

Review: iPhone SE features smaller screen, lower price

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From left, the iPhone 6S Plus, 6S and SE lie next to each other in a comparison photograph, Thursday, March 24, 2016, in New York. Apple's new 4-inch iPhone SE is a good choice at a good price for many people. You get the same speeds, graphics capabilities and rear camera as the iPhone 6S, but for \$250 less. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

Small, medium or large? You might drive a Toyota Prius, and I might drive a Chevrolet Silverado. I might like a shot of espresso while you

might like a Big Gulp. Seems like there's a right size for everything - including cellphones.

Apple introduced the original iPhone with a 3.5-inch screen and kept that size through the iPhone 4S before screens started getting bigger.

It's just in the last two years that Apple started rolling out two iPhones per year with differing screen sizes.

But those new screen sizes were big and bigger.

Apple jumped from the 4-inch screen of the iPhone 5S to give customers the 4.7-inch iPhone 6 and the 5.5-inch iPhone 6 Plus.

Just like that, Apple decided iPhone users wanted bigger screens, but did we really?

I've read that 25 percent of iPhone users did not upgrade to one of the larger iPhones.

Indeed, Apple kept selling the iPhone 5S with its smaller screen and 2-year-old processor as the "entry level" iPhone, and it was apparently selling pretty well.

A lot of people I know were not happy that Apple was forcing larger iPhones on them. I like to keep my phone in my back pocket, and I found the iPhone 6S Plus just too big.

I'm sure people who wear smaller pants than I do have that same problem.

I also know iPad mini owners who think the larger iPhones are just too close in size to their iPads.

Plus a lot of people like using their phone one-handed, and the 6S made that almost impossible.

Thankfully, Apple decided to listen to the market and introduce the iPhone SE, which is basically the guts of an iPhone 6S crammed into the case of an iPhone 5S.

THE GOOD STUFF

The iPhone SE has a lot of features in common with the iPhone 6S, but not everything.

The SE uses the same processor, the A9, with the same M9 motion co-processor.

The main camera on the SE is the same 12-megapixel model as in the 6S, and it can capture 4K HD video.

The SE has a CPU that's twice as fast and graphics performance three times as fast as the iPhone 5S.

The SE also has Apple Pay, which is missing from the 5S.

The faster processor also allows for "Hey, Siri" hands-free use.

THE DIFFERENCES

The insides of the SE have a lot in common with the 6S, but the case and screen are the same as the 5S.

That means the SE's 4-inch screen has a resolution of 1136 x 640 pixels with a pixel density of 326 pixels per inch.

It uses Apple's first-generation Touch ID sensor, which is not as fast as the second-generation fingerprint sensor of the 6S.

The fingerprint recognition is still plenty fast, but not lightning-fast like in the 6S.

THE PRICE DROP

Apple surprised a lot of people with a low starting price for the SE.

There are two storage configurations - 16 gigabytes for \$399 and 64 gb for \$499.

The low starting price is going to bring a lot of new customers to Apple and perhaps convince a number of iPhone 5 and 5S users to upgrade.

The iPhone 6S starts \$250 higher at \$649.

There are naysayers who claim Apple is going to eat into its own market share with the SE, but honestly, while there are some 6S and 6S Plus users who will jump to a smaller iPhone, I think the people holding onto their 5S handset now have a good reason to upgrade.

Plus, in markets like China and India, iPhones have been out of reach for a good chunk of the population. The SE will be popular overseas.

Apple seems to be pretty good at waiting to see what people want and then giving it to them.

People are fickle. We want bigger phones until it's all we have, and then we want smaller phones.

Now there is a current-generation iPhone for everyone.

Pros: Small size, fast processor, great camera.

Cons: Older screen and Touch ID hardware.

Bottom Line: Smaller iPhone lovers are doing a happy dance.

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