

Cassettes: explained

A cassette is the term for the block of sprockets attached to the rear wheel. Standard cassettes for road bikes will generally have a high gear of 12 or 13 teeth (picture 1, a 12-25). Most sprockets will have the number of teeth written onto them which will help you work out what size they are – see insets below. It is possible to purchase specialist cassettes that start at 14, or more teeth (picture 2, a 14-25 or 14up). Such a cassette will mean fewer gears are restricted, or screwed off and so more gears are available to ride with, and those gears will have a closer ratio too. Such cassettes are commonplace in British Cycling youth events. BBB make 9 and 10 speed 14 and 16 up cassettes that can be found online easily for £30-£40 (9 speed being a lot cheaper) and Shimano do an Ultegra 15-25 that is more expensive at around £50-£60. For a similar price you can also buy Shimano 11 speed 14-25 or 14-28. Miche produce 14 and 16-up 11 speed Campagnolo, SRAM and Shimano compatible cassettes.

