

Best iPad 2018

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When it comes to buying an iPad there are a few different questions, but they all come down to one main consideration: what do you need from an iPad? We'll help you work out your requirements and which size of screen will satisfy them.

This guide looks into specifics such as storage capacity, cellular (3G/4G) capabilities and colours. We'll even talk about whether you should be getting an iPad at all (perhaps an Android or Windows tablet would offer better value for money) and second-hand/refurbished alternatives.

Finally, for each category of iPad we consider whether an updated version of that device is likely to be unveiled in the near future, and whether the threat of obsolescence should influence your buying decision. (From time to time Apple adds an iPad to its [Vintage & Obsolete list](#), usually around five or six years after being launched, while slightly more recent devices may not receive iOS updates any more.)

When you've decided which iPad you want to buy, take a look at our [best iPad deals](#) for detailed advice on the best places to buy.

Right now there's an exclusive code that'll get you [up to £37 off any iPad at KRCS](#). Use [MACWORLD3](#) at checkout to get the discount. Ends 9 September 2018.

Comparing the iPad line-up



As you can see above, Apple currently sells four iPad models, and each of those offers three or four colour options, one to three storage capacities, and the option to get both Wi-Fi and cellular, or just stick with Wi-Fi.

That's a lot of configurations: clearly we've got work to do in our task of helping you choose which iPad is best for you and your needs.

Price

We'll start by looking at price, which is likely to be the single biggest factor. Many buyers simply want the best iPad they can get for their money - but that all depends on the budget.

Well, the good news is that there is wide range of iPad prices to choose from.

Prices range from £319/\$329 for the iPad 9.7in all the way up to £1,249/\$1,279 for the 12.9in iPad Pro.

You'll notice that the iPad mini (which hasn't been updated since 2015) inexplicably costs more than the larger and newer 9.7in iPad. That's a good indication that it would not be a good buy right now. (Read about the iPad mini and whether Apple is likely to update it, or discontinue it, [here](#)).

Prices for all the iPads are listed below, correct at time of writing.

iPad mini 4 prices

- iPad mini 4 (WiFi, 128GB): £399/\$399
- iPad mini 4 (cellular, 128GB): £529/\$529

9.7in iPad prices

- iPad (WiFi, 32GB): [£319/\\$329](#)
- iPad (WiFi, 128GB): [£409/\\$429](#)
- iPad (cellular, 32GB): [£449/\\$459](#)
- iPad (cellular, 128GB): [£539/\\$559](#)

10.5in iPad Pro prices

- iPad Pro 10.5in (WiFi, 64GB): [£619/\\$649](#)
- iPad Pro 10.5in (WiFi, 256GB): [£769/\\$799](#)
- iPad Pro 10.5in (WiFi, 512GB): [£969/\\$999](#)
- iPad Pro 10.5in (cellular, 64GB): [£749/\\$779](#)
- iPad Pro 10.5in (cellular, 256GB): [£899/\\$929](#)
- iPad Pro 10.5in (cellular, 512GB): [£1,099/\\$1,129](#)

12.9in iPad Pro prices

- iPad Pro 12.9in (WiFi, 64GB): [£769/\\$799](#)
- iPad Pro 12.9in (WiFi, 256GB): [£919/\\$949](#)
- iPad Pro 12.9in (WiFi, 512GB): [£1,119/\\$1149](#)
- iPad Pro 12.9in (cellular, 64GB): [£899/\\$929](#)
- iPad Pro 12.9in (cellular, 256GB): [£1,049/\\$1,079](#)
- iPad Pro 12.9in (cellular, 512GB): [£1,249/\\$1,279](#)

Click on the links above to go to Apple's site where you can buy that particular iPad model.

Your choice of the individual models will depend on how much money you're willing to spend, how portable and powerful you need your iPad to be, how long you need to be able to use your iPad (and for it to support the latest software), and in what areas (if any) you are willing to compromise.

Size

This is also likely to be an important deciding factor, but in a more subtle way than price: it's a question of taste rather than simply going for the biggest iPad you can get your hands on. Bigger isn't necessarily better if what you need is small and light.

Luckily, Apple sells iPads in four different screen sizes, so there's something here for everyone. In each case the size given indicates the diagonal distance from screen corner to screen corner.

- The 7.9in iPad mini 4
- The 9.7in iPad
- The 10.5in iPad Pro
- The 12.9in iPad Pro

Age

Age is more than just a number. Older iPads (and the older components they contain), even if functioning perfectly right now, are likely to reach the end of their useful life sooner than the newest models.

