

# Apple signs deal for China iPhone launch

August 27 2009

---



A man displays an iPhone along a street in Beijing. US high-tech giant Apple and China Unicom on Friday announced they had reached a multi-year deal to launch the widely popular iPhone in the world's largest mobile market later this year.

US high-tech giant Apple and China Unicom on Friday announced they had reached a multi-year deal to launch the widely popular iPhone in the world's largest mobile market later this year.

"We have signed a multi-year deal with China Unicom to bring iPhone to China, and we expect the launch to be in the fourth quarter of 2009," Alan Hely, an [Apple](#) spokesman based in London, told AFP.

The announcement marks the iPhone's long-awaited debut in China, one of the last major markets where it is not sold, though analysts say the country is the world's biggest market for smuggled, "unlocked" and

counterfeited iPhones.

Apple's Hely did not give further details about the deal such as pricing for the touch-pad smartphone, or whether the device's [wireless Internet](#) function would be disabled, as has been reported here.

China Unicom issued a statement saying more details would be available nearer to the launch date.

China Unicom, the smaller rival of China's largest wireless operator [China Mobile](#), started iPhone negotiations with Apple after the government issued third-generation, or 3G, mobile phone licences in January.

The authoritative Caijing magazine, citing an unnamed source close to the negotiations, said Thursday China Unicom and Apple would offer stripped down eight- and 16-gigabyte iPhones without Wi-Fi.

Analysts say the Chinese government opposes phones equipped with Wi-Fi out of fear that state-owned telecoms companies will lose revenue due to the large number of free wireless hotspots in the country.

The iPhone is likely to be priced starting at 2,999 yuan (439 dollars) with a requirement that customers also buy 3,000 yuan worth of pre-paid calls, the Caijing report said.

China Unicom, which had 140 million mobile subscribers by end-June, expects to attract high-end users with the iPhone to turn around weak performance in competition with arch rivals China Mobile and China Telecom, reports have said.

China Mobile, which had 493 million subscribers by the end of June, is developing a handset similar to the [iPhone](#) with firms including Chinese

computer maker Lenovo, previous media reports said.

[China](#) had 687 million mobile phone users at the end of May, according to government data.

*(c) 2009 AFP*

Citation: Apple signs deal for China iPhone launch (2009, August 27) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-08-apple-china-iphone.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--