pickwise

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Phone checklist

From the latest iPhone and Galaxy flagships to great-value Pixels, we compared the phones worth buying right now, so you can pick the right one for your budget.

The 10 at a glance

#	Phone	Best for	Software	Good for
1	Apple iPhone 18 Pro	Best overall	iOS	All-rounders
2	Samsung Galaxy S26 Ultra	Best Android	Android	Power users
3	Google Pixel 11 Pro	Best for AI and photos	Android	Photography
4	Apple iPhone 17	Best value iPhone	iOS	Most iPhone users
5	Google Pixel 11	Best value Pixel	Android	Everyday use
6	Samsung Galaxy S26	Best compact Android	Android	Smaller hands
7	OnePlus 15	Best battery life	Android	Heavy users
8	Google Pixel 10a	Best under $500	Android	Tight budgets
9	Samsung Galaxy Z Fold 8	Best foldable	Android	Multitasking
10	Apple iPhone 17e	Best budget iPhone	iOS	First iPhone

Quick answers

Is iPhone or Android better?

Neither is better for everyone. iPhones suit people already using Apple devices, while Android offers more choice of brands, sizes and prices.

How much should I spend on a phone?

Most people get a great phone for $500 to $800. Spend more if you want the best camera, the fastest chip or a foldable.

How long should a smartphone last?

Many phones now get five to seven years of software updates, so a good phone can last a long time with a battery replacement.

How to choose a smartphone

How long phones get updates

Policies change, so check the maker's current promise before you buy.

Google Pixel 8 and later	**Samsung** Recent Galaxy S phones	**Apple** Recent iPhones	**Other brands** Varies by model
7 years	**7 years**	**Usually 5+ years**	**Check**

1 Pick iPhone or Android

If you already use a Mac, iPad or Apple Watch, an iPhone fits in easily. Android gives you more choice of brands, sizes and prices.

2 Set a sensible budget

Mid-range phones are now very good. Last year's flagship is often a great deal once the new model arrives.

3 Check the camera you need

If you shoot a lot of photos of distant subjects, look for a telephoto zoom. For everyday snaps, most current phones do a great job.

4 Look at battery and charging

Battery life matters more than most specs. Check independent battery tests and whether the phone supports fast or wireless charging.

5 Think about updates

Longer software support keeps your phone secure and useful for more years, which makes a higher price easier to justify.

6 Choose storage and size

Get more storage if you keep lots of photos and videos. Hold the phone in a store if you can, as size and weight are personal.

Your checklist

Tick things off as you go.

DECIDE WHAT MATTERS

- [ ] iPhone or Android?
- [ ] Set your budget
- [ ] Camera, battery or size first?
- [ ] Do you need a telephoto zoom?

BEFORE YOU BUY

- [ ] Unlocked or carrier deal?
- [ ] Check trade-in value of your old phone
- [ ] Hold it in a store if you can

COMPARE PHONES

- [ ] Years of software updates
- [ ] Independent battery test results
- [ ] Storage you need (128GB, 256GB+)
- [ ] Fast and wireless charging

SETTING UP

- [ ] Back up your old phone
- [ ] Move your eSIM or SIM
- [ ] Turn on Find My or Find My Device
- [ ] Add a case and screen protector

See the full list online

All 10, with pros and cons and who each one suits.

pickwiseguides.com/tech/smartphones-2026

Open the list