The mini 4 is the oldest currently available model, having come out in September 2015. It should still run new apps and iOS updates without serious trouble, although it won't stay that way forever. And the most demanding games, video-editing packages and other processor-intensive software may already give it problems.

The two current iPad Pro models were introduced in June 2017.

The iPad 9.7in (2018) is the newest iPad currently sold by Apple. (Other vendors may still have the iPad 9.7in from 2017, so check you're getting the new one.) If any more new iPads arrive in 2018, they are most likely to launch in September or November.

Which size of iPad should you get?

Let's start looking at those factors in depth. First of all we'll decide if you should buy a standard-size, a mini or an extra-large iPad, and then we'll narrow down your choice from there.

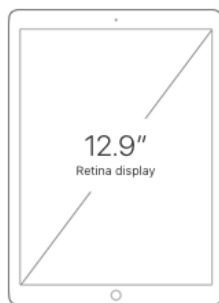
The first decision will cut our options drastically. Do you want a small, mid-size or giant-screen iPad?

Screen size

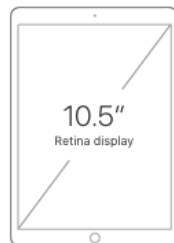
The most obvious aspect of this decision comes down to screen size. You've got four options: 7.9in (mini 4), 9.7in (iPad), 10.5in (Pro) or 12.9in (other Pro). All are measured diagonally.

But how big a screen do you really need?

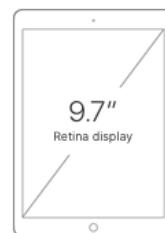
Display



Retina display
12.9-inch (diagonal)



Retina display
10.5-inch (diagonal)



Retina display
9.7-inch (diagonal)



Retina display
7.9-inch (diagonal)

You can get an idea of the comparative sizes in the picture above. But you can also think of

the tablets in terms of print publications: the mini models are roughly the size of a paperback; the mid-size iPads are closer (in length and width, even though they are very much thinner) to a hardback or *Private Eye*-style mini-magazine; and the 12.9in iPad Pro is more like a standard magazine.

The larger screen is obviously better for immersive entertainment. Whether watching films or playing games, it's a more enjoyable, richer experience. The iPad mini has only about two-thirds of the screen area of the 9.7in iPad; the 12.9in Pro has in turn about 78 percent more screen space.

If you're worried that an iPad mini will feel cramped, we'd point out that the mini screen feels much closer to the mid-size iPads than you might think. And we're getting increasingly used to watching films and TV shows on phone screens. Don't discount the mini as an entertainment device - it'll do you proud.

This is simply a question of priorities. Are you more set on getting maximum screen space, or are you willing to compromise on that front in order to get a lower price tag and improved portability?

Your choice of iPad depends to a huge extent on personal feeling, and it's worth trying to get your hands on the various models, whether in an Apple Store or at a friend's house, to get an idea of what you're looking for.

If it's impossible to do this, try the trick we've used occasionally in videos when trying to give viewers an idea of the dimensions of an unreleased product: check the height, width and so on (they're listed below) and use them to knock up a cardboard cutout to play around with.

Portability

12.9-inch iPad Pro	10.5-inch iPad Pro	iPad	iPad mini 4
Height 305.7 mm (12 inches)	Height 250.6 mm (9.8 inches)	Height 240 mm (9.4 inches)	Height 203.2 mm (8 inches)
Width 220.6 mm (8.68 inches)	Width 174.1 mm (6.8 inches)	Width 169.5 mm (6.6 inches)	Width 134.8 mm (5.3 inches)
Depth 6.9 mm (0.27 inches)	Depth 6.1 mm (0.24 inches)	Depth 7.5 mm (0.29 inches)	Depth 6.1 mm (0.24 inches)
Weight (Wi-Fi) 677 grams (1.49 pounds)	Weight (Wi-Fi) 469 grams (1.03 pounds)	Weight (Wi-Fi) 469 grams (1.03 pounds)	Weight (Wi-Fi) 298.8 grams (0.65 pounds)
Weight (Wi-Fi + Cellular) 692 grams (1.53 pounds)	Weight (Wi-Fi + Cellular) 477 grams (1.05 pounds)	Weight (Wi-Fi + Cellular) 478 grams (1.05 pounds)	Weight (Wi-Fi + Cellular) 304 grams (0.67 pounds)

One of the payoffs for settling for a smaller screen comes in the form of portability. For one thing, the iPad mini 4 is a lot lighter - there's a big weight gap between it and even the mid-size iPads: 299g to 469g - that's close enough to half the weight - looking at Wi-Fi-only models. (Note that the iPad and 10.5in iPad Pro weigh the same, even though the latter is longer and wider. It makes up for this by being significantly thinner.)

