FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1978 Honda CB750 Buyer's Guide

Read these pages exactly as they appear in the full guide.
Nothing here is rewritten or summarised — it is the product itself,
so you can judge the depth before you spend a dollar.

The full guide: https://ironheadguides.com/product/IH-HONDA-CB750-1978

IronHead — instant PDF download after checkout.

IRONHEAD

1978 Honda CB750

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

IronHead single-year guide · Model year 1978 only

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1978 only — the final year of the SOHC CB750 (1969–1978). K and F specifications are kept strictly separate throughout.
- **1978 models:** CB750K8 (production code 405) and CB750F3 Super Sport (production code 410). The Hondamatic A3 is noted in the history table but is outside this guide's scope.
- **Engine (both):** 736 cc air-cooled SOHC transverse inline four, two valves per cylinder; 61 mm × 63 mm bore × stroke; dry-sump lubrication; 5-speed gearbox; chain final drive.
- **K8:** 67 hp @ 8,000 rpm; 60 Nm (44 lb-ft) @ 7,500 rpm; 9.2:1 compression; 4 × 28 mm Keihin carburetors with accelerator pump; electric and kick starting.
- **F3:** 67 hp (Hagerty's 1978 F listings); F2/F3-spec engine — 34/31 mm valves, revised head and pistons, 9.0:1 compression, stronger cam chain, 9,500 rpm redline; black-painted engine.
- **K8 chassis:** tubular-steel duplex cradle frame; telescopic forks; preload-adjustable dual rear shocks; 19-in. front / 17-in. rear wire-spoked wheels — the K8 did not get Comstar wheels.
- **K8 brakes:** single 296 mm front disc; 179 mm rear drum. 4-into-4 exhaust with seamless mufflers.
- **F3 chassis:** Comstar wheels; dual front discs; single rear disc; 4-into-1 exhaust; sport seat, bodywork, and blacked-out engine.
- **Final drive:** 630 O-ring chain — K8: 15T front / 41T rear (88 links); F3: 14T front / 43T rear. 530 conversions are common and are not stock.
- **Serials:** K8 — frame CB750-2800001, engine CB750E-3000001. F3 — frame CB750F-2200001, engine CB750FE-3100001. Frame and engine were separate sequences; do not expect them to match.
- **1978 colors:** K8 — Candy Alpha Red, Excel Black; F3 — Candy Presto Red. Honda paint codes for 1978 were not verified and no code chart is printed.
- **Capacities and dimensions (K8):** 19 L (5.0 US gal) fuel; 3.5 L oil; 231 kg (508 lb) dry; 1,495 mm (58.9 in.) wheelbase.
- **Production:** the SOHC generation exceeded 430,000 motorcycles and ended in 1978; no audited 1978-only split exists. Never derive a production total from serial-number starts.

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet

IronHead single-year guide · Model year 1978 only · Covers the final year of the SOHC CB750 — the CB750K8 (production code 405) as the core model, with the CB750F3 Super Sport (production code 410) treated in clearly labeled subsections wherever its specifications differ. The Hondamatic CB750A3 is noted for completeness but is outside this guide's scope. Other model years appear only in the model-history table and where differences from 1978 are explicitly noted

> ***Year chosen: 1978.*** *The last year of the single-overhead-camshaft CB750 — the motorcycle that created the modern superbike in 1969 and, by Honda's own accounting, passed 430,000 machines before the SOHC line ended. The 1978 K8 is the final evolution of the touring K line; the 1978 F3 is the final evolution of the Super Sport. They are two different motorcycles sharing one engine architecture, and this guide never blends them.*

1. Manufacturer history: Honda

Honda was founded by Soichiro Honda, an engineer-racer who built his company on racing first and road bikes second. Honda's 1960s Grand Prix multi-cylinder racers taught the company lessons it applied directly to its road machines — including, as one marque history puts it, the SOHC CB750F line, which carried "the lesson learned from Honda's multi-cylinder racers of the 1960s, but with only a single camshaft and two-valve heads rather than the racer's DOHC and four valves."

The CB750, launched for 1969, was the game changer: the first production motorcycle to combine a transverse four-cylinder engine, a front disc brake, and electric starting at a price ordinary riders could afford. It effectively created the superbike template — four-cylinder engine, high specification, mass production — and, in the words of one history, "cemented the Japanese manufacturers as the new force in motorcycling." By the mid-1970s the CB750 had been overshadowed in the performance press by Kawasaki's Z1, and Honda answered by splitting the line: the K remained the touring four while the new F Super Sport, introduced for 1975, chased the performance buyer. That split defines the 1978 model year this guide covers.

