

Huawei P40 Series: Pro Plus flagship, new Leica cameras, pricing and more

The P40 Pro Plus camera system sounds awesome.

Huawei unveiled its flagship phones, the P40, P40 Pro, and P40 Pro Plus, today in a livestreamed launch on YouTube. The new phones follow in the Huawei P30's footsteps by pulling out all the stops in their cameras. But they won't support Google services, so they won't have access to the Google Play Store. The launch event was due to take place in Paris, but due to restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, it was pared back to an online-only event.

The P40 costs 799 euros (directly converted, that's about \$880, £730 or AU\$1,450). The P40 Pro is 999 euros (about \$1,100, £910 and AU\$1,820). Both will ship April 7. The P40 Pro Plus will cost 1,399 euros (about \$1,540, £1,280 and AU\$2,550) and will ship in June. None of them will be available officially in the US, due to Huawei's ongoing difficulties with the US government, which is also why they don't have Google services.

Camera advances across the range include setups with up to five rear cameras with two optical zoom lenses, allowing for up to 18-240mm equivalent focal range (10x periscope zoom lenses with a less-impressive 100x digital zoom). There's also a 50-megapixel 1/1.28-inch RYYB wide-angle sensor (Ultra Vision Sensor with 2.44 micron pixels), an "Octa" phase-detection autofocus array (for faster AF), advanced computational photography thanks to the XD Fusion Image Engine and a lot more.



Those camera improvements along with 5G, a new matte Nano-Tech Ceramic finish and IP68 are the most impressive new features of the Chinese company's competitors to models such as the Samsung's Galaxy S20 Ultra and the iPhone 11 Pro.

The P40 Pro Plus' Leica camera is clearly the highlight. On top of the aforementioned features, the P40 Pro Plus has improved white balance sensors. They all have a new Golden Snap feature, which chooses the best photo out of a burst, automatically removes random people from the background and fixes reflections. You can also get new accessories, including a Profoto studio light (Profoto is a major studio-photography player) and an underwater case.



Even the front-facing camera is significantly advanced. It's got 32-megapixel f2.2 with ambient and proximity sensors and 4K selfie video, plus a depth sensor for computational defocus, low-light face unlock.

For video, it uses pixel binning of 16 pixels for improved low-light sensitivity. It also lets you take 4K time lapses at telephoto and allows dual video capture (wide-angle and telephoto simultaneously) and directional audio computed from three omnidirectional mics.

Inside, there's a Kirin 990 5G processor, a slot that accommodates either dual SIMs or a SIM and a nanomemory card, Wi-Fi 6 Plus and 40-watt wireless charging.

Its new interface has improved swipe-from-side multiwindow support and a multidevice control panel. You can also interact with Huawei's new assistant, Celia.

In nonphone news, here's what the company also announced.

1. A Bluetooth Hi-Res audio speaker, the Sound X with 360-degree sound from a six-speaker array; a future upgrade will make it smart.
2. The Huawei Watch GT with updated real-time heart monitoring and a Champagne Gold Edition. There's also a sports-oriented GT 2e model with a concealed crown, integrated strap, stainless case, up to two weeks of battery life and, of course, a ton of sports and workout modes.
3. Gentle Monster smart glasses coming this summer.

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