

# Galaxy S20 deals may be on the horizon. Here's how to pick from Samsung's phones

Just because you're hunkered down at home doesn't mean you can't be in the market for a new phone.

If you've been mulling over exactly which of Samsung's Galaxy S20 devices to buy -- the S20 Ultra, S20 Plus or standard Galaxy S20 -- now's the time to start paying attention.



With the slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic, carriers and stores are likely to start slashing prices or offering deals as a way to keep business flowing.

Keep an eye out for discounts and bundles, and in the meantime, find out which Galaxy S20 is best for you. We start with the main differences among the models, each phone's biggest benefits and which one excels at the most important categories. Scroll to the end to compare specs.

## Which Galaxy S20 is which?

The Galaxy S20 trio is about more than just a scale of smallest and cheapest to largest and most expensive. They share commonalities, like a sharp, vibrant screen technology, Android 10 software and a 120Hz screen refresh rate that can make scrolling and gameplay liquid smooth. (Warning: It can also eat up battery reserves.)

But there are some notable differences between them in specs, performance and maneuverability that affect how they fare in day to day use.

Here are some main differences:

1. **Galaxy S20 Ultra:** 6.9-inch screen, heavy and bulky, most camera features, fastest 5G
2. **Galaxy S20 Plus:** 6.7-inch screen, slightly scaled back camera, fastest 5G
3. **Galaxy S20:** 6.2-inch screen, same camera as Plus, slower 5G except for Verizon

## Buy the Galaxy S20 Ultra if...

1. You love an enormous screen
2. Price is not a consideration
3. You enjoy every camera whistle and bell

## Buy the Galaxy S20 Plus if...

1. You like a large screen
2. Want to access the fastest form of 5G
3. Seek long battery life

## Buy the Galaxy S20 if...

1. You prefer a smaller phone
2. Fastest 5G speeds aren't a priority
3. Value for money is an important consideration



## Best screen experience: Galaxy S20 Ultra

The Galaxy S20 Ultra is personally my least favorite of the three. It's too expensive for what it is (starting at \$1,399, £1,199 or AU\$1,999), and it feels like a literal brick (7.8 ounces or 220 grams). But I can't deny that its screen size makes it the best S20 for watching videos and reading the internet, simply because of its larger

screen.

Resolution is actually the lowest of the S20 phones, but its pixel density is so high, I doubt you'll notice.

## **Most powerful camera: Ultra, but...**

On paper, the Ultra wins here. It has two features unique to the Galaxy S20 line: a 108-megapixel main camera that works through a process called pixel binning (read that article, it's fascinating), and up to 100x zoom.

That sounds impressive, and the technology is intriguing. In reality, though, I rarely yearned for either feature, and I don't miss them when I'm using another phone. To use the 108-megapixel setting, you must first tap a setting, take the photo and then, in editing mode, crop in. The purpose is to get a detailed picture using this method than you might otherwise get from the main camera alone, especially if you can't get close to the subject. It's a roundabout way to zoom in on a shot.



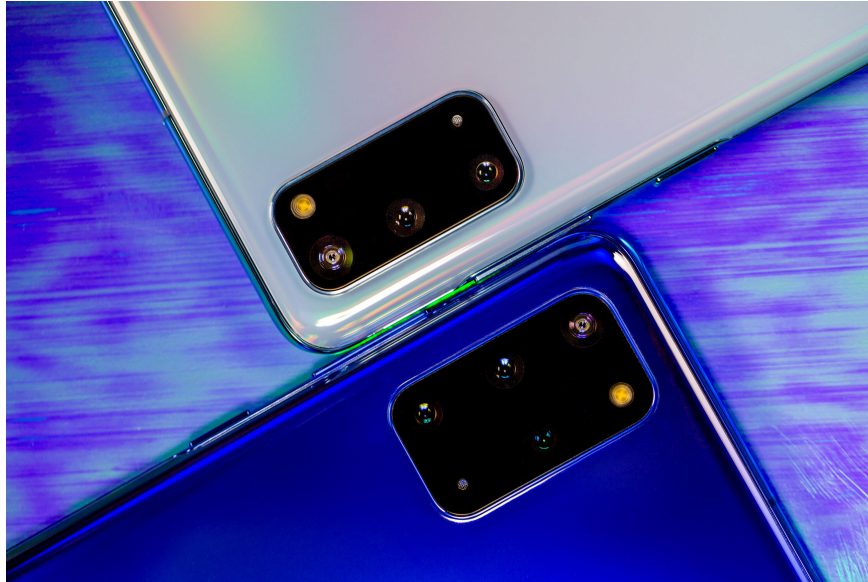
Using the 100x zoom is much more straightforward, but unless you really, really need to get that close, the resulting image will be grainy and barely usable. It works better the farther from the subject you are.

Meanwhile, the 12-megapixel main camera, 64-megapixel telephoto sensor and the 30x zoom on the S20 Plus and S20 did just what they needed to do. You can still take a 64-megapixel photo and crop in for more detail, though this process doesn't use pixel binning. (See the comparison chart below for more camera specs.)

## **Longest battery life: Still up in the air**

Two factors determine battery life on the Galaxy S20 phones: If you're on 4G or 5G, and if you're using the 60Hz refresh rate (default) or have turned on the 120Hz option. I tested all three phones over 4G, because 5G wasn't available where I was testing. I also observed battery conditions in the real world with both the 60Hz and 120Hz screen settings for all three phones.

This is where it gets a little messy. I can't comment on how 5G factors in yet, but in general, the use of 5G can lower battery life. And CNET's comprehensive lab tests -- in airplane mode and over Wi-Fi, and with 60Hz and 120Hz screen selections -- have been temporarily interrupted as we all adjust to quarantine life. They will resume.



In the meantime, I can tell you that despite having the largest battery reserves (5,000 mAh), I was surprised that the Ultra's battery life drained quickly for me when I used the 120Hz refresh rate option.

## **Best 5G: A draw**

The Galaxy S20 Ultra and S20 Plus both support the type of ultrafast 5G data transfer called millimeter wave (aka mmWave). The Galaxy S20 relies on the form of 5G loosely referred to as midband, or Sub-6. Midband 5G has relatively lower peak speeds, but is designed to travel greater distances and be more accessible indoors. Remember, even "slow" 5G is still expected to give you faster data transfer than 4G speeds.

There are exceptions, however. Verizon announced it would release a variant of the Galaxy S20 5G phone that does work with its mmWave network -- we just don't have an exact date yet. In some countries, such as the UK and Australia, you can buy 4G-only versions of the Galaxy S20, as well.

That makes 5G a potentially deciding factor between, say, buying the Galaxy S20 and the Galaxy S20 Plus. If you're looking to future-proof your phone as much as possible, the S20 Plus is the logical choice. If the networks in your area are slower on the draw and 5G won't be fully developed where you live for several years, then you'll hardly miss out with a 4G or 5G Galaxy S20.

## **Best value for money: Galaxy S20**

By virtue of its lower price, the Galaxy S20 is the best value for money, but that's hardly a blanket statement. The entry-level device costs \$1,000 at full retail price in the US, which is significantly more than other entry-level phones like the iPhone 11, which starts at \$699.

Even the \$950 Galaxy Note 10 is less than the S20. Samsung justifies the price hike with the 120Hz screen and camera features, even though the image quality, while very good, didn't demolish the competition. If Samsung, retailers and carriers offer compelling deals and bundles, this is going to be the phone that will be put in the best position to compete.

## Galaxy S20 vs. S20 Plus vs. S20 Ultra

Samsung Galaxy S20	Samsung Galaxy S20 Plus	Samsung Galaxy S20 Ultra
Display size, resolution	6.2-inch Dynamic AMOLED 2X	6.7-inch Dynamic AMOLED 2X
Pixel density	563ppi	525ppi
Dimensions (Inches)	2.72 x 5.97 x 0.311 in	2.9 x 6.37 x 0.30 in
Dimensions (Millimeters)	69.1 x 151.7 x 7.9 mm	73.7 x 161.9 x 7.8mm
Weight (Ounces, Grams)	5.75 oz; 163g	6.56 oz; 186g
Mobile software	Android 10	Android 10
Camera	12-megapixel (wide-angle), 64-megapixel (telephoto), 12-megapixel (ultra-wide), time-of-flight camera	108-megapixel (wide-angle), 48-megapixel (telephoto), 12-megapixel (ultra-wide), time-of-flight camera
Front-facing camera	10-megapixel	10-megapixel
Video capture	8K 8K 8K	8K 8K 8K
Processor	64-bit octa-core processor (Max 2.7 + 2.5 + 2GHz)	64-bit octa-core processor (Max 2.7 + 2.5 + 2GHz)
Storage	128GB	128GB, 512GB
RAM	12GB	12GB, 16GB
Expandable storage	Up to 1TB	Up to 1TB
Battery	4,000 mAh	4,500 mAh
Fingerprint sensor	In-screen	In-screen
Connector	USB-C	USB-C
Headphone jack	No	No
Special features	5G enabled; 120Hz refresh rate; water resistant (IP68)	5G enabled; 120Hz refresh rate; 100X zoom; water resistant (IP68)
Price off-contract (USD)	\$999	\$1,199 (128GB), \$1,399 (512GB)
Price (GBP)	£799	£899 (5G) £999 (5G) £1,199 (128GB), £1,399 (512GB)
Price (AUD)	AU\$1,349 (4G), AU\$1,499 (5G)	AU\$1,499 (4G), AU\$1,649 (128GB), AU\$1,899 (512GB)

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