

Is \$1,100 too much for an iPhone? Get an older one for less

September 21 2018, by Anick Jesdanun



In this Sept. 16, 2016, file photo the new Apple iPhone 7 is displayed at the Apple Store at the Grove in Los Angeles. In the iPhone 7, Apple boosted the front camera from 5 megapixels to 7 megapixels, so selfies don't feel as inferior. (AP Photo/Richard Vogel, File)

The \$1,100 price tag on Apple's latest iPhone turned heads when the company announced it last week. But for less than half as much, you can still get a good camera, a decent-sized screen and other popular features.

Just buy a two-year-old iPhone 7.

That phone was Apple's first to come with water resistance and its first to lose the standard headphone jack. Its 4.7-inch screen is adequate and on par with other smartphones, even though its resolution falls short of high definition. And the phone still has a fingerprint sensor and a home button, both of which have vanished in the latest iPhones.

Or, if you want to pay more for wireless charging, there's the iPhone 8. An edge-to-edge screen? You'll need the upcoming budget iPhone XR or one of its more expensive siblings. And if you want a supersized display, that's where the \$1,100 iPhone XS Max comes in. That model and a smaller version start selling in the U.S. and several other countries on Friday.

If you're shopping for a new phone, it pays to think hard about what you really want and what you're willing to pay for it. Improvements over the previous generation tend to be incremental, but can add up over time—and so do the sums you'll pay for them.

Here's what to consider if you're thinking of bargain-hunting in the iPhone history bin.



In this Sept. 16, 2018, file photo the new iPhone 7 and 7 Plus are on display at the Apple store in Sydney, Australia. Apple's \$1,100 price tag on its latest iPhone got much of the attention during the company's unveiling event. But for 60 percent less, you can still get a great camera and what used to be the iPhone's standard size in the two-year-old iPhone 7. (AP Photo/Rob Griffith, File)

IPHONE 7 (\$449)

The big jump in iPhone cameras came a generation earlier with the iPhone 6S, when Apple went from 8 megapixels to 12 megapixels in resolution. With the iPhone 7, the front camera goes from 5 megapixels to 7 megapixels, so selfies don't feel as inferior. Headphones go into its Lightning port, which is used for both charging and data transfer. It's a pain when you want to listen to music while recharging the phone. For that, you need \$159 wireless earphones called AirPods. Apple no longer includes an adapter for standard headphones; one will set you back \$9 if you need it.

IPHONE 7 PLUS (\$569)

This larger version of the iPhone 7 has a second camera lens in the back, allowing for twice the magnification without any degradation in image quality. It also lets the camera gauge depth and blur backgrounds in portrait shots, something once limited to full-featured SLR cameras. The dual-lens camera alone is a good reason to go for a Plus, though the larger size isn't a good fit for those with small hands or small pockets.



In this March 21, 2016, file photo members of the media and invited guests take a look at the new iPhone SE during an event at Apple headquarters in Cupertino, Calif. If you do get an SE, or one of the iPhone 7 models, spend another \$100 for four times the storage, as the starter model has just 32 gigabytes, or half of what's standard these days. Otherwise, your phone will fill up quickly with photos, video, songs and podcasts. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

IPHONE 8 (\$599)

New color filters in the camera produce truer and richer colors, while a new flash technique tries to light the foreground and background more evenly. Differences are subtle, though. The year-old model, similar in size to the iPhone 7, restores a glass back found in the earliest iPhones. That's done so you can charge it on a wireless-charging mat, which also solves the problem of listening to music while charging. But with more glass, it's even more important to get a case and perhaps a service plan.

IPHONE 8 PLUS (\$699)

Again, the Plus version has a larger screen and a second lens. For those shots with blurred backgrounds, a new feature lets you add filters to mimic studio and other lighting conditions.



In this Sept. 12, 2017, file photo the new iPhone 8 and iPhone 8 Plus are displayed after the new product announcement at the Steve Jobs Theater on the new Apple campus in Cupertino, Calif. With the iPhone 8 the new color filters produce truer and richer colors, while a new flash technique tries to light the

foreground and background more evenly. The iPhone 8 Plus offers a larger screen and a second lens. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

IPHONE XS (\$999)

As with the iPhone X it replaces, the new XS has a display that largely runs from edge to edge, getting rid of the surrounding bezel along with the home button. Many tasks now require swipes rather than presses. The fingerprint ID sensor is replaced with facial recognition to unlock the phone. The display has about the same surface area as the iPhone 7 Plus and 8 Plus, while the phone itself is only slightly larger than the regular iPhone 7 and 8. Improved display technology means vivid colors and better contrasts, including black that is black rather than simply dark. You also get a dual-lens camera and software improvements for regular shots.

IPHONE XS MAX (\$1,099)

This is essentially the "Plus" version of the iPhone XS. The phone itself is about the size of the Plus, but with more room for the display. This phone won't feel big for existing Plus users, but think twice if you have small hands or small pockets.



In this Sept. 12, 2017, file photo the new iPhone 8 Plus is displayed in the showroom after the new product announcement at the Steve Jobs Theater on the new Apple campus in Cupertino, Calif. The iPhone 8 Plus offers a larger screen and a second lens. For those shots with blurred backgrounds, a new feature lets you add filters to mimic studio and other lighting conditions. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

COMING SOON

Consider waiting a month for the iPhone XR. Its display lacks the vivid colors, contrast quality and resolution of the XS, but the price tag is nicer at \$749. As with the XS models, you'll get an edge-to-edge screen to minimize wasted space. There's more display than the regular XS, but the phone itself is also larger—just not as large as the Max. The XR won't have the dual-lens [camera](#), though Apple says it can offer the blurred-background effect with software.

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

Apple quietly discontinued the iPhone SE , which is essentially a three-year-old iPhone 6S, packed in a body that's smaller but thicker than the iPhone 7 and 8. Though the trend in phones has been to go bigger, some people preferred the smaller size—and the \$350 price tag. Apple no longer sells it, though you can get it from some wireless carriers and other retailers, at least for now.



In this Sept. 12, 2018, file photo the iPhone XS, right, and XS Max are displayed side to side during an event to announce new products at Apple headquarters in Cupertino, Calif. The iPhone XS has a display that largely runs from edge to edge, meaning there's little waste. The XS Max phone itself is about the size of the Plus, but with more room for the display. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

ALL IN THE MEMORY

If you get an SE, 7 or 7 Plus, consider spending another \$100 to quadruple the storage. Those phones come with a paltry 32 gigabytes, just half of what's standard these days. If you don't upgrade, you risk filling up your phone quickly with photos, video, songs and podcasts.



In this Sept. 12, 2018, file photo Phil Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of worldwide marketing, speaks about the new Apple iPhone XS, iPhone XS Max and the iPhone XR at the Steve Jobs Theater during an event to announce new Apple products in Cupertino, Calif. Apple's \$1,100 price tag on its latest iPhone got much of the attention during the company's unveiling event. But for 60 percent less, you can still get a great camera and what used to be the iPhone's standard size in the two-year-old iPhone 7. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

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