

# Aqara kick-starts its first Matter-over-Thread smart lock with a promise of Home Key support

Aqara has launched its Smart Lock U200 on Kickstarter, where you can currently nab the device for \$209, down from the \$249.99 it'll cost you when it goes on sale later this year. According to the Kickstarter page, it will ship to backers in April.

The company debuted its new retrofit lock at the IFA 2023 tech show last summer; showcasing its Matter-over-Thread connectivity and separate Bluetooth keypad with a fingerprint reader and NFC built in. This gives you the option to unlock with digital codes, Aqara NFC cards, the Aqara app on your phone, and voice control with compatible voice assistants. That's in addition to still being able to use your existing key (at least for US locks).

Uniquely for a retrofit lock (where you don't need to replace your existing door lock), the U200 can work with US-style deadbolts *and* European mortise locks. Most only work with one or the other. The lock also comes with a rechargeable battery that Aqara says can get a minimum of six months of battery life based on eight entries a day. That's impressive. The wireless keypad uses four AA batteries or can be wired to doorbell wiring.

a: hover]: text-gray-63 [a: hover]: shadow-underline-black  
dark: [a: hover]: text-gray-bd dark: [a: hover]: shadow-  
underline-gray [a]: shadow-underline-gray-63 dark: [a]: text-

gray-bd dark:[&a]:shadow-underline-gray">Photo by Jennifer Pattison Tuohy / The Verge

Matter compatibility should mean it can work with any platform compatible with the new smart home standard, including Amazon Alexa, Apple Home, and Google Home. However, Aqara says compatibility will be rolling out in stages, and it didn't provide a timeline. The lock will work with the Aqara app and the upcoming Aqara Hub M3 at launch.

The U200 will be one of the first Matter-over-Thread-compatible locks to support Home Key and the first ever in Europe

Other upgrades Aqara has promised include support for auto-unlocking, so your door unlocks as you approach, and Apple Home Key. It says it's waiting for certifications from Apple and plans to push the capability via an OTA update.

When Home Key support arrives, the U200 will be one of the first Matter-over-Thread-compatible locks to support it and the first ever in Europe to use Apple's easy unlocking method that turns your iPhone and Apple Watch into a key.

a: hover]: text-gray-63 [&a: hover]: shadow-underline-black dark:[&a: hover]: text-gray-bd dark:[&a: hover]: shadow-underline-gray [&a]: shadow-underline-gray-63 dark:[&a]: text-gray-bd dark:[&a]: shadow-underline-gray">Credit: Aqara

There are now a number of smart locks that support Matter, but very few that support Matter over Thread. This mesh wireless protocol supports longer battery life than Wi-Fi and adds internet connectivity for out-of-home control without needing a proprietary bridge or built-in Wi-Fi. (Instead, you need a Thread border router, such as the Aqara Hub M3).

At CES this year, U-tec announced a new Matter-over-Thread lock but without Home Key support. Yale has a Thread module for its older Assure SL lock that works with Matter but not Home Key. Nuki has a but only for European locks and, again,

no Home Key.

Aqara's own U100 smart lock supports Matter and Home Key but works over Zigbee via an Aqara hub rather than Thread. Then there's Level with its Home Key lock and its teasing of Thread support, but so far, no Thread.

It's clear, however, that Apple Home Key is expanding. Several new Home Key locks were announced at CES 2024, including ones from U-tec, TP-Link, and Lockly. And now that Home Key works with Matter (Apple added HomeKey support to Matter with iOS 17), I expect to see a lot more. Especially since manufacturers don't have to be HomeKit certified to use HomeKey; they just have to have Matter certification, MFi certification, and the correct hardware. Easy, right?

<https://www.theverge.com/2024/2/27/24084674/aqara-u200-matter-over-thread-smart-lock-apple-home-key>