

2015 Tablet Buying Guide

A tablet is the perfect portable device for staying connected to family and friends, streaming your favorite TV show or movie, monitoring your health, and working on office documents and spreadsheets away from the office.



At a glance

- Getting started
- Which brand is right for you?
- Choosing your operating system
- Apps
- Screen size & storage
- WiFi vs. cellular models
- Which style is right for you?



Getting started

Since the introduction of the first Apple® iPad in 2010, the tablet has evolved into much more than a portable digital device for accessing the internet. All tablet manufacturers have released touch-friendly models in different sizes and designs, packed with features and optional apps.

Before you buy, you should consider how you will use your tablet. Will it be used mainly for entertainment, work or playing games? While you will certainly be able to tackle basic computing tasks (e-mail, web browsing, listening to music and watching movies), tablets are not equipped with desktop-grade processors to handle more complex work. The true benefit of tablets is their portability, enabling you to stay connected and entertained with a bigger screen than your smartphone.



Which brand is right for you?

Some people prefer to have the same brand for their phone, tablet, computer, and even TV, since many brands share the same layouts, designs and media features across devices. **Apple** users can access iTunes, their calendar and contacts on their iPad, iPhone and Apple TV. **Samsung** has features like the Samsung Hub which provides access to movies and music on their smartphone, tablet and Smart TVs. **Microsoft® Windows** devices share the same look and feel across their tablets, Windows Phones and PCs and enable you to access files from Microsoft Office. Different brands align with specific operating systems. Learn about specific features of tablet operating systems below.

BRANDS	APPLE	AMAZON	GOOGLE	SAMSUNG	MICROSOFT
Product	iPad	kindle fire	nexus	GALAXY	Surface™
Operating System	iOS	Android Customized for Amazon	Android	Android	Windows
Processor	Dual-core A5 Dual-core A7	Dual-core Quad-core	Quad-core	Dual-core Quad-core	Quad-core Intel Core i5
Display Size	7.9" 9.7"	7" 8.9"	7"	7"	10.6" 8" 10.1"
Storage Available (GB)	16GB 32GB 64GB	8GB 16GB 32GB	16GB 32GB	8GB 16GB 128GB 256GB	32GB 64GB 128GB 512GB
4G LTE Connectivity Options	Available with plan for Verizon Wireless, AT&T or Sprint	Available with plan for Verizon Wireless or AT&T	Available unlocked or with plan for AT&T or T-Mobile	Available with plan for AT&T or Sprint	Not available
Books	Kindle Store iBooks	Kindle Store Other Apple Play apps	Kindle Store Other Google Play apps	Kindle Store Other Google Play apps	Kindle Store Other Windows apps
Movies/TV	Netflix Hulu Plus iTunes	Netflix Hulu Plus Amazon Instant Video Store	Netflix Hulu Plus Google Play	Netflix Hulu Plus Google Play	Netflix Hulu Plus Xbox Video Store
Music	Pandora Spotify iTunes	Pandora Spotify Amazon MP3 Store & Cloud Player	Pandora Spotify Google Play	Pandora Spotify Google Play	Pandora Spotify Xbox Music
App Store	Apple App Store	Amazon App Store	Google Play	Google Play	Windows Store
Special Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siri voice-activated assistant with select models • Sync contacts, music, videos and more between Apple devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siri voice-activated assistant with select models • Sync contacts, music, videos and more between Apple devices • Separate profiles for each user • See more character, artist or other content with X-Ray for Music, Movies and TV • Mayday button provides free on-demand device tech support (not available for Kindle Fire HD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate profiles for each user • Sync contacts, music, videos and more between Google devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Smart Remote, tablet controls Samsung TV • Sync contacts, music, videos and more between Samsung devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Smart Remote, tablet controls Samsung TV • Sync contacts, music, videos and more between Samsung devices

Choose your operating system

There are three main operating systems, with Apple iOS, Android and Windows vying for your consideration. While many people decide to go with what they know, you should weigh all the options to see if you should consider a change.

Apple iOS

iPad, iPad mini

iOS 8 is the latest operating system powering Apple iPad mini and iPad Air tablets. Simple and easy to use, it syncs iOS 8 and OS X Yosemite devices for a seamless user experience. You can answer a phone call from your iPhone on your iPad, or start typing an email on your laptop and continue on your iPad. If you're comfortable using an iPhone, you'll be comfortable using an iPad tablet. Your user experience will be very familiar and smooth, though the simplicity means less customization is possible. iOS 8 offers a vast selection of tablet apps and you'll be able to use iCloud and Touch ID in ways you never have before. Choose from a variety of tablet sizes, screen types, storage capacities, and connectivity options to fit your needs and budget. It's linked to the Apple App Store with their huge selection of apps for the iPad, plus you'll be able to access an extensive selection of music, TV shows and movies through iTunes.

Android

Samsung Galaxy, Google Nexus, Amazon Kindle

The Android operating system is available on tablets from several manufacturers including Acer®, Amazon®, Google®, Samsung® and many others. Google's Android mobile OS features maximum configurability, a premium notification system, plus fast and smooth Web browsing. There is seamless integration with Google applications like Gmail, Google Maps and Google Hangouts for video chat. Android includes support for multiple user logins so you can share your tablet with a friend or family member. From icons to sounds, fonts to themes, your customization options are almost endless. Android also excels in its ability to watch online videos (Apple iOS systems do not support Adobe Flash which is required for most online videos and games). Use the Google Play store to access a ton of tablet-enabled apps plus a good selection of your favorite music, books, magazines, movies and TV shows.