All variations of cellular capable iPads weigh a tiny bit more than their Wi-Fi-only counterparts thanks to extra components, but it is a barely noticeable difference of between 5g and 15g.

The mini 4 is more portable, then, as you'd expect. As well as its markedly lower weight it also has a smaller body, which slips easily into a rucksack or jacket pocket (or even a trouser pocket, at a push). If you plan to mainly use your iPad out and about, on holiday or commuting, the iPad mini is your best bet, but do bear in mind that an iPhone Plus has an only slightly smaller 5.5in display, and dimensions of 158.4mm by 78.1mm, which might appeal to you more if you are really set on getting a small device.

The iPad and 10.5in Pro are pleasingly portable, but they still can't match the mini for portability. The iPad has a slightly lower length and width; the Pro is slimmer.

The 12.9in Pro, as you'd expect, is considerably less portable than its smaller cousins, but we think Apple has done well to keep it down to 677g (that compares to the [first-gen 12.9in Pro](#) from 2015, which was 713g). It's actually 0.6mm thinner than the 9.7in iPad. It certainly won't go in a pocket, but the 12.9in Pro remains a slender, relatively lightweight and portable alternative to a laptop.

Speed

The iPad Pro models are, as you would expect, faster than their smaller equivalents. You can get an idea of relative speed by looking at a few relevant specs:

- iPad mini 4: A8 processor chip
- iPad 9.7in (2018): A10 Fusion chip
- iPad Pro 10.5in: A10X Fusion
- iPad Pro 12.9in (2017): A10X Fusion

The A8 chip was released in 2014; the A10 Fusion is two generations newer and more advanced - Apple estimates that it's twice as fast at general processing. The A10X is a still faster variant of the standard A10.

Another factor to consider is RAM. The iPad mini and 9.7in iPad each have 2GB of RAM, while the iPad Pros have a meaty 4GB of RAM.

We put the iPads through a range of speed tests to give an idea of their relative capabilities.

Geekbench 4 CPU test

We started with the general processing test in the Geekbench 4 app. The 2017 iPad Pro models are still ahead in this department, but the 2018 iPad runs them close in single-core. (We included 2017's iPad 9.7in for comparison purposes, but it's no longer sold by Apple.)

JetStream

Next we tested the iPads' ability to deal with Javascript web applications using the [JetStream 1.1 browser test](#). Again the 2017 Pro models were the front-runners, with the 2018 iPad closing the gap.

GFXBench Metal

What about graphics? We tested this using GFXBench Metal.

If you want to use highly demanding apps such as video and image editors, or if you're into graphically advanced games, you should be edging towards the iPad Pros.

If you're going to be using your iPad for the odd bit of email and web surfing, you should be leaning towards the 9.7in iPad, because the power of the 12.9in Pro, for example, will be wasted on such gentle workloads.

Battery life



While we're talking benchmarks, let's reiterate the probably well-known fact that bigger iPads have bigger batteries, and last longer away from a power supply.

For all four currently available iPads, however, Apple makes precisely the same claim concerning battery life: that they will last "up to 10 hours of surfing the web on Wi-Fi, watching video or listening to music" or "up to 9 hours of surfing the web using a mobile data network".

Despite the fact that Apple doesn't release this information officially, we know that the iPads have different battery capacities:

- iPad mini 4: 5,124 mAh
- 9.7in iPad (2018): 8,827 mAh
- 10.5in iPad Pro (2017): 8,134mAh

- 12.9in iPad Pro (2017): 10,875mAh

Different models have different generations of battery technology, and different demands are placed on their power consumption, resulting in drastically different battery life performance in our experience.

To give a rough idea of the differences you could see, here's our comparison chart from 2017, using the battery test segment of the Geekbench 3 app. (We've started using Geekbench 4 now, which is why the 2018 iPad doesn't appear.)

So, to summarise, all iPads should offer the same battery life, according to Apple, but you may find that you get a bit more battery life out of an iPad Pro, and the battery life of the iPad mini is more likely to disappoint.

Which iPad mini should you buy?

We'll look at the iPad mini in this section - if you'd prefer one of the larger models instead, skip ahead to [the mid-size iPad section](#) or the [big iPad Pro section](#).

