

# Long queues for iPad 2 in China

May 6 2011, by Fran Wang

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Customers check out the newly released Apple iPad 2 in Hong Kong last week. Apple fans queued up for hours Friday in China to snap up the iPad 2 as the updated version of the popular tablet computer went on sale in the world's biggest Internet market.

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Apple's four stores in Beijing and Shanghai began offering the [Wi-Fi](#) model of the lighter, thinner, camera-equipped touchscreen device, which went on sale in the US on March 11 and in countries across Asia last week to great fanfare.

"It's convenient and it's great fun. I've been looking forward to getting one for more than a month, since I learned that Apple was going to launch it in [China](#)," 22-year-old Liu Yan, who runs a magic shop, told

AFP.

Liu purchased the most expensive model -- the 64-gigabyte version selling for 5,288 yuan (\$815). The cheapest 16-gigabyte version sells for 3,688 yuan. Both black and white models were on offer.

Apple employees told AFP that hundreds had queued overnight outside the store in a trendy upscale shopping mall in the city centre. Hired security guards maintained order throughout the day.

By 5:00 pm, queues had waned, but the glassfront store was still jammed with customers including 22-year-old Flora Wang, who said she wanted to buy an iPad but was still deciding whether to buy the original model or the updated one.

"The screen is so big," said Wang, as she played a game and browsed the online app of Spanish fashion brand Zara.

The iPad was also on sale at authorised dealers in China, such as electronics chain stores, but was not available late Friday on Apple's online store for China.

China has a booming grey market for Apple products to satisfy pent-up demand -- perhaps prompting the California-based high-tech giant to gradually shorten the lag time between the US and China launches of its coveted gadgets.

The [iPhone](#) officially went on sale in China in October 2009 -- more than two years after its US launch. The original iPad, which debuted in the United States in April 2010, hit store shelves in China in September.

Apple plans to have 25 new stores in China by the end of this year.

With the world's top Internet population at more than 457 million users, China is a key market for tablet computer makers -- research firm Analysys International estimates tablet sales will reach 4.5 million units here in 2011.

"It is not surprising to see people lining up for the iPad 2, but I don't think there will be a supply crunch due to heavy demand," Sun Peilin, an analyst at Beijing-based Analysys, told AFP.

"Sales will normalise and then pick up in the second quarter," Sun said, adding that iPad prices on the [grey market](#) had dropped off on Friday as the official launch went into full swing.

Apple sold 15 million iPads last year, generating \$10 billion in revenue and establishing the multi-tasking device as a "must-have" consumer item for many.

It quickly dominated the tablet computer market and was swiftly followed by offerings from the tech industry's main players, from Samsung and Dell to BlackBerry maker RIM and Toshiba. Sony unveiled its tablet models last week.

In March, Chinese computer giant Lenovo launched its own [tablet computer](#) -- the LePad, powered by Google's Android software -- at home as it tries to compete for a share of an increasingly crowded market dominated by the [iPad](#).

It is due to go on sale outside China by June.

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