

Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser Model Guide

The Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser is a three-place, single-engine piston aircraft. The library lists it as built 1946-1948. An owner article says production began in 1946, with nearly 3,800 built. A typical example has a 100-hp Lycoming O-235, cruises at 105 mph, carries 38 gallons and has a 600-mile range at 6 gph.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Three-place piston single: 100-hp O-235, 105 mph cruise, 38 gal fuel, about 600 miles range at 6 gph (owner article figures).
- Weights about 900 lb empty with an 850 lb useful load, so check the real weight and balance of the specific airplane.
- Open service items: magneto impulse coupling inspection and a possible brake master cylinder diaphragm defect.
- A Canadian investigation (TSB) of a fatal stall just after takeoff is worth reading before you fly a demo flight.

WHAT YOU ARE BUYING

The PA-12 grew out of the 1942 J-5C Cub Cruiser. Changes included a fuel tank in each wing, metal spars, a new interior and a streamlined look. Wingspan is 35 feet 6 inches and length is 23 feet 1 inch. Registry data for the PA-12/PA-12S family shows up to 90 kt cruise, 310 nm range and 12,300 ft ceiling. Those are family maxima, not figures for every airplane.

PRE-BUY AND MAINTENANCE CHECKS

Ask for complete logs. One restored 1947 example had engine and airframe records back to the factory build sheet. Ask how the wings were rigged, since Piper Service Memo No. 19 covers dihedral and washout. Confirm the magnetos and brake master cylinders against the service items in the safety notes.

STARTING AND ENGINE NOTES

In one 1947 owner's O-235-C1 airplane, only the left magneto had an impulse coupling. The mechanic said to start on Left, and the owner had always started on Both. Starting got harder after that change. A rough-starting engine can also have an overly lean idle mixture, so diagnose before replacing parts. One shop bill for a magneto and primer came to almost \$1,900.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine Power Hp	100
Fuel Capacity Gal	38
Empty Weight Lbs	900
Useful Load Lbs	850

PERFORMANCE

Fuel Burn Gph	6
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WEIGHT & BALANCE

Empty Weight Lbs	900
Useful Load Lbs	850

SAFETY NOTES

- Piper VSP-62 (Lycoming SB 464A) covers PA-12 serials 12-02 through 12-4036: Bendix impulse coupling flyweights may be soft, risking total engine power loss.
- Scott Service Bulletin 1248H-32-53 lists the PA-12: master brake cylinder diaphragms dated 3Q86 through 2Q89 may rupture, causing loss of braking.
- TSB report A94W0078: a PA-12 stalled on departure at about 150 feet during a purchaser demo flight; both occupants died and the cause was not determined.