

PRODUCT REVIEW

KALASHNIKOV AKM

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SELF-LOADING RIFLE (7.62x39MM)



WASR-10 with wire folding stock.

Mikhail Kalashnikov's AKM (c. 1959) is a lighter version of the AK-47 (c. 1947) and the best assault rifle due to its unmatched combination of reliability, durability, robustness, firepower, penetration, and ease of cleaning and repair.

Most AK type rifles use a 1mm thick sheet metal receiver introduced on the AKM instead of the heavier and more rigid machined steel receiver on the original AK-47 which some believe is slightly more accurate (no practical difference) but less durable as the stiffer receiver is prone to cracking unless cold hammer forged steel is used.

Most AKMs use a 1mm thick stamped sheet metal receiver instead of the heavier and more rigid machined steel receiver on the earlier AK-47 which is less durable (prone to cracking unless they are cold hammer forged as on Arsenal's SAM7 series rifles).

Twenty round magazines are

less likely to snag than the 30 round variety. Steel magazines are the strongest and most durable, though Circle 10 brand polymer magazines are reliable and much lighter.

The original 7.62x39mm round is best as its bullets are better at penetrating light cover than the smaller, faster bullets used in the 5.45x39mm and 5.56x45mm rounds that readily tumble/fragment.

Short barrel variants use non-standard components, are very loud with a lot of muzzle flash, and have less muzzle velocity and muzzle energy, so fit a folding stock to a standard AK if you want a more compact rifle.

The AK selector/safety lever is poorly located, which can be addressed by fitting a Mark VI Enhanced AK Selector Safety Lever from Krebs Custom; while the Fuller rear sight mod (from Rifle Dynamics) will make aiming easier and faster.

I recommend the semi-auto Century Arms WASR-10 which has a chrome lined bore and chamber to aid corrosion resistance and the extraction of fired cartridge cases. The wood buttstock is best replaced with a wire side folding stock which folds to the right side of the receiver so it doesn't interfere with an optical sight mount on the left side of the receiver. Variants with the lever release are easier to operate than those with the push button release.

The minimalist wire stock is tough and makes an AK easier to conceal than those fitted with the large polymer side folding stock like those fitted to the AK-74M and 100 series AKs. Wrap it with paracord for comfort.

The BM-1 Accessory Mount from RS Regulate is ideal for fitting a tactical light or laser.

The POSP 4x24 scope is great value, though a small RDS like the H-1 is best for general use.

AIMPOINT MICRO H-1



A small red dot sight (RDS) like the Aimpoint Micro H-1 is ideal for use on an AKM as heavier sights will have a negative effect on handling. The CR2032 watch battery lasts 50,000 hours (over 5 yrs of continuous use (best left on so it is always ready to use).

The best way to attach it to an AK is via a dedicated mount from Sabreworks that makes the KOP System, wherein a base (KOP Platform) replaces the rear sight block. Bases slide into a groove, are retained by a steel pin, and all incorporate a rear sight.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The AK is superb for defensive use due to its unmatched combination of reliability, durability, robustness, simplicity and firepower.

RECOMMENDED ACCESSORIES

Manual / Log Book

AK Handbook / Firearm Usage & Maintenance Log Book. [Blackheart International]

Cleaning Kit

GUN BOSS AK47 / Bio-CLP Gun Oil. [Real Avid / G96 Products]

Field Maintenance Tool

Field Survivor 2. [Samson Mfg. Corp.]

Spare Parts Kit

Red Army Standard Field Kit. [Century Arms]

Broken Shell Extractor

7.62x39 Broken Shell Extractor. [C.J. Weapons Accessories]

Dry Fire Rounds

A-Zoom Snap Caps. [Lyman Products Corp.]

Ear Plugs

EarPro EP3 or EP4 Sonic Defenders. [SureFire]

Illuminated Front Sight

DXT Standard Dot—AK. [XS Sights Systems]

Front Sight Tool

Magna-Matic AK47 Front Sight Tool. [Magna-Matic Defense]

AKM Flash Hider

Cage Comp (bayonet compatible). [Damage Industries]

AKM Sling

Tactical Sling (TAS-AK). [Eagle Industries]

HOT TIP

Training magazines can suffer metal fatigue to their springs so don't use them for combat.