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1974 Honda CB750 Buyer's Guide

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1974 Honda CB750

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

IronHead single-year guide · Model year 1974 (CB750K4) only

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1974 only — the **CB750K4**, the US- and Japan-market designation for model year 1974. Frame serials begin **CB750-2300001**; engine serials begin **CB750E-2300001**.
- **Engine:** 736 cc air-cooled SOHC inline-four, chain-driven single overhead camshaft, two valves per cylinder; 61 mm × 63 mm bore × stroke; 9.0:1 compression; **67 bhp @ 8,000 rpm**, 44.12 lb-ft (6.1 kg-m) @ 7,000 rpm.
- **Induction:** four 28 mm Keihin piston-valve carburetors, setting mark 7A; main jet #105, idle jet #40, float height 26 mm.
- **Transmission:** 5-speed constant-mesh, left-foot shift; wet multi-plate clutch; chain final drive, 18-tooth front / 48-tooth rear sprockets.
- **Chassis:** tubular steel double-cradle frame; telescopic fork (143 mm travel); dual rear shock absorbers (85 mm travel).
- **Brakes:** single hydraulic front disc (296 mm per secondary listings); internal-expanding rear drum (179 mm per secondary listings).
- **Wheels/tires:** 19-inch front, 18-inch rear; 3.25-19 front, 4.00-18 rear; 28 psi front and rear.
- **1974 colors (all three confirmed):** Flake Sunrise Orange, Freedom Green Metallic, Boss Maroon Metallic — white, gold, and black tank striping, the white stripe wider than the K3's.
- **Fuel and oil:** 17 L (4.5 US gal) tank with 5 L (1.3 US gal) reserve; forced-pressure dry-sump lubrication, 3.5 L total oil capacity.
- **Dimensions:** 1,455 mm (57.3 in) wheelbase; 810 mm (31.9 in) seat height; 479 lb (218 kg) listed weight.
- **Production:** K4 production ran June 1973–May 1974; marque references estimate roughly 60,000 built.
- **Key 1974-only tells:** three vertical braces in the cylinder-head side fins; gear-position indicator in the crankcase cover (from engine CB750E-2348093); speedometer marked in 20 mph increments; 8,000 rpm tachometer redline.

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> ***Year chosen: 1974.*** *The CB750K4 is the last of the early K-models' refinements — the year Honda gave its landmark four a gear-position indicator in the crankcase cover, a new cylinder-head casting with three vertical braces in the side fins, and wider white tank striping, all in three new-for-1974 colors. Mechanically it carries the proven 736 cc SOHC package at the height of its development. Because the K4 was sold in the US and Japan while the K2 continued elsewhere, "1974" on a registration document means nothing until the serial numbers are read.*

1. Manufacturer history: Honda

Honda Motor Co. was founded in **1948** by **Soichiro Honda**, a mechanic who had developed his own piston-ring design in 1938 and, after Toyota declined it, started his own company a decade later. The company built its name on small motorcycles and step-throughs before aiming, in the late 1960s, squarely at the big-bike establishment.

The CB750 was launched in **1969** — a mass-production, transverse-mounted, air-cooled 736 cc inline-four with an electric starter, a standard hydraulic front disc brake, and a five-speed gearbox, sold at a price that undercut the British twins it outperformed. The earliest production engines, roughly the first 7,414, used sand-cast crankcases; collectors call these "sandcast" bikes and value them accordingly. The CB750 won the 1970 Daytona 200 and is routinely described as the original superbike — the machine around which the entire "superbike" category formed.

By 1974 Honda was the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer, and the CB750 was its flagship: a byword for quality, value, and performance that had permanently shifted the center of motorcycling from Britain to Japan.

For the restorer, this history sets one expectation: the CB750 is a mass-production machine with superb parts support and deep documentation. The knowledge base — the SOHC/4 Owners Club and its forums, the Honda shop manuals, David Silver Spares and CMSNL fitment data, and marque specialists — has spent decades cataloguing exactly which part fits which serial number. "Correct for 1974" is an answerable question on a CB750, which is precisely why buyers pay for the answer.

2. Model history: the CB750 SOHC

Honda's K-suffix denotes successive versions of the model — K0 the first, then K1, K2, and so on, normally changing on an annual basis. The SOHC K-series ran from 1969 through 1978.

