

## IN THIS CHAPTER

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# Chapter 1

# Buying Your iPhone

You've read about it and watched the news reports. You've seen the lines at Apple Stores on the day a new version of the iPhone is released. You're so intrigued that you've decided to get your own iPhone so you can have a smartphone that can do much more than make and receive calls. Perhaps you're not new to smartphones but are ready to make the switch to the ultimate in such devices. With your iPhone, you can have fun with apps such as games and exercise trackers; explore the online world; read e-books, magazines, and other periodicals; take and organize photos and videos; listen to music and watch movies; and a lot more.

Trust me: You've made a good decision because the iPhone defines the mobile phone experience. It's also a perfect fit for seniors.

In this chapter, you learn about the advantages of the iPhone, as well as where to buy this little gem and associated data plans. After you have one in your hands, I help you explore what's in the box and get an overview of the little buttons and slots you'll encounter — luckily, the iPhone has very few of them.

# Discover the Newest iPhones and iOS 26

Apple's iPhone gets its features from a combination of hardware and its software operating system, which is called *iOS* (short for *iPhone operating system*). The most current version of the operating system is iOS 26. It's helpful to understand which new features the latest models and iOS 26 bring to the table (all of which are covered in more detail in this book).



TIP

Don't panic if you realize that the version of iOS before this one was 18; you didn't lose 8 years of your life in some sort of time warp triggered when you picked up this book. Apple decided to streamline its naming conventions for all operating systems that power their devices by using the year in which they'll be utilized the most, which in this case is 2026. Hence we now have iOS 26, iPadOS 26, macOS 26, tvOS 26, visionOS 26, and watchOS 26.

Apple's latest additions to the iPhone family are the iPhone 17, 17 Pro, 17 Pro Max, and the iPhone Air. Like their predecessors, they're highly advanced smartphones that leave competitors in the dust. Here are some of the key features of the latest iPhone models:

- » **A19 and A19 Pro chips:** The iPhone 17 utilizes the A19 chip, while the 17 Pro, 17 Pro Max, and Air receive the latest and greatest, the A19 Pro. The truly innovative tech in these models demands processors that can handle some heavy lifting while still being able to answer calls and retrieve email, and the A19 and A19 Pro are both more than stunningly capable.
- » **Camera Control:** This hardware feature for iPhone allows instant access to and easy and intuitive control of your iPhone's built-in cameras. The sensor reacts to your touch to give you total command of your cameras and their features. As Apple continues to roll out their Apple Intelligence updates, Camera Control will become even more powerful.
- » **Emergency SOS via Satellite, Crash Detection, Roadside Assistance via Satellite, and Messages via Satellite:** Emergency SOS via Satellite helps you reach emergency responders when you're outside traditional cell or Wi-Fi service. Crash Detection



TIP

utilizes gyroscope and accelerometer tech in the latest models to detect when you've been in an automobile crash and will cause your iPhone to alert emergency services automatically. Roadside Assistance via Satellite helps users connect with AAA, the nation's largest roadside assistance provider, should the need arise when they have no cellular or Wi-Fi coverage. Messages via Satellite allows you to stay in contact using the Messages app, even when you're not connected to Wi-Fi or cellular data. All four features are something you never want to need but are thankful to have.

You might consider acquiring AppleCare+ with theft and loss coverage, which is Apple's extended warranty, currently priced at \$99.99 (iPhone 16e), \$119.99 (iPhone 16 and 17), \$129.99 (16 Plus), or \$139.99 (iPhone Air, 17 Pro, and 17 Pro Max) per year. Monthly plans are also available. AppleCare+ covers unlimited incidents of accidental damage (but you will be charged minimal fees, based on the nature of the repair), which could more than cover the cost of repairing your iPhone without it. You can also get AppleCare One, which allows you to cover three Apple devices starting at \$19.99 per month. You can cover more than three devices for \$5.99 a month per additional device.



WARNING

Don't think your iPhone is unbreakable. Cases are still a good — no, make that great — idea. As mentioned, Apple has a line of cases that not only protect your iPhone but also allow for wireless MagSafe and Qi charging. (MagSafe is Apple's version of wireless charging that uses magnets to keep your iPhone and the charger better connected, which translates to faster and more efficient charging. Qi is an industry-standard wireless charging technology used by Apple and most smartphone manufacturers.)