If you've settled on an iPad mini, then Apple has made things easy for you: there's only the iPad mini 4, and it's only available in two different models, and three colours: silver, grey and gold.

Either way, you'll get an A8 processor chip with an M8 motion co-processor, 2GB of RAM, 128GB of storage, a Retina screen and an 8Mp rear camera.

Beyond colour, the only thing to decide is whether you want to grab the Wi-Fi only model or the cellular version so you can get on a 3G or 4G network. There is a steep price difference between Wi-Fi and cellular - about £130/\$130 - which might seem a lot, but if you expect to travel with your mini 4 (surely one of the main benefits of the smaller model) then 4G support might be worth the extra cost.



Future iPad mini releases

It's always annoying to buy a product only for the manufacturer to announce its successor a few weeks later. Which makes the release date of the iPad mini 5 an object of some interest to prospective iPad mini buyers. Sadly, only Tim Cook and a few of his closest advisors know for sure when the iPad mini 5 will be announced.

The iPad mini 4 came out in September 2015, and Apple has tended to update that line on a yearly basis; but Apple's September and October 2016 press events came and went with no word about the next iPad mini. Nor was there an update to the iPad mini in October 2017.

Following the announcement of the new 9.7in iPad in March 2018 we are thinking it's increasingly unlikely that the iPad mini will ever be updated. So, the chances are, if you were to pick up an iPad mini now, a new one won't be coming out in a month's time making your brand-new device obsolete. With that in mind, if you need an iPad mini now, go for it, because it may soon be removed from sale.

Which is, perhaps, a good reason not to buy one...

Take a look at our round-up of the [iPad mini 5 release date rumours](#) to find out more about the future of this iPad.

What next? [Pros and cons of each iPad model](#) | [Conclusion: which iPad is right for you?](#) | [Storage capacity options](#) | [Colour options](#) | [3G/cellular](#) | [Return to top of article](#)

Which mid-size iPad should you buy?

Okay, you've settled on one of the mid-size iPads: either the 9.7in iPad or the 10.5in iPad Pro. Which is the better choice for you?

If you've got lost and would prefer a smaller or larger tablet, jump back to [the iPad mini section](#) or ahead to the [12.9in iPad Pro section](#). Alternatively, jump to the [top of the page](#).

We have a [comparison of the iPad mini and the iPad 2018](#) here if you would like some more detail.

What are the differences between the 9.7in iPad and the 10.5in iPad Pro?

First, let's sum up the main differences between the 9.7in iPad and 10.5in iPad Pro. Take a deep breath, because there are *lots*.

First, the physical differences. The 10.5in iPad Pro has a bigger screen, and to fit this in it has reduced the size of the bezels around the edge of the screen - but it's also had to make the iPad itself a little longer (by about 10mm) and wider (by about 5mm). On the other hand, the Pro is significantly slimmer (6.1mm, to the iPad's 7.5mm). The two factors pretty much cancel each other out: they both weigh the same, almost to the gram (they're both 469g with Wi-Fi only; the 9.7in iPad is one gram heavier, 478g to 477g, in the cellular model).

To return to the screens, both models come with Retina displays (to understand what that means, see [our guide to Retina displays](#)) and both have a pixel density of 264ppi. In sharpness they should be identical.

But the Pro's screen has a resolution of 2224 x 1668, compared to the 9.7in model's 2048 x 1536. And it feels better too - it's a fully laminated screen so there isn't the slight 'give' that you get when pressing down on the 9.7in iPad's display.

And the Pro gets a True Tone display which adjusts contrast and brightness in varying light conditions. This is subtle in effect, but sitting at a desk under electric light in late afternoon with the iPad Pro and the iPad side by side, it is fairly clear that True Tone is gently warming things up - a kind of watered-down version of Night Shift. The nice thing is that you don't need to worry about this feature, you just get slightly better and more context-appropriate screen performance.

The iPad Pro has considerably better cameras. Its rear-facing camera is rated at 12Mp, to the iPad's 8Mp, and gets a flash and optical image stabilisation, which the iPad doesn't; it's capable of recording 4K video, whereas the iPad is limited to 1080p. The Pro's front-facing camera is 7Mp to the iPad's 1.2Mp, and 1080p to the iPad's 720p.

Both devices get the [Live Photos feature](#), where short snatches of video are captured before and after still photos so they can be animated (the iPad mini doesn't have this feature).