For the restorer, Honda's scale is the good news: more than 430,000 SOHC CB750s were built, the parts interchange is documented by decades of owner and specialist literature, and factory shop-manual material for the 1978 K and F supplements survives. The bad news is the same scale: ten model years of running changes, three model lines (K, F, and the Hondamatic A), and a thriving replica and café-racer trade mean a claimed "original 1978" must be verified number by number, part by part. This guide gives you the numbers.

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet

2. Model history: the SOHC CB750 (1969–1978)

Year	K line	F line	Notable
1969	K0	—	Launch. The original superbike. First ~7,414 engines die-cast ("sandcast").
1970	K1	—	Continued development of the K0 formula.
1971	K2	—	Running refinements.
1972	K3	—	Running refinements.
1973	K4	—	Frame and engine numbers no longer match — separate sequences from here on.
1974	K5	—	—
1975	K5 (continued)	**F** (Super Sport launch)	F introduced alongside the K5: new gas tank, rear disc brake, 4-into-1 exhaust, hotter engine tune.
1976	K6	F1	A1 Hondamatic introduced (2-speed automatic) — outside this guide's scope.
1977	K7	F2	Second-generation F: bigger valves (34/31 mm), revised head, 9.0:1 compression, stronger cam chain, Comstar wheels, dual front discs. K7: touring redirection — 4-into-4 exhaust, accelerator-pump carbs, longer output shaft, 17-in. rear wheel. A2 Hondamatic.

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet

Year	K line	F line	Notable
1978	**K8 — this guide**	**F3 — this guide**	**Final year of the SOHC line. New serial allocations; Candy Alpha Red / Excel Black (K8); Candy Presto Red (F3).** A3 Hondamatic.

The following generation (1979-on) moved to double overhead camshafts and is an entirely different machine — outside this guide's scope. Nothing in this guide's specifications should be applied to a 1979 or later CB750.

3. What is unique about the 1978 CB750

3.1 The last of the line — K8 and F3 designations

1978 is the only year the designations **CB750K8** and **CB750F3** were used, and the designations are the model year: Honda's production codes are **405** (K8) and **410** (F3), with fresh serial allocations — K8 frames from CB750-2800001 and engines from CB750E-3000001; F3 frames from CB750F-2200001 and engines from CB750FE-3100001. If the serials fall in those blocks and the hardware matches, the bike is a 1978. There is no comprehensive factory "changes for 1978" list in the literature consulted; the K7/K8 and F2/F3 pairs are mechanically and structurally very close, so the model-year identity rests on the designation, the serial allocation, and colors and graphics — not on a long list of mechanical differences. Do not let a seller invent one.

The historical weight of the year is real, though. The SOHC generation ended in 1978 with total production past 430,000, and marque histories single out the K7/K8 as the lowest-production models of the range and the easiest K models to distinguish from the K0–K6 line. A correct 1978 is the bookend of the most important Japanese motorcycle ever built.

3.2 K8 versus F3 — two different 1978 motorcycles

Never treat "a 1978 CB750" as one specification. The K8 is the touring four; the F3 is the Super Sport, and by 1978 they share little beyond the basic engine architecture:

- **Engine tune:** the K8 runs the milder K specification (67 hp @ 8,000 rpm, 9.2:1 compression). The F3 runs the F2/F3 specification — 34 mm inlet / 31 mm exhaust valves (up from 32/28), revised combustion chamber and porting, 9.0:1 compression, new cam profiles, stiffer valve springs, 9,500 rpm redline, stronger cam chain, extra crankcase and oil-pan finning. The F3's engine is painted black.
- **Wheels:** the F3 wears Honda's Comstar wheels (steel struts bolted to the hub, riveted to extruded-aluminum rims — introduced on the 1977 F2). The K8 does **not** have Comstars: period testing notes the K7/K8 line kept wire-spoked wheels, a 19-in. front and a 17-in. rear.
- **Brakes:** the F3 has dual front discs and a single rear disc. The K8 has a single 296 mm front disc and a 179 mm rear drum.
- **Exhaust:** 4-into-4 with seamless mufflers on the K8; 4-into-1 with a revised collector on the F3.
- **Gearing:** the F3 is geared considerably lower than the K8 (14T/43T vs 15T/41T final drive), though slightly higher than earlier F models.
- **Bodywork and riding position:** sport seat and cowl-type bodywork on the F3; the K8 got a two-stage touring seat, a handlebar set closer to the rider, and five gallons of fuel range.

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet

A "1978 CB750" with F3 bodywork on K8 running gear — or vice versa — is a parts marriage, not a factory specification. Check the frame and engine serial prefixes (CB750- vs CB750F-) before anything else.

3.3 1978 running details and year differences

Against 1977, the documented 1978 differences are the serial allocations above, the F3 designation in place of F2, and colors: Candy Alpha Red is confirmed on the 1978 CB750K in Honda paint references, and Candy Presto Red is confirmed on 1978 F3 Super Sports in multiple auction records. The K8's published colors are Candy Alpha Red and Excel Black.

