

Here's why Galaxy Z Flip is the foldable phone I'm most excited for right now.

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Samsung's fully embraced the "Go big or go home" mentality with its tabletlike Galaxy Fold last year. But its second foldable phone—rumored to be called the Galaxy Z Flip (internal code name Galaxy Bloom) - is

almost guaranteed to be smaller. It's also likely going to be cheaper, bend vertically instead of horizontally and be outfitted with only half the cameras its folding predecessor has. And honestly, I couldn't be more excited.

There's something about foldable phones that still feels magical to me, a sensation that's hard to come by after nearly 14 years working with phones. I thought I'd seen it all: phones that flip up, kick out, flex, even phones shaped like a circle. But a screen that's both thin and strong enough to bend in half without breaking feels like the future come to life.

Where the Galaxy Fold was a luxury device designed to make a splash as the first major foldable phone, the Z Flip will take on the Motorola Razr as a more affordable phone that highlights not the luxury, but the practicality of a foldable phone. It's likely Samsung will unveil the Galaxy Z Flip at its Unpacked event on Feb. 11.

For Samsung, the Z Flip will give the company a dramatic lead in the foldable space, with a large premium device (the Galaxy Fold) followed by a simpler phone with a smaller screen. That's two pathways for Samsung to secure interest from early adopters. For the rest of us, there are several practical reasons to train our eyes on the Galaxy Z Flip, or whatever it winds up being called, that go way beyond the novelty of a foldable phone.

1. The first foldable phone with a glass screen?

One rumor suggests that the Galaxy Z Flip will be the first foldable design to use an ultrathin glass screen. That's momentous if true. The first generation of foldables use [plastic displays](#), which are much more susceptible to damage.

It'd be interesting to see how completely a glass screen would bend. Could the two sides really fold flat? I'd also love to test firsthand the screen's ability to keep the electronic display underneath safe from pressure, scratches, drops, dust and water damage.

2. Foldable phones are still a proof of concept

Right now, this is a zone of uncertainty. Foldable phones are expensive, fragile and few. At this point it's hard to believe that they could replace the large-screen rectangles we carry today, but there are hints it just might work.

The more foldable phones exist—both in design and in total number of units made—the more we can see if they'll actually take off. Or if they're just fun, expensive toys. The Z Flip will be one more effort that helps determine the fate of the category.

The variety we see already in early foldable designs is crucial. We've seen commercial devices and prototypes for small foldables like the Razr, which can slip into a pocket, all the way up to a 10-inch tablet that folds into three parts.

It will be through real-time trial and error that the industry determines which designs work best, how to fix common weaknesses and what it is that people actually want in a foldable phone. Only then can companies collectively begin to perfect them.

3. This is Samsung's chance to prove it can make a sturdy foldable

An embarrassment for Samsung, the Galaxy Fold's early screen flaws overshadowed its historic debut. Samsung delayed the initial sale date

for months, redesigned the Fold, scaled back production and dropped two colors. Now with the rumored Galaxy Z Flip, Samsung gets a second chance.

Choosing a radically different design—the Galaxy Z Flip should be a vertical flip [phone](#) with a smaller screen than the 7.3-inch Galaxy Fold—gives Samsung an opportunity to apply the lessons it learned from the Fold's early mistakes.

Tight seals between the display and the folding mechanism, tamperproof cover material and a reinforced OLED display will go a long way toward reestablishing its reputation in the foldable space. It should also have fewer cameras and a cheaper price than the Fold's \$1,980 starting price.

4. Finding the limits of a small outer screen

Like the Galaxy Fold and the Motorola Razr, the Galaxy Z Flip should have an external display, and I'm interested to see how Samsung will design it. On both the Fold and the Razr, the screen was relatively small, making it fine for viewing alerts and initiating quick tasks, but less ideal for other use.

If the Galaxy Z Flip goes even smaller than the Galaxy Fold's 4.6-inch exterior screen, I'll have a few questions. Will you still be able to use every app on the outer display and open it to reveal the app inside, or will your actions and activities be more limited?

I'll have to wait for its debut to find out.

5. Lower prices will make foldable phones more accessible

With the Galaxy Fold priced at \$1,980, the foldable Z Flip is expected to cost significantly less.

Samsung was clear about calling the Galaxy Fold a luxury handset, which somewhat cushioned the news that it would cost nearly \$2,000. The messaging was this: It's worth it for a futuristic device that's big enough to replace a tablet.

The Galaxy Z Flip is sure to be another case entirely. One rumor suggested it could cost around \$850, which is about half the price of the Motorola Razr or the Galaxy Fold.

We'll see what happens, but one thing is clear: The more affordable these phones are, the more Samsung and its competitors will snag more real-world buyers (or "testers"). And the more people who use these early foldable phones, the faster we'll know where their future truly lies—in pockets and purses all over the globe, or in a museum of futuristic tech that never panned out.

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