The Pro 10.5 has a processor that's slightly more advanced than the iPad: the A10X Fusion to the A10. The A10 also appeared in the iPhone 7 and 7 Plus. The X tends to signify that Apple has developed the chip for the iPad. We think you are unlikely to see a significant real-world difference between the two chips.

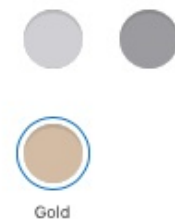
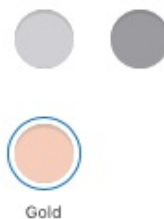
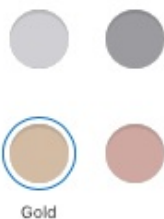
It used to be the case that only the iPad Pro models were compatible with the Apple Pencil, but since the introduction of the iPad in March 2018, this is no longer the case. Now both mid-sized iPads can utilise an Apple Pencil for an extra £89/\$99 - making both an attractive option for creatives.

However, the smaller iPad lacks the discreet connector on its lefthand edge that allows you to attach and power the Smart Keyboard or a third-party equivalent. The Smart Keyboard costs £159/\$159 but may make the Pro a more appealing option for business users.

And, while for many buyers this won't be a huge priority, audio is a huge difference. The Pro has four speakers, compared to the iPad's two, and can fill a small room with warm, immersive sound that makes watching films or listening to music a pleasure.

The iPad's audio output is thin in comparison - we would always previously have recommended buying separate wireless speakers if you want to use your iPad as a sound-based device, but the Pro's enhancements make this largely unnecessary.

And the iPad Pro is available in Rose Gold, as well as the three colours (silver, gold, and Space Grey) that the iPad comes in. Although the 2018 iPad has a distinctly more pinky-gold shade than the iPad Pro.



But what do these differences mean in terms of your day-to-day experience?

Price

The [iPad Pro 10.5](#) is a lot more expensive than the 9.7in iPad, although its higher range of storage allocation options exaggerates this difference somewhat.

iPad Pro 10.5 costs:

Wi-Fi: £619/\$649 (64GB), £769/\$799 (256GB) and £969/\$999 (512GB). Cellular/4G: £749/\$779 (64GB), £899/\$929 (256GB) and £1,099/\$1,129 (512GB).

The [iPad](#) costs:

Wi-Fi: £319/\$329 (32GB), £409/\$429 (128GB). Cellular/4G: £449/\$459 (32GB), £539 /\$559 (128GB).

Conclusion

The iPad Pro 10.5 is a lot more expensive than the iPad, yet there are so many significant improvements that we reckon it's worth it. As usual, however, this depends on personal needs.

If you're into iPad photography, the greatly superior camera specs and range of photographic features makes the Pro 10.5 a better choice. Detail is better in overcast conditions, and the rear-facing flash lets you shoot in low light; there's 4K video; selfies are far sharper.

It's no longer the case that the excellent (if costly) Apple Pencil stylus only works with the iPad Pro, but only the Pro model is compatible with the Smart Keyboard, which might be a nice option for business users.

The Pro's screen is bigger, and feels better; and including this bigger screen hasn't resulted in a bulkier device. Indeed, it's slimmer than the iPad 9.7in and the same weight, albeit a shade longer and wider.

And the processor is likely to be fractionally quicker, although that's probably only noticeable if you run processor-intensive apps and graphically demanding games.

Those who have light use in mind (email, browsing the web, simple games etc) should be absolutely fine with an iPad, and would do well to save the extra cash. The A10 processor is no slouch, either.

We'll run through the pros and cons of each model, and discuss final decisions (such as storage allocation, 3G and colour choice) in the section called [Decision Time](#). Here are some other sections you might want to read next:

What next? [Pros and cons of each iPad model](#) | [Conclusion: which iPad is right for you?](#) | [Storage capacity options](#) | [Colour options](#) | [3G/cellular](#) | [Return to top of article](#)

Which large screened iPad should you buy?

This one won't take long, because there is only one size we are considering here - the 12.9in iPad Pro. (There are significant differences between the 2015 and 2017 models though, if you are considering an older second-hand model - the main improvements are a quicker processor, better cameras and a camera flash, the True Tone display, and increased storage options.)