Year	Model	Notable
1969–70	**K0**	Launch. The earliest ~7,414 engines carry sand-cast cases ("sandcasts"). The original superbike.
1970–71	**K1**	Second-year K model.
1972	**K2**	Quieter mufflers, revised rear shocks; remained the standard CB750 in Europe through the K3/K4 years.
1973	**K3**	Improved forks, five-way rear shocks, new tank graphics, restricted air intake, front-disc water guard, running lights in the front indicators.
1974	**K4 — this guide**	**Three-brace cylinder-head fins; gear-position indicator (from engine 2348093); wider white tank stripe; 20 mph speedometer; three new colors.**

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Year	Model	Notable
1975	**K5**	Larger indicators, rubber-tipped flip-up sidestand, dark-green instrument faces, 10 mph speedometer.
1976	**K6**	Lighter green instrument faces; new color range led by Candy Antares Red.
1977	**K7**	Revised engine specification shared with the new F1, including accelerator-pump carburetors.
1978	**K8**	Last of the SOHC K fours; the least sought-after K, but the last classic four-pipe.

Parallel lines: the **CB750F Super Sport** (1975–1978) with 4-into-1 exhaust, rear disc brake, and racy styling, and the **CB750A Hondamatic** (1976–1978), a two-speed automatic. A new dual-overhead-cam, 16-valve 749 cc engine replaced the SOHC for 1979, ending the ten-year run of the single-cam fours. Neither the F, the A, nor the DOHC models are covered by this guide.

Production context: the SOHC/4 Owners Club estimates roughly **60,000** K4 machines were built (June 1973–May 1974). Across the whole 1969–1978 run, published estimates range from over 430,000 to about 553,400 machines — the practical consequence is that 1974-correct parts are findable, but 1974-*only* details are the ones that get substituted. Check every trim and running-change part against the engine number.

3. What is unique about the 1974 CB750

3.1 The K4's visible tells

The SOHC/4 Owners Club's model guide lists the K4's distinguishing marks against the K3. Learn them — they are the fastest way to judge a bike at a glance:

- **Three vertical braces in the cylinder-head side fins.** The K4's head casting carries only three vertical braces in its side fins. Count them.
- **Wider white tank stripe.** The tank striping is white, gold, and black, and the white portion is wider than on the 1973 K3.
- **Speedometer in 20 mph increments.** The K4's speedometer reads 20, 40, 60, 80, and so on. The 1975 K5 went to 10 mph increments with dark-green instrument faces — a K4 wearing 10 mph dials is wearing K5 clocks.
- **Gear-position indicator.** The K4 added a gear-position indicator on the gearbox — a small indicator in the left crankcase (sprocket) cover. It was a running change, not a from-day-one fitting (see 3.2).
- **Three new colors.** Flake Sunrise Orange returned from the K3 palette, joined by Freedom Green Metallic and Boss Maroon Metallic (see 3.4).

3.2 Running changes within the K4 year

The K4 was not a static specification. The SOHC/4 Owners Club's technical page ties three running changes to engine numbers — and they matter, because an "incorrect" early or late feature may be perfectly correct for that engine's build date:

- **From engine CB750E-2304501:** smaller cam-chain tunnel. This change came only about 500 engines into production, so effectively the whole K4 run carries it.
- **From engine CB750E-2348093:** crankcase-cover gear indicator. K4s built before this engine number do not have the indicator; K4s from it onward do. Do not "correct" an early K4 by adding one, and do not dismiss a late K4's indicator as an add-on.
- **From engine CB750E-2352923:** new cylinder block.

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The rule: read the engine number first, then judge the details. Two K4s with engine numbers 30,000 apart can legitimately differ.

3.3 K4 against the K3

The K4 carries the K3's mechanical package forward — the 736 cc engine, the five-speed gearbox, the 18/48 final drive, the fork and five-way-shock chassis, the front disc and rear drum. What changed for 1974 is detail, not architecture:

- New cylinder-head casting (three vertical braces) and, later in the run, a new cylinder block.
- The gear-position indicator, added at engine 2348093.
- New color range and wider white tank striping.
- The 20 mph speedometer continued; the dark-green faces and 10 mph markings arrived with the K5.

A K3 and a K4 parked side by side look like the same motorcycle to a casual observer. The serial numbers, the head-fin braces, and the instrument markings are what separate them — which is exactly why K3 parts and K4 parts get mixed in restorations. When ordering, quote the full frame and engine numbers and insist on K4 fitment.

