

iPhone 4S fever hits Hong Kong

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People line up for the Apple iPhone 4s in Hong Kong on November 10, 2011. More than a 1,500 people lined up for the latest Apple smartphone which will go on sale in the territory on November 11, 2011.

Hong Kong was gripped by iPhone 4S fever on Thursday as more than 1,500 fans and resellers queued outside the Apple store ahead of the release of the smartphone in the southern Chinese city.

The crowd -- including the elderly and parents with children in tow -- began to converge on a footbridge opposite Apple's plush new harbourside store on Monday, setting up tents with mats, chairs and blankets.

The [iPhone](#) 4S will be launched in Hong Kong on Friday at 7:00 am (2300 GMT Thursday), in the latest phase of its rollout which will also see it debut in [South Korea](#) and 13 other countries.

Would-be customers braved chilly weather and overnight rain, as well as gangs of resellers who were trying to muscle in on the queue to snap up phones for the [grey market](#).

"A scuffle nearly broke out several times. It was such a mess, there was no proper arrangement," said Man Chow, 33, a local bank worker who took leave to join the queue on Wednesday evening with a friend.

"We had to stand and queue last night even though it was raining and it was very cold. We don't know whether there's a quota for each customer but I want to get as many iPhone 4Ss as I can," he said.

A man from mainland China who refused to give his name said he had been waiting all week.

"I'll be very proud to own this latest phone. And I'll be very embarrassed if I can't get anything," he said, adding he would buy as many as he could and sell those he didn't want for himself.

Stunned tourist Dustin Moore said: "I'll just wait for a few weeks or even a few months to get the phone. This is just crazy, I don't know what to say."

More than four million of the smartphones have been sold since its world debut in markets including Germany, Britain, France, Japan and Australia on October 14, according to the company.

The buyer frenzy comes despite software bugs that have caused some iPhone 4S owners to report lower than expected [battery life](#), and reports that its Siri voice-recognition software may not cope well with foreign accents.

Consumer Reports, the influential magazine for product reviews, gave

the new model a thumbs up on Tuesday after declining to recommend the previous iPhone version because of reception problems.

The iPhone 4S is already a hit on Hong Kong's grey market, where they sell for up to six times the official price.

Those margins will shrink dramatically once the product is freely available in the city, but there will still be a market for people who are prepared to pay a premium to avoid the queues at the [Apple store](#).

Other iPhone4Ss will end up on the grey market in nearby cities such as Shenzhen and Guangzhou in mainland China, where they have yet to be officially released.

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