

Measuring Bicycle Rim Sizes

What size tire do you need to buy for your bicycle? There are so many different tire sizes and different systems for marking tire sizes that have been used over the years that this is often a serious problem, especially for older bicycles.

I have a [major article on this Website explaining the different Tire Sizing Systems](#). Whenever possible, you should try to match your new tire to the old tire, using the [ISO/E.T.R.T.O. size number](#), if it is marked on the tire or rim.

If the [ISO/E.T.R.T.O. size number](#) matches, it means the tire will fit on the rim. Tires are also designated for different widths, but you can generally interchange tires of different widths as long as you match the [ISO/E.T.R.T.O. size number](#).

But what do you do if you don't have the original tire, or if the markings are not legible? All is not lost! If you have a tape measure, you can measure the rim to determine the [ISO/E.T.R.T.O. Bead Seat Diameter](#). You can measure either the:

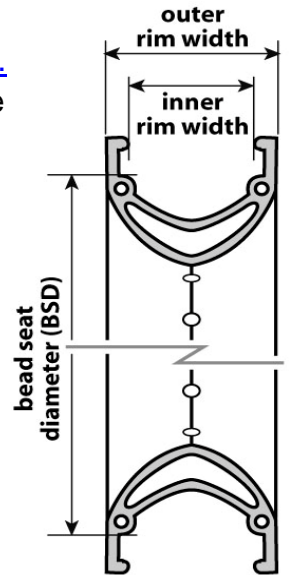


illustration: C.J.Patten

- **Diameter**

The rim's diameter will generally be 6-8 mm larger than the Bead Seat Diameter, depending on how high the rim flanges stick up above the bottom of the rim channel.

If you are working with an empty rim, this is the easiest way to measure, but if you have a built up wheel, the axle will get in the way of the tape measure, making it difficult to get an accurate measurement.

- **Circumference**

For a built-up wheel, it is easier to measure the rim's circumference by wrapping your tape measure all the way around the rim.

Depending on the design of the rim and the width of your tape measure, you may or may not be able to measure the actual bead seat part of the rim, but you should be able to get pretty close, and you can fudge a bit to allow for the way the tape fits into your particular rim.

Below is a table of common (and uncommon) rim sizes with the corresponding bead seat circumference dimensions:

Bead Seat Circumference (Rim measurement)		Traditional Designation	ISO Bead Seat Diameter	Applications/Notes
1995 mm	78.5 inches	28 x 1 1/2, 700 B	635 mm	English, Dutch, Chinese, Indian Rod-brake roadsters (Also marked F10, F25, 700 B)
1979 mm	77.9 inches	27 x anything	630 mm	Older road bikes , went out of fashion in the early 1980s
1954 mm	76.9 inches	700 C, 28 x 1 5/8, 29 inch (28 x 1 1/2 F.13 Canada)	622 mm	Most newer adult bikes for road use use this size, including most road bikes and hybrids
1881 mm	74.1 inches	26 x 1.25, x 1.375	599 mm	Very Rare U.S. size, 1940s and older. Not available.
1875 mm	73.8 inches	26 x 1 1/4 EA.1, 26 x 1 3/8 (S-6)	597 mm	Schwinn " lightweights ", Older English " club " bikes
1853 mm	73 inches	26 x 1 3/8 (E.A.3), 650 A	590 mm	Most 3-speeds , department-store or juvenile 10 speeds
1844 mm	72.6 inches	700 D	587 mm	Oddball size formerly used on some GT models. Not available. 590 mm or 584 mm tires may work.
1834 mm	72.2 inches	650B, 26 x 1 1/2	584 mm	French utility bikes, tandems, and loaded-touring bikes; some older Raleigh and Schwinn mountain bikes. This size is currently undergoing something of a renaissance
1793 mm	70.6 inches	26 x 1, 650 C	571 mm	Triathlon, time trial, high performance road bikes for smaller riders
		26 x 1 3/4		Schwinn cruisers
1756 mm	69.1 inches	26 x 1.00- x 2.125	559 mm	Most Mountain bikes , cruisers
1718 mm	67.7 inches	24 x 1 1/4, 24 x 1 3/8 (S-5)	547 mm	Rare British or Schwinn Juvenile

1696 mm	66.8 inches	24 x 1 1/8, 24 x 1 3/8 (E.5), 600 A	540 mm	British Juvenile, most wheelchairs French 600A is actually 541 mm, close enough
1633 mm	64.3 inches	24 x 1, 24 x 1 1/8	520 mm	High performance wheels for smaller riders; Terry front
1593 mm	62.7 inches	24 x 1.5- x 2.125	507 mm	Juvenile mountain bikes, BMX Cruisers
1539 mm	60.6 inches	550 A, 22 x 1 3/8	490 mm	European Juvenile, folding
1436 mm	56.5 inches	22 x 1.75; x 2.125	457 mm	Rare juvenile size...Schwinn
1417 mm	55.8 inches	20 x 1 1/8; x 1 1/4; x 1 3/8	451 mm	Juvenile lightweights , BMX for light riders, some recumbents
1382 mm	54.4 inches	500 A	440 mm	European Juvenile, folding
1316 mm	51.8 inches	20 x 1 3/4	419 mm	Rare Schwinn juvenile
1275 mm	50.2 inches	20 x 1.5- x 2.125	406 mm	Most BMX , juvenile, folders, trailers, some recumbents
1225 mm	48.2 inches	450 A	390 mm	European Juvenile
1159 mm	45.6 inches	17 x 1 1/4	369 mm	Alex Moulton
1115 mm	43.9 inches	18 x 1.5- x 2.125	355 mm	Birdy folding bikes
1096 mm	43.2 inches	16 x 1 3/8	349 mm	Older Moulton, Brompton & other folders, Recumbent front, Greenspeed trikes, juvenile
1068 mm	42.1 inches	400 A	340 mm	European Juvenile
1059 mm	41.7 inches	16 x 1 3/8	337 mm	Very Rare Mystery tire
1052 mm	41.4 inches	16 x 1 3/8	335 mm	Very rare Polish juvenile

996 mm	39.2 inches	16 x 1 3/4	317 mm	Rare Schwinn Juvenile
958 mm	37.7 inches	16 x 1.75- x 2.125	305 mm	Juvenile, folders, trailers, some recumbents
638 mm	25.1 inches	12 1/2 X anything.	203 mm	Juvenile, scooters.
478 mm	18.8 inches	10 x 2	152 mm	Wheelchair casters
431 mm	16.9 inches	8 x 1 1/4	137 mm	Wheelchair casters