1978 buyer cautions (design quirks and period realities, not defects):

- **K and F parts do not freely interchange.** The F2/F3 and K7/K8 share the longer output shaft and its sprockets and chain — earlier K parts do not swap directly. Verify sprocket tooth counts and chain pitch against Section 4.4 before paying a "correct" premium.
- **"Matching numbers" is not a 1978 concept.** Honda ran separate frame and engine sequences; on a K8 they start 200,000 numbers apart. A seller claiming "matching numbers" on a 1978 either misunderstands the bike or is selling you something else.
- **Comstar wheels on a K8 are wrong; spoked wheels on an F3 are wrong.** Wheel type is one of the fastest visual tells between the two 1978 lines.
- **The F3's exhaust valve guides are a known weak point.** Specialist discussion records premature exhaust-guide wear on 1977–78 F heads — one F3 owner reported shot guides at 13,000 miles, and the pattern is described as common under 30,000 miles. Budget a top-end inspection, not just a compression test.
- **Advertised F3 power figures vary by source.** Hagerty's 1978 F listings consistently state 67 hp; period press recorded the F2's dyno peak at 8,500 rpm; one spec aggregator lists 73 hp @ 9,000 rpm for its 1978 F2 page. Treat any single figure as a market-listing figure, not a certified output.
- **530 chain conversions are everywhere.** The stock 1978 final drive is a 630 O-ring chain. A 530 conversion is a common, practical modification — but it is not factory-correct, and it should be disclosed and priced as a modification.

4. Technical restoration data — 1978 Honda CB750

4.1 Frame and engine numbers (1978)

- **K8:** frame serial begins **CB750-2800001**; engine serial begins **CB750E-3000001**. Honda production code **405**.
- **F3:** frame serial begins **CB750F-2200001**; engine serial begins **CB750FE-3100001**. Honda production code **410**. (Some references render the F engine prefix without the trailing F in F-model context; check the actual stamping against the model allocation rather than trusting a transcription.)
- **1977 comparison (for context only):** K7 — frame CB750-2700009, engine CB750E-2700001. F2 — frame CB750F-2100011, engine CB750FE-2600004.
- **Stamping locations (Honda shop-manual identification page):** the frame serial is stamped on the **right side of the steering-head pipe**; the engine serial is stamped on the **elevated part of the right rear section of the engine**.
- **Do not expect frame and engine numbers to match.** Honda used separate sequences — by 1978 the K8's frame and engine starts are 200,000 apart, and the F3's 900,000 apart. Non-matching is factory practice, not an engine swap.

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet

- **No 17-character VIN in 1978.** The 1978 bikes carry Honda-era frame/engine serials. The RC01-era format arrives with the 1979 DOHC generation, and the standardized 17-character JH2… format first appears in the consulted allocations for 1981. Do not describe a 1978 serial as a modern VIN.
- **Steering-head certification label:** the US-market bikes carry a black certification label on the steering head; the corner of the label shows the month and year of manufacture (e.g. "1/78") — a checkable build-date tell independent of the model-year designation.
- **Carburetor identification:** the carburetor ID number is stamped on the left side of the carburetor body — worth recording when verifying that the carb set belongs to the bike.

4.2 Engine specifications (1978)

Shared architecture (both K8 and F3): 736 cc air-cooled transverse inline four; SOHC, two valves per cylinder; 61 mm × 63 mm bore × stroke; dry-sump lubrication; 5-speed constant-mesh transmission; chain final drive; wet multi-plate clutch.

CB750K8 engine

Item	Specification
Engine type	Four-stroke, transverse four-cylinder, SOHC, 2 valves per cylinder
Capacity	736 cc
Bore × stroke	61 mm × 63 mm
Compression ratio	9.2:1
Valves	32 mm inlet / 28 mm exhaust (per F2-vs-earlier comparison notes)
Induction	4 × 28 mm Keihin carburetors, accelerator-pump type
Ignition	Battery and coil, breaker points
Starting	Electric and kick
Max power	67 hp @ 8,000 rpm (period dyno: 57.13 rear-wheel hp)
Max torque	60 Nm (44 lb-ft) @ 7,500 rpm
Lubrication	Dry sump; oil capacity 3.5 L
Clutch	Wet multi-plate
Overall gear ratios	1st 13.99 / 2nd 9.54 / 3rd 7.45 / 4th 6.14 / 5th 5.26:1

CB750F3 engine (F2/F3 specification)

Item	Specification
Engine type	Four-stroke, transverse four-cylinder, SOHC, 2 valves per cylinder
Capacity	736 cc
Bore × stroke	61 mm × 63 mm

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet