

Dealmaster: New low on Mac mini, Samsung 980 Pro, and Amazon Fire Kids; plus AirPods and iPad

Enlarge / Apple's 2023 Mac mini. If you've seen one, you've seen them all, but it's what's on the inside that counts.

Andrew Cunningham

reader comments

20 with

Share this story

Today's best deals feature a \$100 price cut on the 2023 entry-level Mac mini, a new record low. Samsung's high-performance 980 Pro internal SSD and Amazon's Fire 7 Kids tablet are also seeing the lowest prices we've tracked. Elsewhere on the web, we have deals on AirPods Pro, regular AirPods, and the latest iPad Air that all match their previous record-low prices. As always, we use tracking sites like CamelCamelCamel and Keepa to compare current sale prices to the typical street price to ensure the sales we find are good deals, too.

Apple Mac mini (2023) M2, 8GB RAM, 256GB storage for \$500 (~~\$600~~)

Apple's latest entry-level Mac mini desktop computer is seeing its biggest discount yet, down from \$600 to \$500. Equipped

with Apple's M2 processor and 8GB of RAM, we found the Mac mini to be cool, quiet, energy-efficient, and packing enough power for almost any rich media content creation you'd do outside of a professional studio context. Folks who need more should look to the M2 Pro-equipped minis. This is a new record-low for the 2023 mini, so we don't expect it to last long.

Enlarge / Left to right: Apple's AirPods (2nd generation), AirPods (3rd generation), and AirPods Pro.

**Apple AirPods Pro for \$200 (~~\$250~~),
AirPods for \$150 (~~\$170~~)**

Apple's latest AirPods Pro are also at their lowest recorded prices, matching Black Friday lows, as are the base model AirPods. The Pro model adds noise cancellation and rubber tips to control outside sounds and provide a better fit. It's great for plane and train rides, but you can turn on Transparency Mode to tune in to your surroundings if you're out for a run in a busy area. Apple says this mode will also tune in to

voices better, which one study found the AirPods Pro to do well enough to compete with some hearing aids. These features bring battery life down to about 4.5 hours versus the regular AirPods' six-hour life, but if these features are important to you, it could be worth the compromise. Both models are sweatproof, according to Apple, and they utilize spatial audio to tune the music to your unique ear shape. The Pro just does more to keep out (or let in) outside sounds and keep the buds snug in your ear.

Advertisement

Enlarge / The 2022 iPad Air.
Samuel Axon

10.9-inch iPad Air 64GB (2022) for \$500 (~~\$560~~)

The 2022 iPad Air is in the Goldilocks zone for anyone in the market for a new tablet. We called it the “easiest tablet to recommend” in our review, due to its blazing-fast M1 processor, compact design, and faster USB-C performance, among

other things. Whether you want to upgrade from an older iPad or pick up your first one, it's a great choice for most buyers. It's been selling at full retail price for the last month or so, but, at \$500, this current price matches the record low of the holidays. Just note that this specific configuration only has 64GB of storage, which may make it ill-suited for use as a media device, depending on your habits and Wi-Fi access. It's still great as a reader and web-browsing device, though.

Samsung 980 Pro SSD with heatsink: 1TB for \$87 (~~\$120~~), 2TB for \$144 (~~\$200~~)

If you're building a high-performance gaming PC or upgrading the storage on your PS5, the Samsung 980 Pro has impressive options for both. The 2TB 980 Pro has hit a record-low price of \$144 (\$87 for 1TB) and can level up your more demanding gaming PC builds with write speeds Samsung rates at up to 7,000MB/s. These are the lowest prices we've tracked on these models and the first time we've seen the heatsink-equipped version match or exceed the base's sale price.

Advertisement

One caveat: If you pick up one of these, make sure to update

the device's firmware to the latest version. Samsung's 980 and 990 SSDs have recently been suffering some reliability and data loss issues, but Samsung says it has addressed the problems via updated firmware.

Michael Short/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Amazon Fire 7 Kids tablet for \$60 (~~\$100~~)

Amazon's Fire 7 tablet for kids is truly made for children. It's a 7-inch tablet with a colorful 1.1-inch thick case, doesn't have ads, and comes with a two-year "Worry-Free Guarantee." Amazon says, "If it breaks, return it and we'll replace it for free." It also comes with a 1-year Amazon Kids+ subscription and parental controls. With 16 GB of RAM, USB-C charging, and a microSD card slot, you're not left wanting for much from a kids tablet. Typically this package runs you \$100, but it's currently on sale for a new record low of \$60.

<https://arstechnica.com/?p=1929388>