The iPad Pro 12.9in (2017) is available in six versions:

- 12.9in iPad Pro (Wi-Fi-only, 64GB): £769/\$799
- 12.9in iPad Pro (Wi-Fi-only, 256GB): £919/\$949
- 12.9in iPad Pro (Wi-Fi, 512GB): £1,119/\$1,149
- 12.9in iPad Pro (cellular, 64GB): £899/\$929
- 12.9in iPad Pro (cellular, 256GB): £1,049/\$1,079
- 12.9in iPad Pro (cellular, 512GB): £1,249/\$1,279

You can [buy the iPad Pro 12.9 \(2017\) here](#).



The iPad Pro offers the biggest screen ever on an Apple tablet (12.9 inches), a super-fast processor (the A10X Fusion - although this is also available on the Pro 10.5in), an excellent 12Mp rear-facing camera with flash (if you can imagine using a device as big as that for photography), and a user experience that looks more than capable of replacing a laptop.

But on the down side, it's far less portable than even the mid-size iPads (even though it remains admirably slim, the sheer screen area makes it a handful) and ruinously expensive.

As has become an annoying tradition with iOS devices lately, the storage options for the iPad Pro have a big hole in the middle. There's no 128GB option: it's either go budget (if you can call £769 'budget'), with 64GB (which ought to be comfortably enough for most users, although it may be a little on the low side for a work, creative, or gaming device); or go big with either 256GB or the new and frankly alarming 512GB, either of which are for serious film editors and

creative design users, or people with enormous libraries of apps, games, videos and songs.

This is a personal decision, of course, but we can offer a little guidance. The things that tend to take up all the space are (in order of size, starting with the biggest): movies; TV shows; games; music; photos and other images; documents.

If you plan to use your tablet for lots of things near the start of that list, 64GB may not be enough. Keen gamers, those who like to watch films on the go or keep large music libraries, will find themselves juggling space. Mobile workers may be fine, especially if they store documents in the cloud. (Other cloud-based strategies, such as iTunes Match, can help you cope with a smaller storage allocation.)

But bear in mind that plenty of people coped with just 16GB on their entry-level iPhones, iPad minis, and iPad Airs before Apple cut the 16GB option, and it can be done. We view 64GB as a mid-level storage option, not at all a bargain-basement bare minimum.

We look at the question of storage in slightly more detail in a later section of this article:[How much storage does my iPad need?](#)

What next? [Pros and cons of each iPad model](#) | [Conclusion: which iPad is right for you?](#) | [Storage capacity options](#) | [Colour options](#) | [4G/cellular](#) | [Return to top of article](#)

Decision time!

Phew! Are we close to a decision? Here are the pros and cons of each iPad model, and the people for whom it would be the ideal choice:



iPad mini 4: Pros, cons, and who is it for?

Pros: Very portable. Decently powerful. 8Mp rear-facing camera, and some new camera/video modes. Touch ID fingerprint scanner. Barometer. Anti-reflective screen finish. Gold colour option.

Cons: Small-screen reservations. Extra £80/\$70 on top of the 9.7in iPad (but still a good deal).

Ideal for: The portability-conscious with a higher budget. Gamers on the go. Tablet photographers. Ebook enthusiasts.

Read more: [iPad mini 4 review](#)

[View iPad mini 4 on Apple Store](#)



iPad 9.7in (2018): Pros, cons, and who is it for?

Pros: Beautifully thin and light. Strong camera makes it a legitimate photographic option (although it is surpassed by the camera on the Pro models). Natty gold colour option. Powerful enough to handle pretty much anything on the App Store. Now it's got an A10 chip, it's not that far behind the iPad Pro's A10X Fusion processor. Plus it can now use the Apple Pencil!

Cons: Can't use the Smart Keyboard. Feels cheaper thanks to the unlaminated screen.

Ideal for: Anyone who needs a big screen (not a huge screen - they'll want the 12.9in iPad Pro) but is on a budget, and can cope without the very latest in processing muscle and camera megapixellage. Still a great all-rounder, but less future-proofed than the Pro models.

Read more: [iPad 9.7in \(2017\) review](#)

[View iPad 9.7in on the Apple Store](#)

iPad Pro 10.5in (2017): Pros, cons, and who is it for?

Pros: More powerful than the iPad. This and the larger Pro offer the best camera setups, including rear flash, Retina flash feature for the front camera, numerous other photographic features and the best megapixel ratings. Can use the Smart Keyboard.

Cons: Expensive. Overkill for many situations - current apps will run happily on the iPad 9.7in's A10 processor. Smart Keyboard is hard to type on quickly and accurately at this size.

Ideal for: Gamers and iPad photographers, and anyone who wants to be able to run the most demanding apps now and in the future. Power users. Those who are boastful and/or rich - if they're not distracted by the 12.9in iPad Pro. Business users (if the range of apps meets their

approval). Creative design types.