Any iPhone model from the iPhone SE second generation and newer (including all 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and Air models) can use most features of iOS 26 if you update the operating system (discussed in detail in Chapter 3). This book is based on iOS 26. This update to the operating system adds many features, including (but definitely not limited to) the following:

» **Liquid Glass:** The iPhone user interface has looked much the same for as long as I can remember. But now Apple is changing

things up a bit with a sleek interface meant to evoke the look of glass, with enhanced fluidity and transparency throughout the OS and its apps. Everything has a glossy look and feel. All 26 operating system revisions sport the Liquid Glass look, bringing more uniformity across Apple's multiple device platforms. The change may be a little jarring for some at first, but I urge you to give it a chance to grow on you.

- » **Camera:** The Camera app user interface has been simplified for everyday shooting but still provides access to all the advanced features some of you have come to know and love.
- » **Messages:** The Messages app gets several upgrades, including the ability to include polls when the conversation might benefit from one (for example, when in a group chat trying to work out a time and place to grab lunch). Another great new feature is the ability to translate languages on the fly so that you can understand what others are saying in their own language in real time.
- » **Accessibility features and improvements:** Apple is always enhancing accessibility features for its products, and it's on top of the game with new features such as Accessibility Reader and updates to others, such as Personal Voice. Accessibility Nutrition Labels, which lists the features app developers utilize in their apps, are also in this latest release of iOS.
- » **Apple Intelligence:** Apple Intelligence, which Apple describes as "AI for the rest of us," first showed up in iOS 18 but is much more enhanced in iOS 26. The only downside is that it only works for iPhone 15 Pro, iPhone 15 Pro Max, and newer iPhone models. Find out more throughout the book, but especially in Chapter 11.

These are but a few of the improvements made to the latest version of iOS. I suggest visiting [www.apple.com/os/ios](http://www.apple.com/os/ios) to find out more.



TIP

Don't need all the built-in apps? You can remove them from your Home screen. (Note that built-in apps take up very little of your iPhone's storage space.) And if you change your mind, you can easily add them back to your Home screen by searching for them in the App Store and tapping the Get button, or by retrieving them from the App Library.

# Choose the Right iPhone for You

A variety of iPhone models are on the market; it can be daunting when trying to decide which one you want to purchase. In this section, I focus on Apple's newest models, the iPhone Air and 17 series. If you'd like to explore others, Apple has a great tool for making comparisons at [www.apple.com/iphone/compare](http://www.apple.com/iphone/compare).

The sizes of the latest iPhone models vary:

- » iPhone 17 measures 2.81" by 5.89" (the screen measures 6.3" diagonally) with a depth of 0.31".
- » iPhone Air measures 2.94" by 6.15" (the screen measures 6.5" diagonally) with a depth of 0.22" (see **Figure 1-1**).
- » iPhone 17 Pro measures 2.83" by 5.91" (the screen measures 6.3" diagonally) with a depth of 0.34" (see **Figure 1-2**).
- » iPhone 17 Pro Max measures 3.07" by 6.43" (the screen measures 6.9" diagonally) with a depth of 0.34".



*Courtesy of Apple Inc.*

**FIGURE 1-1**



*Courtesy of Apple Inc.*

**FIGURE 1-2**

You can get the iPhone 17 in black, white, mist blue, sage, and lavender. iPhone 17 Pro and 17 Pro Max come in silver, cosmic orange, and deep blue. iPhone Air is available in space black, cloud white, light gold, and sky blue.

Not sure whether to get an iPhone Air or 17 model? Here are a few more key differences:

- » **All iPhone 17 models and the iPhone Air include a great battery life.** You get up to 27 hours of video playback for iPhone Air, up to 30 hours for the iPhone 17, up to 33 hours for the 17 Pro, and a whopping 39 hours for the 17 Pro Max.
- » **The iPhone Air and iPhone 17 models use eSIMs instead of physical SIMs.** A SIM stores important information about your phone and your cellular provider network. Physical SIMs can be moved from phone to phone, but eSIMs are permanently built-in.
- » **All models received camera upgrades.** All models have fantastic camera systems, but the biggest camera innovation for all four of the newest models is the Center Stage front camera. The Center Stage front camera allows users to take photos and videos in either portrait or landscape mode while holding the iPhone vertically (no need to rotate it) because of its wider field of view and higher resolution than previous models. Center Stage also combines with AI to track participants to make sure that the field of view automatically expands to include everyone in the frame.
- » **Screen resolution.** The higher the resolution the better, especially for larger screens since you need to pack more pixels (the tiny dots of color that make up the images) into a larger space. The iPhone 17 and 17 Pro offer 2622 x 1206 resolution; the 17 Pro Max provides a stunning 2868 x 1320; and the Air gives you an excellent 2736 x 1260.

