A few good tech deals happening this July 4th weekend

Enlarge / Activating Siri on an Apple HomePod speaker.

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Greetings, Arsians! It’s Independence Day in the United States, so the Dealmaster is back with a special Fourth of July edition of their usual tech deals roundup. While today’s holiday isn’t well-known for providing big discounts on tech—the biggest price drops will still come on Black Friday and Cyber Monday—we’ve found a handful of genuine deals worth considering on video games, tablets, speakers, and more. Below are the best Fourth of July tech deals we could find this year.

Enlarge / The Sega Genesis Mini.
Sam Machkovech

This is tied for the largest discount we've seen on Sega's bite-sized retro console, which we reviewed positively when it launched late last year. Much like the NES Classic and Super NES Classic before it, the Genesis Mini packs a few dozen hits in an adorably tiny replica of the console on which it's based.

Here, you get 42 pre-loaded and well-emulated games—including favorites like *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Streets of Rage 2*, *Gunstar Heroes*, and *Ecco the Dolphin*—along with two controllers. Those gamepads aren't the six-button models Sega launched later in the original console's life, unfortunately, and there's no way to "rewind" your progress if you screw up in-game. But at half off the original MSRP, this is a good value for nostalgists or anyone who missed out on the Genesis experience back in the day.

Enlarge / *Final Fantasy VII Remake*.
If you don’t mind buying used, GameStop’s Independence Day sale lets you buy three pre-owned games for the price of two. The discount will appear at checkout and apply to the cheapest title in your cart.

We wish some of these pre-owned prices were lower—a few games have gone for less as new copies, so cross-check other retailers before you buy. The deal doesn’t cover Nintendo Switch games, either. Still, the sale applies to several high-profile PlayStation 4 and Xbox One titles, including *Final Fantasy VII Remake*, *God of War*, *Red Dead Redemption 2*, *Death Stranding*, and *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*, among others.

Apple Watch Series 3 (38mm) for $169 at Amazon (normally $185)

Enlarge / The Apple Watch Series 3.

This is the joint-lowest price on the Apple Watch Series 3, Apple’s entry-level smartwatch. It has a smaller display than the newer Apple Watch Series 5, it can’t stay “always-on,” it’s a pinch slower, and it doesn’t come with more advanced features like fall detection and ECG measurements. But it provides the same core experience for a couple hundred dollars less, which makes it ideal for iPhone users interested in upgrading to a smartwatch for the first time.

The Series 3 is also slated to get Apple’s watchOS 7 update later this fall. Just note that it’s likely the next watch on Apple’s chopping block; we don’t know when exactly it’ll be phased out, but Apple plans to cut off the Series 2 from major OS updates starting this year. For now, though, this is the least expensive way into the most comprehensive smartwatch platform on the market.

UE Wonderboom 2 for $70 at Best Buy (normally $85)

Enlarge / The UE Wonderboom 2.
Best Buy has the lowest price we've seen on this recommended portable Bluetooth speaker, which we highlight in our guide to the best travel-friendly tech.

The UE Wonderboom 2 is only somewhat bigger than a can of soda, but it plays loud and clean for its ultra-portable size. Its giant control buttons make it easy to operate, it gets about nine hours of battery life per charge, and its design is tough and waterproof. Don't expect any deep bass from a speaker this small, but for tight spaces or music on the go, the Wonderboom is well worth a look. Just note that this deal only applies to the "Concrete" model.

Apple HomePod for $200 at Best Buy

(normally $300)

Enlarge / The Apple HomePod.
While Apple’s HomePod falls well short of the Amazon Echo or Google Home as a *smart* speaker, it demolishes much of its competition in terms of audio quality. Viewed purely as a wireless home speaker, it’s a much easier sell at this discounted price of $200—which is tied for the lowest we’ve seen—especially for those who already use Apple Music and an iOS device.

To be clear, though, you *have* to be locked into Apple’s world to get the most out of the HomePod: you can’t even set it up with an Android phone, and while you can AirPlay anything from an iOS device, Apple Music is always set as the default music service (for now). If you can live with its restrictions, though, the HomePod’s rich and full-bodied sound is impressive.

The Steam Summer Sale continues

Enlarge / *Half-Life: Alyx*.
While not explicitly a Fourth of July sale, Steam's Summer Sale is the most prominent PC games sale of the year, and it's rolling on until July 9. While those who aren't tied to the PC can find many of the advertised deals for less at other retailers, there are still plenty of good prices for those who only use Valve's storefront.

Some recommendations here include the Ars-approved (and VR-only) *Half-Life: Alyx* for a new low of $45, the "masterful" *Doom Eternal* for a new low of $30, the time-looping adventure game *Outer Wilds* for $17, *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain* for $6, *Halo: The Master Chief Collection* for $32, and *Celeste*, our 2018 game of the year, for half off.

Some other notables



Enlarge / The Nintendo Switch Pro Controller.

Finally, here are some more notable Fourth of July deals we're seeing this weekend, in rapid-fire format:

- Amazon Fire HD 8 Kids Edition (32GB) tablet for **$99.99** at Amazon (normally $140).
- Amazon Fire HD 10 Kids Edition (32GB) tablet for **$149.99** at Amazon (normally $200).
- Anker PowerLine III (6ft) USB-C to USB-C 2.0 cable for **$9.99** at Amazon (use code: **AKCTCPL353** – normally $18).
- Anker PowerPort Strip PD 2 Mini USB power strip – 2x AC, 2x USB-A, 18W USB-C PD, 30W USB total for **$24.89** at Amazon (**clip $4 coupon** – normally $34).
- 20% off various laptops, desktop PCs, and monitors at Acer (use code: **JULY2020**).
- Lenovo Yoga C940 laptop – Intel Core i7-1065G7, 14-inch 1080p, 12GB RAM, 512GB SSD for **$999.99** at Best Buy (normally $1,300).
- Various *The Jackbox Party Pack* games on sale at Amazon, Steam, and PlayStation Store.
- Nintendo Switch Pro Controller for **$59** at Walmart

(normally $69).

- Razer Viper gaming mouse for **$49.99** at Best Buy (normally $65).

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