3.4 Colors and trim: the three 1974 finishes

The 1974 K4 came in three factory colors, confirmed across the SOHC/4 Owners Club guide, period references, and paint research:

- **Flake Sunrise Orange** — the metalflake orange carried over from the K3 palette.
- **Freedom Green Metallic**
- **Boss Maroon Metallic**

1974 trim details: the **tank stripes are white, gold, and black**, with the white stripe wider than the K3's; the **side covers are smaller than the K0's** with no slots on the leading edge; the **upper forks are chromed**; the **headlight shell is black**; the **taillight and side reflectors are larger than the K1's**; the **throttle uses two cables — pull-open and pull-close**; the **exhaust is a four-into-four** with heat shields; the **speedometer reads in 20 mph increments**; the **tachometer redline is 8,000 rpm**.

No factory paint-code numbers for the 1974 colors were found in the references consulted for this guide. A parts-supplier cross-reference lists Flake Sunrise Orange as Honda code R-2 C-F, but that is a vendor listing, not factory literature — treat it as unconfirmed (see the corrections file). Judge originality by the color name, the stripe layout, and — where paint survives under badges or in the tank tunnel — the original finish itself.

1974 buyer cautions (design realities, not defects):

- **The K4 was sold in the US and Japan; the K2 continued elsewhere.** In Europe the K2 remained the common CB750 through this period. A "1974" CB750 must be identified by its frame serial (CB750-23nnnnn), not by its registration year or its paint.
- **Honda numbers don't "match" like British numbers.** Frame (CB750-23nnnnn) and engine (CB750E-23nnnnn) are separate sequences with different prefixes and were never identical. Closeness of the two numbers is reassuring, but the test is whether both fall in the K4 allocation — including the widely spaced Japanese domestic allocation (see 4.1).
- **Model year and build date are different things.** K4 production ran June 1973–May 1974, so a 1974-model bike with a late-1973 build tag (e.g. 10/73 or 1/74 on the steering-neck certification label) is normal, not suspicious.
- **Early and late K4s differ.** The gear indicator, the cylinder block, and the cam-chain tunnel all changed by engine number during the year. Verify features against the engine number (Section 3.2) before calling a detail wrong.

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4. Technical restoration data — 1974 Honda CB750

4.1 Frame and engine numbers (1974)

Item	Numbering
Frame, US/general production	**CB750-2300001** onward
Engine, US/general production	**CB750E-2300001** onward
Frame, Japanese domestic K4	**CB750-2400002** onward
Engine, Japanese domestic K4	**CB750E-2341915** onward
Next US model (K5) frame	CB750-2500001 onward
Next US model (K5) engine	CB750E-2372115 onward

- The frame number is stamped on the **left side of the steering-head pipe**. The engine number is stamped on the **top-left side of the crankcase**. (Some generic serial-location references place Honda numbers on the right; the model-specific SOHC/4 Owners Club guide gives left for both — see the corrections file.)
- The frame and engine numbers **never match exactly**. They are separate sequences with different prefixes; what matters is that both fall in the K4 allocation. One documented original K4 carries frame CB750-2321660 with engine CB750E-2325320 — close, not identical.
- **Japanese domestic K4s are the exception that proves the rule.** Their serials are widely spaced — frames from CB750-2400002, engines from CB750E-2341915. Do not reject a genuine JDM bike for numbers that look "mismatched" by US-market expectations.
- The steering-neck certification tag carries the build month and year (e.g. 1/74). A 1974-model K4 may have been built in 1973 — K4 production ran June 1973–May 1974.

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4.2 Engine specifications

Item	Specification
Engine type	Air-cooled 4-stroke transverse inline-four
Displacement	736 cc
Bore × stroke	61 mm × 63 mm
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Valve train	Single chain-driven overhead camshaft, 2 valves per cylinder
Maximum power	67 bhp @ 8,000 rpm
Maximum torque	44.12 lb-ft (6.1 kg-m) @ 7,000 rpm (≈ 60 Nm per secondary conversions)
Lubrication	Forced-pressure dry sump
Carburetors	4 × 28 mm Keihin piston-valve (slide)
Clutch	Wet, multi-plate
Transmission	5-speed constant mesh, left-foot shift
Primary reduction	1.708:1
Secondary reduction	1.167:1
Final reduction	2.667:1 (18T front / 48T rear sprockets)
Final drive	Chain
Starting	Electric starter and kickstarter

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