**Table 1-1** gives you a quick comparison of the iPhone Air, 16e, 16, 16 Plus, 17, 17 Pro, and 17 Pro Max (models currently sold by Apple). All costs are as of the time this book was written. (Some carriers may introduce non-contract terms.)

**TABLE 1-1** iPhone Model Comparison

Model	Storage	Cost (May Vary by Carrier)
Air	256GB, 512GB, and 1TB	From \$999
16e	128GB, 256GB, and 512GB	From \$599
16	128GB	From \$699
16 Plus	128GB and 256GB	From \$799
17	256GB and 512GB	From \$799
17 Pro	256GB, 512GB, and 1TB	From \$1099
17 Pro Max	256GB, 512GB, 1TB, and 2TB	From \$1,199

Other differences between iPhone models come primarily from the current operating system, iOS 26, which I cover in the remaining chapters of the book.



TIP

One exciting pricing option is the iPhone Upgrade Program. You choose your carrier, get an unlocked phone so you can change carriers, and receive AppleCare+ to cover you in case your phone has problems, all starting at a cost of \$42.41 a month (depending on the iPhone model you select). The price does not include data usage from your carrier. Check out [www.apple.com/shop/iphone/iphone-upgrade-program](http://www.apple.com/shop/iphone/iphone-upgrade-program) for more information.

## Decide How Much Storage Is Enough

*Storage* is a measure of how much information — for example, movies, photos, and software applications (apps) — you can store on a computing device. Storage can also affect your iPhone's performance when handling such tasks as streaming favorite TV shows from the web or downloading music.



TIP

*Streaming* refers to playing video or music content from the web (or from other devices) rather than playing a file stored on your iPhone. You can enjoy a lot of material online without ever downloading its full content to your phone — and given that the most

storage-endowed iPhone model has a relatively small amount of storage, streaming is a good idea. See Chapters 18 and 20 for more about getting your music and movies online.

Your storage options with an iPhone 16e are 128, 256, and 512 gigabytes (GB). The iPhone 16 affords only 128GB, 16 Plus offers 128GB and 256GB, 17 provides either 256GB or 512GB, 17 Pro and Air have 256GB, 512GB, and 1TB (terabyte, which is 1000GB), and 17 Pro Max can give 256GB, 512GB, 1TB, or 2TB. You must choose the right amount of storage because you can't open the unit and add more, as you usually can with a desktop computer. However, Apple has thoughtfully provided iCloud, a service you can use to back up content to the internet. (You can read more about iCloud in Chapter 4.)

How much storage is enough for your iPhone? Here are some guidelines:

- » If you simply want to check email, browse the web, and keep your calendar up to date, and you enjoy communicating via voice, video, and instant messaging, 128GB likely is plenty.
- » For most people who manage a reasonable number of photos, download some music, and watch heavy-duty media such as movies online, 256GB may be sufficient. But if you might take things up a notch regarding media consumption and creation in the future (such as the newest grandchild being on the way soon), you should seriously consider 512GB.
- » If you like lots of media, such as movies or TV shows, you might need 512GB or 1TB. For example, shooting 4K video at 60 frames per second will take roughly 1GB of storage space for every two and a half minutes of footage. If you shoot a lot of video, 2TB of storage might be more appealing.



TECHNICAL STUFF

Do you know how big a *gigabyte* (GB) is? Consider this: Just about any computer you buy today comes with a minimum of 256GB of storage. Computers have to tackle larger tasks than iPhones, so that number makes sense. The iPhone, which uses a technology called *flash storage* for storing data, is meant (to a great extent) to help you experience online media and email; it doesn't have to

store much since it pulls lots of content from the internet. In the world of storage, 64GB for any kind of storage is puny if you keep lots of content (such as audio, video, and photos) on the device. Some iPhone models are now offering *terabytes* (TB) of storage; 1TB is equal to 1000GB.

