



**Golf Cart Tips**

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# Buying A Used Golf Cart – What You Should Know For 2023

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When I moved to a large **gated community**, I, in a sense, joined a **society** of leisure-loving residents whose main conveyance was a **golf cart**. So, to join in spirit with my new neighbors, I had a new project...

**When buying a used golf cart**, this is a list of the questions you need to ask yourself and the potential seller to find the perfect conveyance for your needs.

Since I am looking for a personal **people mover**, I can skip the business and military uses and get right into what to look for to meet my **family's** needs.

# How Much Does A Used Golf Cart Cost?

**Used golf carts in decent condition will cost an average of \$2,000-\$4,000.** If the Golf Cart is under 5 years old, then \$3,000 to \$4,500. Consider your location, though, because if you are conducting your search in a golf community, then they are in higher demand there and will naturally be worth more to the seller.

Gauge how much a used golf cart costs before you shop by researching online. There isn't a Blue Book for golf carts so you will need to do some research to get the best price for the vehicle. Check **eBay** and **Craigslist** for similar carts. When checking eBay, set the filter to see completed sales so you can see the actual price paid, and not just what they wanted for it.

## New Vs Used Golf Carts

Choosing between new and used golf carts can be a tough decision. While new carts offer the latest features and warranties, used carts come at a more affordable price. Consider your budget, desired features, and maintenance requirements before making a decision to ensure the best fit for your golfing needs.

## Golf Cart Value Blue Book

While there isn't an 'official' blue book for golf carts akin to the Kelley Blue Book for vehicles, there are several alternatives for determining the value of a golf cart. Websites such as GolfCartResource.com or GolfCartGuide.com offer free value and pricing tools to help users estimate the cost of new or used golf carts. These tools take into account different factors including the make, model, condition, and age of the golf cart. Additionally, checking out local dealers and online marketplaces can help you gauge the current market value. It's essential to do thorough research to ensure you're getting or giving a fair price for a golf cart.

## Is A Gas Golf Cart Or An Electric Golf Cart Better?

In some campgrounds, communities, and resorts, this decision has been made for you because they only allow one or the other. How large of a neighborhood are you going to be covering? How hilly is the terrain? A gas-powered cart has virtually unlimited distance and is better pulling up a hill. The electric has an average distance of 30 miles or so between charges (48 Volt carts, that is) and are easier to maintain. A 48-volt cart will run twice as long as a 36-volt on a charge. That equates to longer run time and less time being charged.

The distance between charges varies of course, with how much the cart is carrying up and down hills. Then there is the time it takes to fully charge back up before you can hit the road again, whereas you can set out immediately with the gas vehicle as long as you have checked the fuel gauge. If you have purchased a new electric golf cart, the batteries are usually warranted for two years, which is a good thing considering the cost of the battery is much higher than an automobile battery.

Electric carts come in different battery pack configurations: A 48-volt which will have four 12 volt batteries or six 8 volt batteries. A 36-volt cart will have six 6 volt batteries. The charger for the electric cart is entirely different from an automobile battery charger and is quite a bit more expensive.

Gas carts will have 4 or 5 times the moving parts that an electric cart will have and will, of course, have different maintenance routines to perform. Some models of gas carts will use a mixture of 2-cycle oil and gasoline. Older models need the oil and gas premixed and added to the tank, while others have an oil injector that adds the oil as the gas is used.

Proper attention to the belts and carburetor components will minimize the added issues you might encounter. The tune-up parts and filters are readily available and easy to install yourself. There are detailed how-tos on this site for the major golf cart brands.

The gasoline cart will have better pulling power and will lend itself to off-road adventures exceptionally well. When evaluating a cart for purchase, make note if any of these possible upgrades for utility and adventuring are going to be difficult or impossible for the model you selected.

If you are looking at a cart that has engine issues and is being sold because the owner doesn't want to deal with it, this is an excellent opportunity to do a bit of engine upgrading with the money you saved. This will translate into more power and more speed.

Gas and electric golf carts are both great options but don't fall into the misconception that electric is cheaper than gas because of the maintenance and gasoline. The fact is that the

batteries have to be replaced every 4-6 years and they are not cheap. The cost of the fan belts, oil changes, fuel, and filters pans out about the same as the battery cost in the long run.

