



A 40–26 chainset, which is available from Prowheel, would give a more practical range and necessitate fewer front shifts. While there are arguments – simplicity and cost – for a single chainring for urban use, a wide-range double makes the Subway 1 more versatile. Longer, hillier rides, with or without luggage, are more manageable.

Wide street tyres are a defining feature of urban MTBs. The Subway’s measure 52mm. With the lower pressures this airspace allows, bump and vibration absorption is better. There’s also more grip on gravel.

The wheels have a sensible number of spokes and arrived true. Given that this is a bike that will likely be parked around town, Allen-bolted wheel skewers would be a security upgrade over quick-releases.

Single-piston cable disc brakes are par for the course. The issue with them for beginners, compared to the hydraulics fitted to the Subway 2 (£390), is not so much that they lack power but that they need adjusting for pad wear to maintain the performance they do have.

**Ride**

The Subway 1 has the stable handling its oldish-school MTB origins dictate. Wide tyres and relatively high-trail steering cope well with unseen

**Clockwise from above:** An 11–34 cassette beats 11–28. Cable discs work OK if maintained. Flared grips aid comfort

potholes and ironwork, and make steep descents less nerve jangling.

The Kenda Komfort tyres roll OK for cheap rubber. If you want tougher ones to more or less eliminate the risk of punctures, Continental Contact Plus City tyres are available in a more suitable width (55–584) than Schwalbe’s Marathon Plus (40–584).

The riding position demands some forward lean, which will be second nature to experienced cyclists but may put too much weight on the hands for beginners. A cheap fix (ideally by Halfords) would be a handlebar with more rise or a more steeply angled stem. The contact points are all right, although anyone planning longer rides would benefit from the alternative grip provided by a pair of bar ends.

**Verdict**

Other than its lack of equipment, there’s little to dislike about the Subway 1. It’s a simple, sturdy hybrid with wide tyres. You could sensibly use it for a wide variety of riding – not just for urban transportation but also non-technical tracks, countryside exploring, even bikepacking or light touring. That versatility makes it one of the better beginner’s bikes at this price.

Speaking of which: don’t forget Cycling UK members get 7% off bikes at Halfords (cyclinguk.org/halfords). At £320.85, that’s a £25 saving you can put towards those all-important mudguards.

**Tech spec**

**Carrera Subway 1**

- Price:** £345.
- Sizes:** S, M (tested), L, XL
- Weight:** 14.7kg (as pictured, including pedals).
- Frame & fork:** Aluminium alloy with 135mm QR dropouts, 68mm threaded BB and fittings for two bottles, rear rack and mudguard. Hi-ten steel fork with 1 1/8in steerer, 100mm QR dropouts and fittings for mudguard and rack.
- Wheels:** 48–584 Kenda Komfort tyres, 584x18mm double-wall alloy rims, 32x3 spokes, unbranded QR hubs.
- Transmission:** Wellgo alloy pedals, 170mm Prowheel chainset with 46–30 chainrings, sealed-bearing square-taper bottom bracket, KMC Z Narrow chain, Shimano HG-31 11–34 8-speed freewheel. Shimano ST-EF500 shifters, Shimano Tourney FD-FY710 front derailleur, Shimano Tourney RD-TX800 rear derailleur. 16 ratios, 24–114in.
- Braking:** Shimano ST-EF500 levers, Tektro M280 cable disc callipers, 160mm rotors.
- Steering & seating:** Carrera comfort grips, 640x25.4mm alloy handlebar (10mm rise), 60mm x 7° alloy stem, 1 1/8in semi-integrated headset. 154mm-wide memory foam saddle, 350x31.6mm alloy seatpost, Allen-bolt seat clamp.
- Equipment:** none.

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Dimensions in millimetres and degrees