What's the price for larger storage? iPhone Air with 256GB sells for \$999, 512GB is \$1,199, and 1TB is \$1,399. The iPhone 16e with 128GB is \$599, 256GB is \$699, and 512GB is \$899. For the iPhone 16, a 128GB unit costs \$699. iPhone 16 Plus with 128GB goes for \$799 and 256GB is \$899. iPhone 17 with 256GB is \$799 and 512GB is \$999. iPhone 17 Pro with 256GB is \$1,099, 512GB goes for \$1,299, and the model tops out at \$1,499 for 1TB. Not to be outdone, iPhone 17 Pro Max is the priciest: \$1,199 for 256GB, \$1,399 for 512GB, \$1,599 for 1TB, and \$1,999 for 2TB. Note that prices may vary by carrier and where you buy your phone.

## Understand What You Need to Use Your iPhone

Before you head off to buy your iPhone, you should know what other connections and accounts you'll need to work with it optimally.

At a minimum, to make standard cellular phone calls, you need to have a service plan with a cellular carrier (such as AT&T or Verizon), as well as a data plan that supports iPhone. The data plan allows you to exchange information (such as emails and text messages) over the internet and download content (such as movies and music) without need of a Wi-Fi connection. Before you sign up, try to verify the strength of cellular coverage in your area (ask your local cellular company representatives for more info), as well as how much data your plan provides each month.

You also need to be able to update the iPhone operating system (iOS). Without a phone carrier service plan, you can update iOS either wirelessly over a Wi-Fi network or by plugging your iPhone into your computer. You would also need to use a Wi-Fi network to go online and make calls using an internet service, such as FaceTime or Skype.



TIP

Given the cost and high-tech nature of the iPhone, having to jury-rig these basic functions doesn't make much sense. Trust me: Get an account and data plan with your phone service provider.

You should also open a free account on iCloud, Apple's online storage and syncing service, to store and share content online among your Apple devices. For example, you can set up iCloud in such a way that photos you take on your iPhone will appear on your iPad. You can also use a computer to download photos, music, books, or videos and transfer them to your iPhone through a process called syncing.

Apple has set up its software and the iCloud service to give you two ways to manage content for your iPhone — including apps, music, or photos you've downloaded — and specify how to sync your calendar and contact information.

There are a lot of tech terms to absorb here (iCloud, syncing, and so on). Don't worry. Chapters 3 and 4 cover those settings in more detail.

## Where to Buy Your iPhone

You can't buy an iPhone from just any retail store. You can buy an iPhone at the brick-and-mortar or online Apple Store and from mobile phone providers, such as AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon. You can also find an iPhone at major retailers, such as Best Buy and Walmart, through which you have to buy a service contract for the phone carrier of your choice. You can also find iPhones at several online retailers (such as [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [Newegg.com](https://www.newegg.com)) and through smaller, local service providers, which you can find by visiting <https://support.apple.com/en-us/109526>.



TIP

Apple offers unlocked iPhones. Essentially, these phones aren't tied to a particular provider, so you can use them with any iPhone cellular service provider. Although you may save a lot by avoiding a service commitment, purchasing an unlocked phone can be pricey up front.

# What's in the Box

When you fork over your hard-earned money for your iPhone, you'll be left holding one box, but that box does include some magical goodies.

Here's what you'll find when you take off the shrink wrap and open the box:



TIP

- » **iPhone:** Your iPhone is covered in a thick, plastic-sleeve thingy. Take it off and toss it back in the box.  
Save all the packaging until you're certain you won't return the phone. Apple's standard return period is 14 days.
- » **Documentation (and I use the term very loosely):** This typically includes a small pamphlet, a sheet of Apple logo stickers, and a few more bits of information. Thankfully, you have this book to guide you.
- » **USB-C cable:** Use this cable to connect the iPhone to your computer (if your computer has a USB-C port; otherwise, you'll need a USB-C-to-USB-C adapter) or to a USB-C power adapter (not included).

The iPhone box is a study in Zen-like simplicity. Where's the charging plug? Apple now feels that just about everyone has several charger plugs laying around their home, so they think it's wasteful (not to mention a little more expensive) to include one with every new iPhone. If you need a charger plug, Apple will certainly sell you one, and many third-party options are available as well.