Windows

Microsoft Surface

Windows 8.1 comes close to offering a traditional computing experience with full support for all your Windows software. When you purchase a Windows 8.1 tablet you can run the full version of Microsoft Office so you can access and edit Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, and more. You can also run all of your standard Windows-compatible programs. Also, connectivity options and hardware add-ons for Windows tablets are typically more plentiful than with other tablet types. The Windows Store offers a wide variety of apps, games, videos, movies, music, books and popular Windows programs.

Apps

Users will quickly find that apps are the heart and soul of any tablet. No single tablet comes with every app that you will need or want. Basic apps are included on your tablet and then you can purchase additional apps that fit your needs. If you need the capability of reading/writing Word files, you'll need to buy an app for that. If editing photos is your thing, there's an app for that, too. Discover an endless availability of apps to keep you productive, informed and entertained.



Screen size & storage

Your computer relies on several components for storage capacity and processing speed. It's important to know the different components and how each affects your computer's performance.



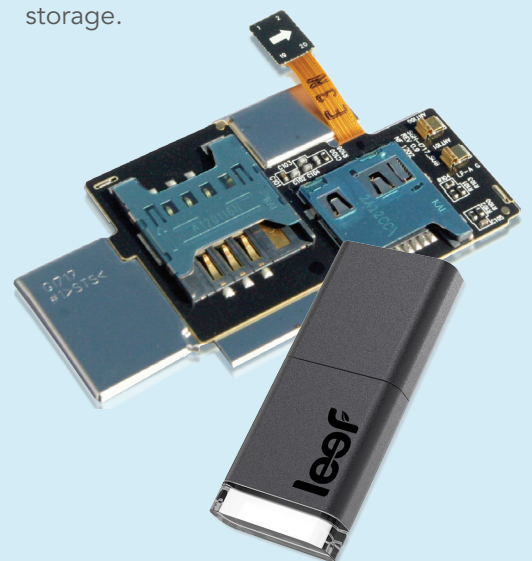
Screen Size

Screen size and storage capacity can vary greatly from tablet to tablet. When shopping for a tablet, the term "10-inch or 7-inch tablet" refers to the size of screen which is measured diagonally and not the size of the actual tablet. A 7-inch tablet is considered small, while 8.9-inch and larger tablets are considered large-screen. Most manufacturers offer a variety of screen sizes to fit any lifestyle and budget.

Screen resolution is also important – especially for ebook reading, entertainment and Web surfing. Look for a sharp, brightly-lit display to deliver crisp text and vibrant images. Google Nexus, iPad Air and iPad mini tablets with Retina displays, and Amazon Kindle Fire offer superior screen resolution.

Storage

Cloud (off-device) storage is an option for many tablets (iCloud for iPads, Amazon Cloud Storage for Kindle Fires, and OneDrive for Windows), but you'll also want plenty of on-board storage. All the apps, music, videos and photos that most people keep on their tablets can take up a lot of space. Some of today's tablets can offer storage that tops out at 128GB of flash-based memory. Most tablets have a maximum of 64GB of flash-based memory, with most tablets available in 16, 32 or 64GB varieties. A few Android tablets feature microSD memory card slots for expanded storage.



WiFi vs. Cellular models

Many tablets come in a WiFi-only model or with the option of always-on cellular service from a wireless provider. If you want to use your tablet to get online anywhere, you should opt for a model with cellular 3G or 4G service, like the latest iPad, iPad mini, or the Amazon Kindle Fire HD 8.9. This does add to the overall cost of the tablet, and then you need to pay for cellular service; however, for tablets, you can usually purchase data on a month-to-month basis, without signing a contract.

Another way to get your tablet online: Use your 3G or 4G phone as a WiFi hotspot for your tablet — this won't work with every phone/tablet combo, so you should check with your carrier before making your decision.

Kids' tablets

Tablets designed for kids have fun and colorful designs with protective bumpers and rugged designs to withstand active users. These tablets also come preloaded with a variety of fun games, educational activities, art programs, e-books, music, and videos, which you can tailor to your child's age or grade. But don't consider them simple toys. Today's kids' tablets have some very grown-up features — especially with the entry into the market of such companies as Amazon and Samsung. Although they are designed for younger children, parents can also use the tablet by switching from kid mode to a parent mode.



Tablet accessories

A case will not only protect your tablet from bumps and scratches but can also be used as a stand for comfortable viewing. Get a laptop-type experience by adding a keyboard to your tablet. Some attach to your tablet while others use Bluetooth to enable you to can work wirelessly. App-enabled devices will empower you to keep track of your health and fitness level, collect credit card payments, control your home's temperature, play interactive games and more.



Universal Foldable Bluetooth Keyboard

Go anywhere with this universal Bluetooth® keyboard that has a battery life of 44 hours. This wireless keyboard is compatible with Android, iOS and Windows devices. It also doubles as a case and stand.



AR for her Zipstick Powerbank with Flashlight

Power up your devices on-the-go with this ultra-lightweight charger. Discreet and powerful, this charger fits perfectly in purses, clutches and backpacks. Bonus: The LED flashlight makes finding things in your bag super easy!