Read more: [iPad Pro 10.5in \(2017\) review](#)

[View 10.5in iPad Pro on the Apple Store](#)



iPad Pro 12.9in (2017): Pros, cons and who is it for?

Pros: Huge screen (12.9 inches). Extremely fast processor. Four speakers. Can use Apple Pencil and Smart Keyboard.

Cons: Least portable iPad yet (although it is admirably slim). Punishingly expensive. Processor speed could be overkill for many prospective buyers.

Ideal for: Creative types, most of all, but anyone who needs a big screen will be interested. Gamers and those who enjoy consuming media on the go will like the combination of a sumptuous screen and a quad-speaker audio system.

Read more: [iPad Pro 12.9in \(2017\) review](#)

[View 12.9in iPad Pro on Apple Store](#)



Final conclusion

If you're looking for a super-portable tablet and are willing to compromise on screen size and processing power we would previously have recommended the iPad mini. But the mini now costs £80 more than the iPad so we aren't so inclined to recommend it. Plus, if you want a small device for consuming media on then maybe the iPhone Plus would be a better choice. We think Apple knows this and is soon going to discontinue the iPad mini.

If you need a larger screen then your next thought will probably be the iPad 9.7in (2018), which is also the cheapest option - starting at £319/\$329. The iPad Pro 10.5in starts at £619/\$649, an extra £300/\$320 (albeit with twice the storage), so you really need to weigh up if you need the better spec list: it has a slightly bigger screen, faster processor, better camera with flash, Apple Pencil support, True Tone display and quad speakers.

The extra money is overall just about worth it in our opinion. But you'd be fine with the iPad if you're willing to make some sacrifices. And the Pro 10.5 is an expensive choice.

And what of the 12.9in iPad Pro? This behemoth will serve you well as a laptop replacement, and seems targeted at three distinct groups: business users, gamers and (most of all) creatives. It's going to cost you, but if you want that big, big screen, that super-fast processor, and those tasty new accessories, it should be worth it.

View the [iPad mini 4 here](#), [iPad here](#) and [iPad Pro here](#).

Should you buy your iPad on contract?

We'd generally say not - it'll be cheaper up front but you'll end up paying more in the long run.

But it all depends on your budget and the most convenient way to pay for your device. (Businesses often prefer to pay for employees' tablets on contract.) And if you find a good deal, that may be enough to swing the decision.

Remember that you won't be able to switch to a different data provider until you've finished paying off the contract, as the iPad is likely to be locked to the original contract provider. Here's [how to unlock an iPad from its network](#), once you've fulfilled your contractual obligations.

We discuss the best iPad contract deals in a separate article: [Best iPad deals](#).

What storage capacity should my iPad have?

The four iPads offer anywhere from 32GB to 512GB. How much storage capacity will you need?

Well, first of all remember that you can't upgrade the storage capacity of an iPad at a later date: this is your storage limit from now until you buy another iPad, so aim high and buy as much storage as you can afford.

Apple is probably a little cheeky in how much more it charges at each storage point (this stuff is relatively cheap for a manufacturer to upgrade), but it's better to spend an extra few pounds now than to buy an entire new iPad in six months' time. Also bear in mind that the true storage capacity of an iOS device is less than the advertised capacity, partly because of the space taken up by pre-installed software.

Storage capacity is in our experience mainly used up by three things: music, photos, and videos, in increasing order of storage drain. If you want to keep lots of films - or even a few, to be honest - then you need high storage: probably 64GB or higher for video fans.

Same applies to large photo or music libraries, to a lesser extent, although Photo Streams and iTunes Match respectively make it practical (if perhaps not preferable) to keep your stuff in the cloud and access it remotely.

