

Galaxy Fold first look: We go hands-on with Samsung's nearly \$2,000 foldable phone

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Samsung's Galaxy Fold will be priced starting at \$1,980

Samsung is about to fold, but don't take that the wrong way. It wants you to buy into the new Galaxy Fold that goes on sale next Friday and that will cost you nearly \$2,000.

That sum alone raises all sort of eyebrows, especially when you thought

\$1,000 for a smartphone was excessive. But you're also curious about the dramatic new "foldable" design that transforms Samsung's latest smartphone from a slightly chunky handset with a 4.6-inch display into a small tablet with a 7.3-inch screen.

We were curious, too, and one week before the Fold hits stores, we got our hands on the flexible display hybrid [device](#).

In its closed position, Fold will function as your standard premium smartphone, though the small front screen practically begs you to unfold the device into a tablet. Samsung is giving tablet mode top billing—the device comes unfolded when you open the box.

There's nothing to actually folding and unfolding the device. Opening and closing it is as satisfying as closing an old flip phone. Merely unfold it, and snap it back in place. Closing it produces an audible "clap" noise just like those older devices. Unlike the typical flip phone, you unfold it sideways and not top-down.

The inner display is protected by a tough polymer layer; the outer screen is Gorilla Glass. Samsung says the flexible display was eight years in the making and designed for being opened and closed at least 200,000 times.

At certain angles, or depending on what you have on the screen, a line on the inner screen is visible where you fold the device. If you close your eyes and rub your hand along the screen, you'll feel this divider, too.

Surprisingly, though, this didn't bother us as much as you might think particularly when you're watching a video or playing a game, though it will likely take getting used to—and we want to gauge our reactions once we spend more time with the device.

There are trade-offs, however, even on a phone as pricey as this one.

There is no [headphone jack](#), though Samsung does include a pair of its wireless \$129 Galaxy Buds in the box.

Samsung isn't committing to a 5G model for the U.S. market but it will sell a 5G Fold in some places overseas. The version of the Fold launching next week in the States will only work on AT&T and T-Mobile's 4G LTE networks. There is also no unlocked model in the U.S. for use on Verizon or Sprint.

Unlike other recent Galaxy phones, the Fold is not water resistant.

The [phone](#) is also thick when closed, roughly the same size as a Galaxy S10 stacked on top of a Galaxy S10+. It still fits into our pant and coat pockets, though you won't have much room for other items once it's there.

When opened the screen is roughly the same size as Apple's iPad Mini.

Specs wise the phones are slightly more powerful than what you would get with Samsung's \$1,000 Galaxy S10+.

The processor is the same as the S10 line, Qualcomm's Snapdragon 855, though the Fold has 12GB of RAM and 512GB of internal storage. Unlike other Samsung devices, there is no expandable storage.

The six cameras—one of the front, two in the tablet mode, and three on the back—are similar to the S10, including giving you three shooting options for the [rear camera](#) (wide angle, ultra wide-angle and 2x telephoto zoom).

One of the tablet mode's two cameras is a depth sensor for improved selfies and portraits.

The foldable is powered by a 4,380 mAh dual battery system that Samsung says will last all day.

You can also take advantage of the "Wireless Power Share" feature that Samsung first introduced on the Galaxy S10s to juice up compatible phones or those Galaxy Buds, by placing those devices on the back of the Fold.

Samsung is going after a very specific audience with the Fold: Early adopters who are willing to pay to be the first with the would-be latest, greatest and coolest device.

Presumably, these folks will also have the money to replace an internal display that might break—the screen might be strong but it's not bulletproof (Samsung does include a case for the Fold in the box that is made from a "bulletproof material" for added durability).

In our brief time, the Fold definitely checks many of those boxes and is certain to turn heads. But for \$1,980, you may want to wait for round two before going into the fold.

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