So, on to the Pros and Cons

### **Electric Cart Pros**

- Have fewer moving parts and therefore have fewer components that can fail.
- Cleaner to run.
- No trips to the gas station, just plug it in at home.
- Quieter to operate.
- Easy to diagnose any failures because it usually has an onboard computer.
- Fast acceleration.
- The cost of maintenance is fixed in the cost of the battery replacements.

### **Electric Cart Cons**

- Expensive batteries to replace every 3 – 5 years.
- The range is limited by the charge.
- A deep cell charge is usually overnight.

### **Gas Cart Pros**

- The range is virtually unlimited.
- It doesn't require a rocket scientist to tune it up.
- More power to carry.
- Speed can be modified since it is regulated mechanically.

### **Gas Cart Cons**

- Louder operation.
- More hands-on maintenance.
- Exhaust emissions.
- The cart needs to be fueled from time to time just like the family car.

# What Brand of Golf Cart Should I Choose?

The three top manufacturers are EZGO, Club Car, and Yamaha...in that order. They have been around since the '50s and are very well made. They are easy to find parts and service for and accessories are freely available from dealerships and Amazon. Some off-brands to consider are Cushman, Harley-Davidson, and Taylor Dunn.

Buying a used golf cart means a lower price, usually half of a new cart, but a cheap initial purchase can get zeroed out if you buy a cart that is ready to be refurbished. If the cart has already been renovated, then you stand to win out on price overall.

A new golf cart will come with a warranty and allow for customization. For example, having the electrical accessory package may be a waste of money if you don't need headlights, a horn, or taillights. I personally drive mine at night when going over to my brother's house, so the lights are a must for me. A new cart will also come with no unpleasant surprises like bent frames and worn out rings.

Most late model gas and electric golf cars are equipped with an hour meter for gas or amp-hour meter for the electric. Check the meter to see how many hours or amp-hours the cart you are wanting to purchase has. Usually, a gas cart will give 5000-6000 hours before needing an overhaul. An electric will get 40,000 to 55,000 amp hours before needing an overhaul.

Used carts have many 3rd party and manufacturers accessories available. If you are a hands-on type of customer, you can jump on to Amazon and customize to your heart's content. Remember that there aren't Lemon Laws for carts like there are for automobiles, so if you purchase a used cart, get a written return policy note before the money changes hands.

# Two Passenger or Four Passenger Golf Cart?

A simple enough question, but the answer will be crucial to the cost of the final choice. The most common cart available is a two-passenger cart capable of hopping from one residence or golf course to another. If you are going to be hitting the links, you will want a cart with a



rear golf club carry area. If you need to transport 3 or more people, be aware that in most cases the body with the extra seating capacity is still using the same frame and suspension as the 2 person vehicle. This means to meet safety issues, you will need a beefed-up suspension, brakes, chassis, and engine.

## What Will You Use It For?

What are you using it for? Are you a golfer and want to run your own cart on the links instead of renting it from the golf shop? If you are not living close enough to the course, you are going to need a trailer and a hitch to get the cart there. Using the bed of a pickup is only useful as a short-term measure, like taking it in for repair or going cross country... you don't want to go through getting the cart into the truck bed every time you use it. The cost of a new well-constructed trailer is approximately \$1,200 to \$2,500.

Not going to use it only for golf? If you are going to run around the neighborhood, it needs to be street legal, or at the very least have lights, mirrors, and a windshield.

If you are going to use it for off-roading or hunting, will you need to install a lift kit and change the tires? Make sure that if this is going to be required in the future that the cart you are considering lends itself to be modified in this manner.

## What To Check On A Used Golf Cart Before Purchase

You can probably tell if the cart has been sheltered or left outside by checking the condition of the seats and roof. The vinyl should still be flexible and not hardened by too much sun exposure. Mold in the crevices and on the roof can mean it has been out in the rain a lot. Find the serial or model number plate – this tells you the age of the golf cart. Check out the other pages on this site for the location of the serial/model number and how to read it – Club Car, EzGo, Yamaha, Harley Davidson, and Cushman.

Check for cracks in the body and especially in the wheel fender area. A crack here could occur if the cart has been in a collision.

The wheels and tires should be checked for dry rot...use your own judgment when checking the tire condition as they can be expensive and hard to find.

Check inside the engine well under the seat. If electric, see if there is an electrical burn smell. If gas, check to see if the engine is dirty and oil covered. Large amounts of oil and grease saturating the engine could indicate a leaking or cracked crankcase, and/or gearbox. It is hard to say how much crud on the motor means problems, but if it is pretty clean, it may have been serviced recently.

