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iPhone Q&A

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What are all the differences between the original iPhone and the iPhone 3G?

Please note that all models mentioned in this Q&A have been discontinued. However, it has been updated to cover the most recent operating system support and can be quite helpful for anyone considering either of these devices on the used market.

The differences between the [original iPhone](#) and the [iPhone 3G](#) are fairly modest.

External Differences

From a quick look at the front of both models side-by-side it would be unlikely that the casual observer would notice a difference -- each have an identical 3.5" display with 320x480 resolution at 163 ppi (although the specific [display parts](#) are different) -- the 3G model does have a slightly wider black frame around the screen.



Photo Credit: Apple, Inc. (Original - Left, 3G - Right)

Flip the devices around, however, and one would immediately notice that the original iPhone and iPhone 3G are quite different, as the original model uses aluminum and the 3G model is offered in either black or white plastic. Both the original and 3G models have a 2.0 megapixel digital camera.



Photo Credit: Apple, Inc. (Left - Original, Middle & Right - 3G)

The dimensions are similar, but not quite identical, as the 3G models are slightly thinner at the tapered edges and slightly thicker in the middle (0.48 inches compared

The other most notable external design change between the original and 3G models is that the headphone jack is no longer recessed on the 3G models. This is welcome news for those interested in using third-party headphones or accessories.

Identification Differences

As the original iPhone has a unique rounded design with a mostly aluminum back, help with [identification](#) for the original iPhone is less necessary than it is for subsequently introduced models. Differentiating the iPhone 3G from the [iPhone 3GS](#) models, however, is much more challenging.

One simple way to externally identify all iPhone models is by the [Model Number](#) listed in small type on the back of the [phone](#).

The iPhone 3G is model number [A1241](#) and the China-only iPhone 3G that *does not have Wi-Fi* is model number [A1324](#). The original iPhone is [A1203](#).

Everyi.com's [Ultimate iLookup](#) feature and the [EveryMac app](#) -- available for [iOS 5 or later](#) and [Android](#) -- also can identify these iPhone models by [EMC Number](#), [Order Number](#) (referred to as "Model" in software), and their [Serial Numbers](#) as well.

Internal Differences

The most substantial differences are internal -- the iPhone 3G adds support for faster 3G networks -- usually [twice as fast](#) as the [EDGE standard](#) supported by the original -- as well as [GPS hardware](#) that is capable of pinpointing a user's current location, automatically geotagging photographs taken with the internal camera, and providing the location of the user to third-party applications.

Both models include support for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 2.0 (2.0 for the original and 2.0+EDR for the 3G). The original iPhone offers 4, 8, or 16 GB of storage, and the iPhone 3G offers 8 or 16 GB of storage (the white model is only available with 16 GB).

Battery Life Differences

Apple reports that the iPhone 3G also features modestly better battery life -- most notably "up to" 10 hours of talk time while using a 2G network (compared to 8 hours for the original) and 300 hours of standby time (compared to 250 hours for the original).

However, it is worth noting that Apple reports that the iPhone 3G only provides 5 hours of talk time or web use on a 3G network and [real-world tests](#) have shown that battery life can fall short of this estimate.

iOS Support Differences

The iPhone 3G shipped with then new software -- version 2.0 -- with support for third-party [applications](#) and other improvements compared to the software that shipped with the original, particularly for [corporate users](#), but the original model could be updated to use the new software at no extra charge.

The original iPhone can support a maximum of iPhone OS 3.1.3 (subsequently renamed the iOS), and the iPhone 3G can support a maximum of iOS 4.2, although [some features](#) such as multitasking are not supported. *Neither device can support iOS 5 or subsequently released versions of the operating system.*

Pricing Differences

In the United States, the iPhone 3G originally sold for US\$199 and US\$299, for the 8 GB and 16 GB models, respectively, compared to US\$499 and US\$599 when the original iPhone models were introduced with 4 GB and 8 GB of storage.

Apple proclaimed that the iPhone 3G was "twice as fast at half the price", but the reality was more complicated as the required service plans became more expensive. On June 8, 2009 -- with the introduction of the iPhone 3GS -- Apple discontinued the 16 GB iPhone 3G configuration and dropped the price of the 8 GB iPhone 3G to US\$99 *with a new two year AT&T Wireless contract.*

For your convenience, the main differences between the original iPhone and iPhone 3G have been summarized below:



	iPhone (Original)	iPhone 3G
Data Networks:	EDGE (2G) & Wi-Fi	EDGE (2G), 3G & Wi-Fi
A-GPS:	No	Yes
Bluetooth:	2.0	2.0+EDR
Storage Size:	4, 8, 16 GB	8, 16 GB*
Talk Time (3G):	N/A	5 Hours
Talk Time (2G):	8 Hours	10 Hours
Battery Life (Web - 3G):	N/A	5 Hours
Battery Life (Web - Wi-Fi):	6 Hours	6 Hours
Battery Life (Music):	24 Hours	24 Hours
Battery Life (Video):	7 Hours	7 Hours
Standby Time:	250 Hours	300 Hours
Headphone Jack:	Recessed	Flush
Back Exterior Finish:	Aluminum/Black Plastic	Black or White Plastic*
Maximum iOS:	3.1.3	4.2
Dimensions (Inches):	4.5 x 2.4 x 0.46	4.5 x 2.4 x 0.48
Weight:	4.8 oz. (135 g)	4.7 oz. (133 g)
Model No:	A1203	A1241/A1324
Intro. Price:	US\$499, US\$599†	US\$199, US\$299§

* White was only offered with 16 GB of storage for US\$299.

† On September 5, 2007, a mere two months after it shipped, Apple discontinued the 4 GB iPhone model and dropped the price of the 8 GB model to US\$399. On February 5, 2008, Apple introduced a 16 GB model for US\$499. These prices required a two-year contract in the US.

§ These prices required a two-year contract in the US. On June 8, 2009 -- with the introduction of the iPhone 3GS -- Apple discontinued the 16 GB iPhone 3G configuration and dropped the price of the 8 GB iPhone 3G to US\$99 *with a new two year AT&T Wireless contract*. Please note that the required service plan was more expensive than it was for the original iPhone as well and after the introduction of the iPhone 3GS an unlimited data plan was required.

Please also see EveryiPhone.com's [Ultimate iComparison](#) feature to dynamically compare any iPhone model to any other iPod, iPhone, or iPad.

Also see: [What](#) are all the differences between the iPhone 3GS and the iPhone 3G?

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