechanical inspection and cannot tell you whether a specific motorcycle is safe. If you are unsure, pay a qualified mechanic for a pre-purchase inspection or walk away. Recall data comes from NHTSA; confirm open recalls for the exact VIN with a dealer or at nhtsa.gov/recalls.