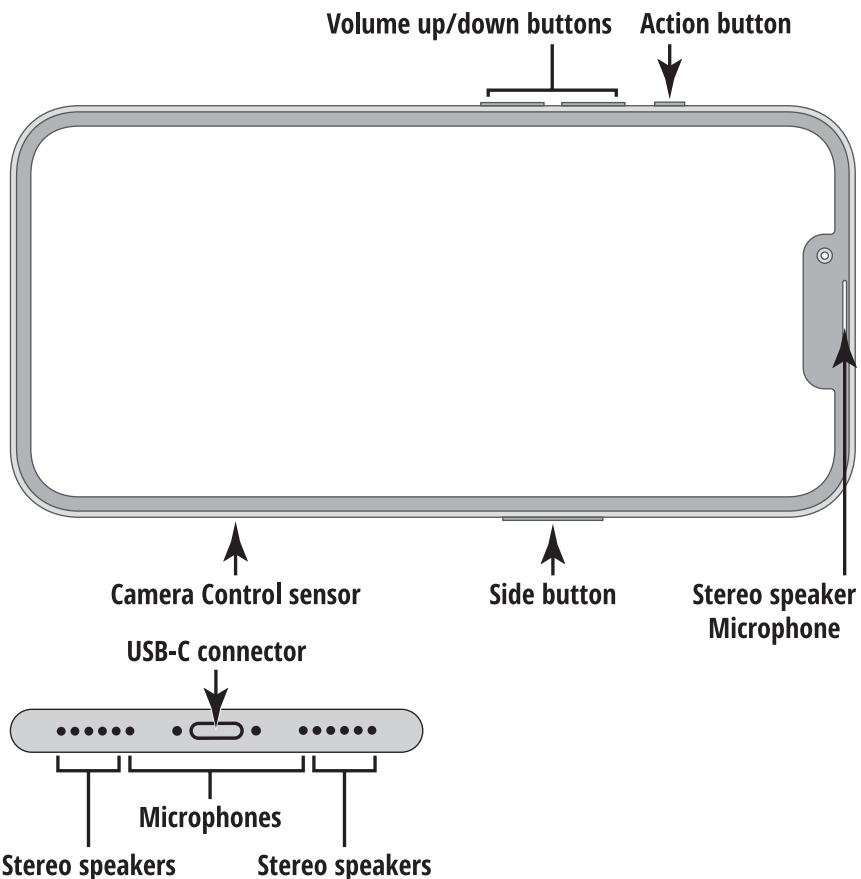


TIP

Search for iPhone accessories online. You'll find iPhone covers and cases (from leather to silicone), car chargers, and screen guards to protect your phone's screen.

# Take a First Look at the Gadget

In this section, I give you a bit more information about the buttons and other physical features of the newest iPhone models. **Figure 1-3** shows you where each of these items is located on the iPhone Air and 17 models.



**FIGURE 1-3**

Here's the rundown on what the various hardware features for iPhones without Home buttons are and what they do.

If you have an iPhone model with a Home button, read your iPhone's documentation or visit <https://support.apple.com/iphone> to discover the hardware features specific to your device.



- » **Side button:** You can use this button to power up your iPhone, put it in sleep mode, wake it up, lock it, force a restart, power it down, and much more.
- » **USB-C connector:** Use the USB-C connector to charge your battery, listen to audio with EarPods (not included), or sync your iPhone with your computer. (See Chapter 4 for more on syncing.)
- » **Action button (iPhone 15 Pro, 15 Pro Max, and all iPhone 16 models only):** This button can be customized to perform a host of features, including silent mode, Focus, Camera, Flashlight, Voice Memo, Recognize Music, Translate, Magnifier, Controls, Shortcut, and Accessibility.
- » **Camera Control (all current models except iPhone 16e):** This can perform its share of features, too, including Exposure, Depth, Zoom, Cameras, Styles, and Tone.
- » **Built-in stereo speakers:** The speakers in iPhones provide rich stereo sound and deeper bass than previous models, and are located on the bottom edge of the phone and at the top part near the earpiece.
- » **Volume up/down buttons:** Press the volume up button for more volume and the volume down button for less. (You can use the volume up or volume down button as a camera shutter button when the camera is activated.)
- » **Built-in microphones:** Built-in microphones make it possible to speak into your iPhone to deliver commands or content. This feature allows you to make phone calls, use video calling services (such as Skype or Zoom), and work with other apps that accept audio input, such as the Siri built-in assistant.

