

Review: Samsung Galaxy S6 impresses, but something's missing

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The Samsung Galaxy S6 is a paradox. While Samsung has produced a great phone and included some nice upgrades, it left out some of the Galaxy's best features and hiked the price.

It's the coolest (and best-looking) Android phone I've used, so let's start with what I like about it.

Samsung's flagship Galaxy S phones have always been on the cutting edge of features, but their design always felt a bit cheap, especially the very thin and flimsy plastic back.

Samsung must have read my mind, because the new S6 and S6 Edge are made of aluminum and glass. The plastic back of the Galaxy S5 has been replaced with Corning Gorilla Glass on the S6 models.

The phones both have a 5.1-inch screen with a resolution of 2,560 by 1,440 pixels for a pixel density of 577 pixels per inch.

In comparison, the Retina display of the iPhone 6 has 326 pixels per inch.

The S6 Edge has a rounded glass screen on the vertical edges, which has a bit of extra functionality and a ton of visual appeal. The Edge is a stunning phone to use and to hold.

The phones measure 5.59 by 2.75 by 0.27 inches, and they weigh just 4.6 ounces.

Inside, the S6 and S6 Edge are identical.

They both run Android 5.0 (Lollipop) with an octa-core Exynos processor with 3 gigabytes of RAM and from 32 to 128 gigabytes of storage.

They have 802.11ac Wi-Fi and Bluetooth v4.1.

The main camera has a 16-megapixel sensor with [optical image stabilization](#). The front camera has a 5-megapixel sensor.

The S6 can shoot 4K video (3,480 x 2,160 pixels) at 30 frames per

second.

The 2600 mAh battery is good for up to 26 hours of talk, 13 hours of video playback, 12 hours of LTE internet use or 58 hours of music playback.

The phones feature built-in wireless charging with the optional wireless charging pad, and they also have a fast-charge feature.

Samsung says 10 minutes of charging can provide up to four hours of battery life.

The website Droid-life.com did a fast-charging test. It started with the battery at 5 percent; with 15 minutes of charging the battery was at 32 percent. It took 40 minutes to reach 76 percent and 72 minutes to reach 100 percent.

Comparisons

The glass and metal sandwich design is beautiful, and it's drawing a lot of comparisons to the iPhone.

The sleep-wake button and the volume buttons mimic the iPhone, as do the headphone jack, charging port and even the speaker grille on the bottom.

The S6 and S6 Edge also have a home button on the front that doubles as a fingerprint reader to unlock the phone.

The usual colors are available (black, white, gold) but you can also get a green S6 Edge or a blue S6.

It's the most iPhone-like Galaxy S phone yet, but I don't think that's a

bad thing.

The iPhone is popular, and if Samsung can improve on the iPhone's features, that's a good thing.

But in changing the design, Samsung has removed some of the core features that made the Galaxy S unique.

Using glass for the back cover meant the end of the replaceable battery. Also gone is the microSD card slot for memory expansion.

That's right, no more swapping out batteries or adding storage. Those two features have been hallmarks of the Galaxy S, and I'm betting some users are not happy about their absence.

The Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge are also not waterproof, like the S5.

The phone comes with a ton of bloatware (no surprise). There are folders full of preloaded apps from Samsung, Google, Microsoft and AT&T (which kindly provided the review unit).

At least it was mostly contained in those folders, so you can ignore it if you like. I didn't get a chance to see what could be deleted.

Price: While the S6 is reasonably priced at \$684.99 for the 32 Gb version, the Edge screen bumps the price up to \$814.99. Those are the cash prices from AT&T.

I like those curved edges, but they add \$130 to the price of the phone.

This presents a quandary: Do you spring for the curved screen or do you spend that extra money on an S6 with 64 Gb of storage for \$784.99?

Interesting problem to have, I suppose.

If I were spending my own money, I'd opt for more storage and the flat screen of the S6.

Overall, the Galaxy S6 would be my choice for an Android phone. It has the features and the looks at the right price. The Edge is sexier-looking and is selling well, according to early reports, but I think that money is better saved or spent on more storage for its flat-faced sibling.

Pros: Beautiful design, fast charging, great camera

Cons: Expensive (Edge), missing features (replaceable battery, external storage)

Bottom line: The Galaxy S continues to evolve in mostly positive ways.

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