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Summary Article: **saddle**

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seat or pad to support the rider on an animal, chiefly a horse. The saddles mentioned in the Bible are generally considered to have been saddlecloths. The ancient Greeks sometimes used saddlecloths, but they had no saddles and often rode bareback. The Romans did not use a saddle until near the end of the empire. The Native Americans of the Great Plains of North America were famous horsemen, and usually rode without saddles. To riders accustomed to the saddle, however, its advantages are decisive. Probably it was developed either in France during the early Christian era or in the steppe region of Asia. In Europe the saddle came into general use in the Middle Ages. The exploits of medieval knights would have been difficult without the saddle. Saddles of various types include the packsaddle, to which the load of a pack animal is secured; the camel saddle; the howdah, used by riders of elephants; and the saddle used by riders of horses. There are two main types of horse saddles, the Hungarian and the Moorish. The Moorish saddle, which was used extensively by cowboys in the United States, has a horn which is essential in using the lasso. To hold it in place under the strain of the lasso, this saddle has two strong girths, each tightened by a cinch strap. The Hungarian saddle, of which the English saddle is an example, the McClellan saddle, and the racing saddle have no horns. The English saddle has padding, and the stirrup is hung farther forward than on the Moorish saddle or the McClellan saddle, neither of which is padded. For constant use, the hard saddle is believed in North America to be better for both the horse and the rider. The padded saddle has advantages in brief and occasional rides. See also equestrianism; stirrup.

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