One good thing to check for is stray wiring...wires that have been added or replaced and strung across the open-air areas, not in the wire management bundle. If you discover any of these, inquire what they were fixing or adding that called for these errant wires.

If considering an electric cart, check the age of the batteries as these are replaced on average every 5 years. All batteries have some kind of stamp on one of the terminals in the form of two characters – a letter and a number. The letter will indicate the month (A=Jan, B=Feb, etc.) and the number is the year (4=2014). There isn't much worry that the 4 would mean 2004...batteries rarely last for ten years. Use this to determine how soon you will be replacing them. Inspect the battery cables and batteries for corrosion, leaks, wear and tear. The top battery brands include Trojan, US Battery, Crown, and Interstate. If the cart you are considering uses an off-brand, you'll have to do more research about its performance.

## Absolutely, Positively Test Drive The Golf Cart

Check the steering, moving it side to side checking for looseness and a worn 'rack and pinion' steering box. These are expensive to replace.

The brakes should work well and be firm when stopping. Any noise or squealing indicates a brake job soon.

See how smooth the ride is, making sure the wheels aren't wobbly and making sure the axle or wheel isn't bent.

Take it up a hill with just you on it and again loaded down with more passengers...Is it struggling to climb?

While you are taking the cart out for a test drive, ask if any replacements have been done, or that they know that will need to be done soon. Any future repairs should be considered when coming down to the final price.



The value you are getting will be determined by what kind of deal you are getting, adding the future repairs/replacements into the mix. You can buy the cart for a low price and take care of the additional cost later...and this will vary with your choice of hiring it out or doing it yourself.

## Make Sure That A Used Golf Cart Suits You Best

As in any vehicle purchase, there are advantages to purchasing a cart that has been previously owned and buying one new out of the box. A used cart has this advantage: Lower Price – A good, used golf cart could possibly run anywhere from a few hundred dollars to a couple of thousand.

The prospective seller will have various reasons for getting rid of his cart ranging anywhere from having bought a brand new one himself, the previous owner passing away, or they just don't use it anymore.

## Before You Settle On A Particular Golf Cart, Follow These Steps

Check at the golf course where you usually play, and you might find that they regularly change out their fleet and you could find a great deal on a cart that had regular maintenance.

Ask some of the people around you and in your neighborhood if they could recommend a trustworthy dealer. They might even be able to secure a discount if they are on a first-name basis with him. See if he is reliable on repairs and if he does in-house work on the carts or farms it out to a repair shop.

If you are buying from a dealer, you might consider one that has been reconditioned for sale, but thoroughly check out any "reconditioned" or "refurbished" carts. Sometimes a quick paint job on the frame and engine wash is all that's been done. Don't buy a golf cart that is being sold "as is." That might mean the dealer couldn't or wouldn't find and fix a problem with the vehicle. However, The dealer likely checked the cart for the issues, which he repaired prior to it being sold.

Lastly, dealers will offer some kind of warranty for golf carts that have been reconditioned. A purchase from an individual or non-dealer will usually always be an as-is deal.

## In Conclusion

There is a small but steadfast golf cart dealer near me named Jim and Mel's that regularly has traded in golf carts for sale. Some of the elites that live around here always have to have the latest make and model cart to be seen in. The traded-in carts are refinished and prepped and are almost always \$2500. It's a stable price and isn't limited to just EzGo or Club Car. Two years later and my cart has been outstanding in performance.

I realize that for a lot of people, committing to buy a golf cart is no big deal as far as cost is concerned, but it really is a lifestyle change. I used to fix up old Datsun's for a hobby and had to give that up due to the space required. Fixing up golf carts is an excellent substitute and much cheaper!

I really doubted that I needed a golf cart to get around my new town, but I use it all the time...from traveling the golf courses by day to evening jaunts across the back trails. I bought a 22-year-old used gas cart and will be learning everything I need to keep it running.

Hopefully, at this point, you have enough information to make an informed decision on your new purchase, and I also hope you will be able to use this site to keep it running well. Onward and upward!

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### About the author

Chuck Wilson

With years of expertise in both electrical and mechanical drafting, Chuck Wilson brings a unique skill set to the world of golf cart maintenance and documentation. This dual background allows for a deep understanding of the intricate systems that make golf carts run efficiently. Leveraging this knowledge, Chuck has spent several years specializing in golf cart upkeep, from routine servicing to complex schematic documentation.