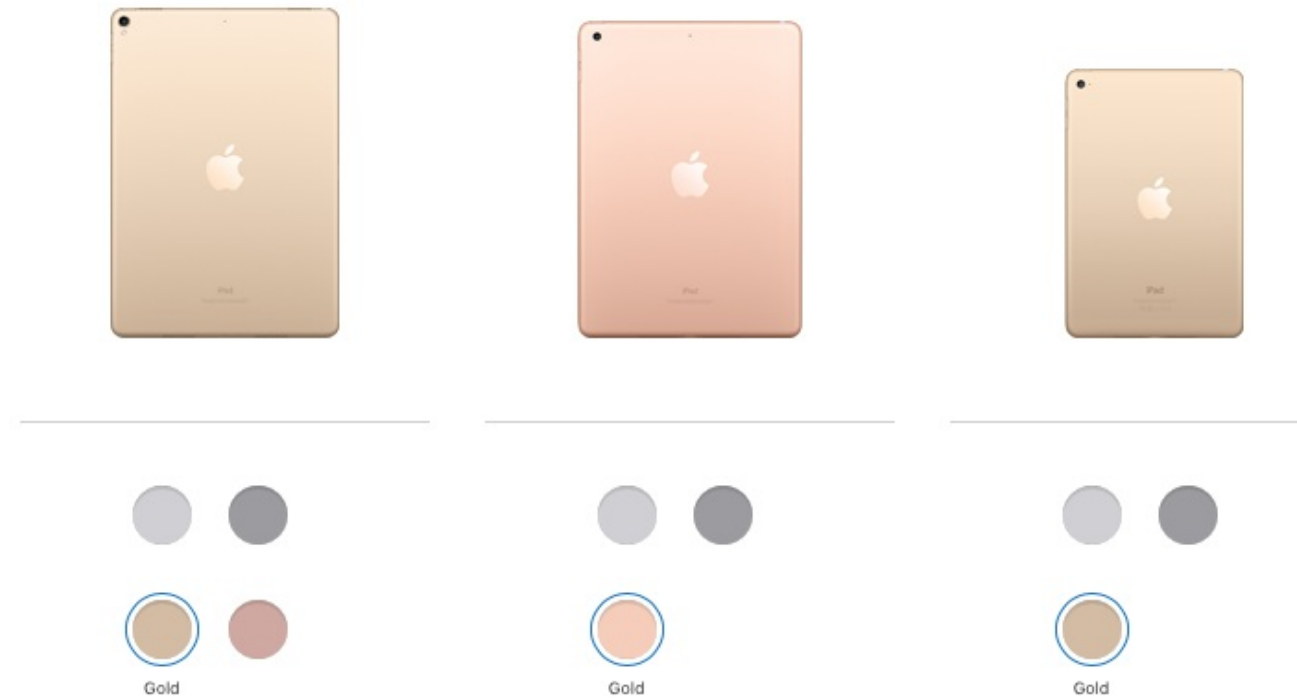
The other thing that will fill up your storage is apps, but the amount of space they take up varies enormously. Those heavy-duty games we talked about earlier will use up a lot of space, and gamers should aim high on storage - 128GB is a good bar to aim at, although you'd probably be fine with 64GB.

Colour options

We're not sure we can help too much on this one. But the basic gist is this: if you're getting the iPad mini 4, iPad 9.7in or iPad Pro 12.9in, you can buy it in grey, silver, or gold. And if you're getting the iPad Pro 10.5in, you get all three of those options and pink (or rather Rose Gold) too.

We really like the iPad in gold, as we mentioned earlier - it's quite bronze-like in its warmth - and the pink, while a bit of an opinion divider, is nowhere near as bold as that sounds. But grey or silver are the more conservative options.

One thing you might not realise is that the gold 9.7in iPad finish is more of a cross between the Gold and Rose Gold shades of the 10.5in iPad Pro, as shown in this image.



The 3G/4G/Cellular option

Finally, do you need 3G/4G/cellular connectivity?

It's a luxury, even if it's a nice one to have. For an extra £100/\$100 or so, you'll be able to access the web and email, and use connected apps, away from a Wi-Fi network. (You also need to factor in the cost of a data plan.)

Consider carefully how often you're going to do that - with an iPad mini there's likely to be more on-the-go use than with a full-size iPad, but it's still a lot to pay for something you may only use from time to time. Have you got a regular (overground) commute where you'd enjoy catching up on news headlines or email? Then it could be worth the extra.

Just bear in mind that the cellular option also brings with it a GPS radio - meaning you'll be able to pull in accurate location data when using your device on the go.

So that's it - hopefully we've walked you through the iPad buying decision without too many tears. We wish you many happy hours of iPad use.

Bonus 1: The refurbished option

We'll mention this only briefly because it's covered elsewhere, but one option you should absolutely consider is Apple's Refurbished store. It's a sort of halfway house between new and second-hand: the devices are pre-owned, but Apple has checked them thoroughly, replaced any worn-out components, and rated them as good as new (and you get a warranty to prove it).

If this sounds appealing, have a look at our in-depth article:[Should you buy a refurbished iPad: The differences, pros and cons of refurbished and brand-new iPads](#)