

iPhone SE Review: Compact Power on a Budget

Description

iPhone SE Review: Compact Power on a Budget

Apple's iPhone SE has long been a favorite among users who prefer a smaller, more affordable iPhone without sacrificing performance. The latest iteration, the **iPhone SE (3rd generation, 2022)**, continues this tradition, offering a compact design, powerful internals, and a budget-friendly price tag. But does it still hold up in 2024? Let's dive into a detailed review.

Design: Small but Familiar

The iPhone SE retains the classic design of the **iPhone 8**, complete with a **4.7-inch Retina HD display**, thick bezels, and a physical home button with Touch ID. While some may see this as outdated, others appreciate the nostalgic feel and one-handed usability.

Key Design Features:

- Compact & Lightweight** - At just **144g**, it's one of the lightest iPhones available, making it ideal for pocket carry.
- Aluminum & Glass Build** - The front and back are reinforced with glass, while the frame is aluminum, giving it a premium feel.
- IP67 Water & Dust Resistance** - Survives splashes and brief submersion, though not as robust as newer iPhones.
- Single Rear Camera** - A single 12MP wide lens sits in the top-left corner, maintaining the iPhone 8's aesthetic.

While the design may feel dated compared to modern iPhones with edge-to-edge displays, the SE's small size is a major selling point for those who dislike large phones.

Display: Small but Sharp

The **4.7-inch LCD display** has a resolution of **1334 x 750 pixels**, resulting in a **326 PPI** pixel density - identical to the iPhone 8. While it lacks the **OLED** technology found in pricier iPhones, the screen is still bright, colorful, and sharp enough for everyday use.

Display Pros & Cons:

• **Good Brightness (625 nits max)** Visible in sunlight, though not as vibrant as OLED.

• **True Tone Support** Adjusts white balance for a more natural viewing experience.

• **No HDR or ProMotion** Lacks the high dynamic range and 120Hz refresh rate of flagship iPhones.

• **Thick Bezels** The large top and bottom bezels make the screen feel smaller than it is.

For reading, browsing, and media consumption, the display is more than adequate though users accustomed to larger, higher-resolution screens may find it limiting.

Performance: A15 Bionic – Flagship Power in a Budget Phone

The **iPhone SE (2022)** is powered by the same **A15 Bionic chip** found in the **iPhone 13 series**, making it one of the fastest budget smartphones available. This means:

• **Smooth iOS Experience** Handles multitasking, gaming, and app launches with ease.

• **Future-Proof Performance** Apple's chips remain powerful for years, ensuring long-term software support.

• **5G Support** Unlike the previous SE (2020), this model includes **5G connectivity**, though it lacks mmWave (found in higher-end iPhones).

Benchmark Performance:

- **Geekbench 5 (Single-Core):** ~1,700 (similar to iPhone 13)
- **Geekbench 5 (Multi-Core):** ~4,600 (slightly behind iPhone 13 due to thermal constraints)
- **Gaming:** Runs **Genshin Impact, Call of Duty Mobile, and Fortnite** at high settings without major lag.

The A15 Bionic ensures that the iPhone SE remains competitive even against newer mid-range Android phones.

Camera: Simple but Effective

The iPhone SE features a **single 12MP wide-angle camera** (f/1.8 aperture) on the back, with no ultra-wide or telephoto lens. While it lacks the versatility of multi-camera setups, it still delivers **solid image quality** in good lighting.

Camera Performance:

• **Great Daylight Photos** Sharp, well-balanced colors with good dynamic range.

• **Portrait Mode (via software)** Uses computational photography to simulate depth effects.

• **4K Video Recording** Supports 4K at 24/30/60 fps, with **Cinematic Mode** (1080p only).

• **Weak Low-Light Performance** Struggles in dim lighting compared to newer iPhones.

• **No Night Mode** Unlike the iPhone 13 and later, the SE lacks Night Mode, resulting in grainy

low-light shots.

For casual photography, the iPhone SE's camera is more than sufficient. However, serious photographers will miss features like Night Mode and an ultra-wide lens.

Battery Life: Just Enough for a Day

The iPhone SE's **2,018mAh battery** is the smallest in Apple's current lineup, and it shows. While it lasts a full day with **moderate use**, heavy users may need a midday charge.

Battery Performance:

- **Light Use (Calls, Texts, Browsing):** ~12-14 hours
- **Moderate Use (Social Media, Streaming, Gaming):** ~8-10 hours
- **Heavy Use (Gaming, Video Recording):** ~5-6 hours

The SE supports **18W fast charging** (charger sold separately) and **Qi wireless charging**, but its small battery means it won't last as long as larger iPhones.

Software & Updates: iOS for Years to Come

The iPhone SE ships with **iOS 15** (upgradable to the latest iOS version) and will receive **software updates for at least 5-6 years**, ensuring long-term security and feature support.

Key iOS Features:

- **FaceTime & iMessage** – Full access to Apple's ecosystem.
- **App Library & Widgets** – Modern iOS features work seamlessly.
- **Privacy Controls** – App Tracking Transparency and Mail Privacy Protection.

Since the SE uses the same chip as newer iPhones, it won't be left behind in future iOS updates.

Price & Value: A Budget iPhone That Punches Above Its Weight

The **iPhone SE (2022)** starts at **\$429** (64GB), making it the **cheapest new iPhone** available. For comparison:

– **iPhone 13 mini (128GB):** \$599

– **iPhone 14 (128GB):** \$699

Who Should Buy the iPhone SE?

- **Budget-conscious buyers** who want an iPhone without spending \$700+.
- **Users who prefer small phones** (4.7-inch display is rare in 2024).
- **Those who prioritize performance** (A15 Bionic is still fast).
- **People who prefer Touch ID** over Face ID.

Who Should Avoid It?

- **Photography enthusiasts** (no Night Mode, single camera).
- **Heavy media consumers** (small screen, weak battery life).
- **Users who want the latest design** (thick bezels, old form factor).

Final Verdict: A Niche but Powerful iPhone

The **iPhone SE (2022)** is a **compelling choice for budget buyers, small-phone lovers, and performance seekers**. It sacrifices modern design, battery life, and camera versatility in exchange for **affordability and raw power**.

While it won't replace a flagship iPhone for everyone, it remains one of the best **value-for-money iPhones** available—especially for those who don't need a large screen or advanced camera features.

If you want a **fast, compact, and affordable iPhone**, the SE is still a fantastic option in 2024.

Category

- 1. Uncategorized

Date Created

July 8, 2026

Author

vvfw