Fairphone users can buy new camera without replacing the phone itself



Enlarge / The Fairphone 3+ pictured here is a bit bulkier than a standard smartphone—but that bulk makes it far more repairable, and as of today's news, even upgradeable.

reader comments

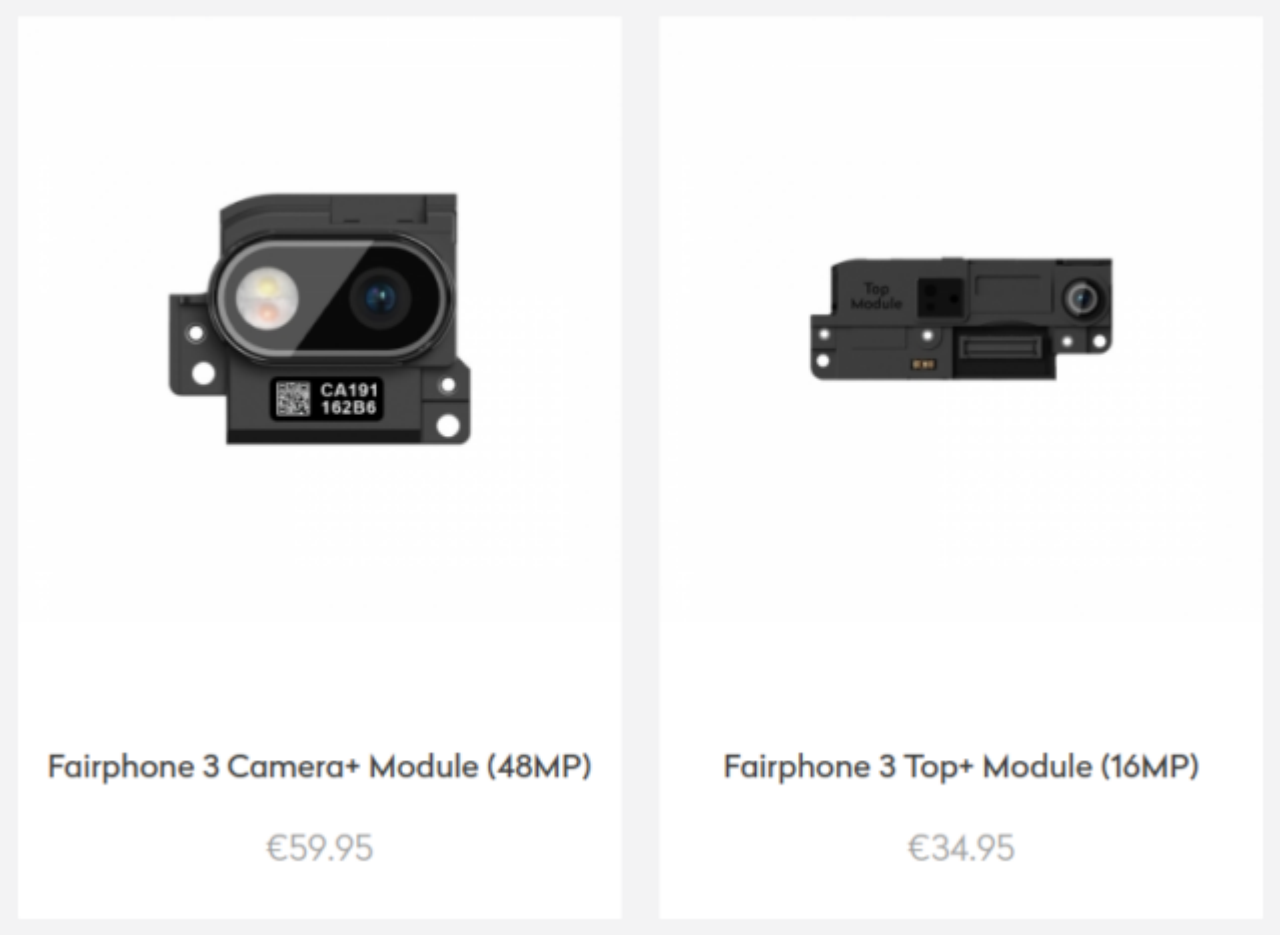
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Last year, repair guide site iFixit tore down the Fairphone 3 and gave the modular-designed phone a rare perfect 10/10 repairability score. Today, Fairphone demonstrated just how far its philosophy of modular phone design can take its users by offering the massively upgraded cameras from its newly released Fairphone 3+ model to owners of the earlier Fairphone 3.

Fairphone designs are noticeably bulkier than typical

smartphone designs—but they have a reason to be. Its components have been split into seven replaceable modules in order to extend the service life of each Fairphone. Battery getting weak? It's replaceable. Dropped your phone and broke the screen? Not only replaceable, but *guaranteed* replaceable—and for reasonably technical end users, *user*-replaceable—with easily purchased parts from the factory.



Enlarge / Imagine being able to upgrade a phone piecemeal, like you would an older but still solid PC.

The original Fairphone 3 launched with a 12 megapixel rear camera and an 8 megapixel front camera. The newly released Fairphone 3+ is essentially the same phone, but it offers a refresh on the camera modules, bringing the rear camera to 48 megapixels and the front to 16 megapixels. Owners of the original Fairphone 3 can upgrade by simply purchasing replacement modules from the Fairphone store and replacing them.

List price for the Fairphone 3+ 48MP rear camera module

is €59.95 (about $71), and the “Top+ module” (which includes the 16MP front camera) is €34.95 (~$41). Fairphone is also offering Fairphone 3 owners a combo deal through the end of September, which gets them both modules for a total cost of €70 (~$85). Either option compares pretty favorably to the €469 (~$555) cost of the Fairphone 3+ itself.

Unfortunately for our US readers, the Fairphone is still a European-only phone without a US market counterpart. The Fairphone’s 4G radio doesn’t support the mid-bands used in the US market. So even if you manage to acquire one somehow, it won’t make a very good phone here, providing limited connectivity in the lower bands only.

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