

iPhone 13: Release date, features, specs, and rumors

We're about a month away from a formal announcement, and that means even more frequent leaks and rumors. Here's what we know.



By [Jason Cipriani](#) | August 9, 2021 -- ZDNet



Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

September is usually an exciting month. Not only do we transition from the heat of the summer to cooler fall days, but that's usually the same general timeframe when Apple announces new iPhone models and releases the next version of iOS.

And yet, each year as September gets closer, it feels like it's too soon to start talking about Apple's next phone. But here we are, nearly a year after the iPhone 12 lineup was released, getting ready for the iPhone 13. Of course, Apple hasn't formally announced anything or even admitted there's an iPhone 13 (or maybe it'll be called iPhone 12S?) coming. So, instead, we have to rely on rumors to give us a peek behind the iPhone's curtain.

Current rumors paint a decent picture of what we should expect, and on top of that, we can make some educated guesses to get a better picture of what we should expect the iPhone 13 to do and look like. That said, we don't know everything, and until Apple CEO Tim Cook walks out on stage and thanks all of us for joining the event, all the rumors below should be treated as that -- rumors.

What will the next iPhone be called?

- Could be the iPhone 12S or iPhone 13
- For sake of differentiating models, we'll go with iPhone 13... for now.

Apple has traditionally used a tick-tock approach to updating iPhone design, hardware, and names. For example, the iPhone 6 was followed by the iPhone 6S. However, recently, we've seen the company ditch the S-series in favor of increasing the name by one like it did with the release of the iPhone 12 only a year after the iPhone 11.

Either name could be in our future, but for ease of identifying a new iPhone, we're going to go with iPhone 13 until Apple CEO Tim Cook says otherwise.

When will the iPhone 13 be available?

- Likely in the third-quarter
- 2020 pushed the iPhone launch back a few weeks
- September or October would be a good guess

Typically, Apple announces new iPhone models sometime in September and then releases them a few weeks later. That timing was pushed back a bit in 2020 due to the pandemic, with the iPhone 12 lineup launch split between Oct. 23 and Nov. 13.

Hopefully, production is back on track this year and we'll see a more familiar September announcement and release.

How much will the iPhone 13 cost?

- It's too early to know
- But we don't expect a big price increase or decrease

Pricing seems to always be the hardest piece of information to nail down before Apple announces it. With the announcement still several months away, we haven't seen any indication of what to expect in terms of price when it comes to the next crop of iPhones.

We don't expect Apple to raise prices, at least not on the base storage models, but stranger things have happened.

What will the iPhone 13 look like?

- Apple just changed the design, don't expect it two years in a row
- There's speculation of a smaller Face ID notch

Apple completely revamped the overall look of the iPhone line, with the launch of the iPhone 12 and its flat-edge design. Because of that, we don't expect Apple to drastically change the design of the iPhone 13, if at all. There are some reports that the Face ID notch that's been at the top of the iPhone's display since the iPhone X is getting smaller, so that may be one slight design change. Otherwise, outside of new colors, and maybe a larger camera array on the back of the phone, don't get your hopes up for a new design.

What will the iPhone 13 feature for specs?

- Rumors are still all over the place
- No ports and the return of Touch ID, maybe?
- 120Hz Always-on display? It's possible

Features and specifications will be something we can start to nail down closer to the announcement, but right now, reports are all over the place and likely include stuff Apple is working on, has worked on, or considered working on. For example, last year, rumors indicated we'd see an iPhone with a display refresh rate of 120Hz. That didn't happen, and it's unclear if it ever will, although there's some speculation the faster display tech will make its iPhone debut this year. It's possible Apple is still working on a faster display and it was always meant for the iPhone 13 (or 14). If I had to guess, we will see 120Hz displays in the iPhone 13 Pro and iPhone 13 Pro Max this year, but not the base iPhone 13 (and iPhone 13 mini, if there is one).

There's also some speculation that Apple will get rid of the Lightning port on the bottom of the iPhone. Instead, Apple will use its new MagSafe technology to charge the phone and sync data. Another possibility is Apple removes the Lightning port and replaces it with a USB-C port, as it has on the MacBook, iPad Air, and iPad Pro lines. Personally, I don't see Apple doing this quite yet. I'd love for Apple to

switch to USB-C across all of its products, but it's been a slow process in changing out the Lightning connector on iPad models.

Bloomberg's Mark Gurman reported in his weekly newsletter [Power On](#) that Apple is readying an iPhone with a new A15 processor, smaller notch, and possibly an always-on display like the Apple Watch currently uses. Oh, and Gurman also states that a 120Hz is possible as well. Another rumored feature that could be a product of wishful thinking is that we'll see the return of Touch ID, Apple's fingerprint sensor tech, in the iPhone 13. Only instead of being embedded in the home button, it's either going to be moved to the side button, like the fourth-generation iPad Air, or embedded under the display, as we've seen on several Android phones and tablets over the last few years.

Either option would be welcome, especially with facial coverings rendering Face ID almost useless. Although Apple added a tool to make it easier to use in iOS 14.5 if you own an Apple Watch, it's still not ideal.

Either of those rumors can be founded in fact or wishful thinking, it's hard to say right now. We can expect Apple to put a faster processor, a better GPU, improve or keep battery life the same, along with upgrades to the camera. All those are staple upgrades in every new iPhone.

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