Poco’s F7 Ultra is a midrange phone with a flagship chip

Poco is releasing its first phone with “Ultra” branding, and on paper it lives up to the name. The F7 Ultra runs on the flagship Snapdragon 8 Elite chipset, and combines it with a triple rear camera setup, 120W wired charging, and IP68 protection from dust and water. Despite those specs, it’s going on sale in the UK for £649 (around $835), making it one of the cheapest phones to use Qualcomm’s top tier chip.

Xiaomi sub-brand Poco has always prioritized inexpensive handsets, but its F-series has been where it gets a little closer to the flagship space. The Snapdragon chip here is paired with up to 16GB of RAM and 512GB of storage, so performance should be excellent. Only the Redmagic 10 Pro offers the 8 Elite for less right now, but its gamer aesthetic is less likely to have broad appeal. Xiaomi’s software experience is substantially smoother too, and its promise of four Android updates compares pretty favorably to Redmagic’s commitment to… one.

The F7 Ultra’s rear camera array includes a 50 megapixel main camera at a fast aperture of f/1.6, a 50MP 2.5x telephoto camera, and a 32MP ultrawide — plus another 32MP camera for selfies. I haven’t pushed the camera hard, but the few shots I have taken aren’t bad at all. There’s a little noise — worse if you push past the telephoto’s optical zoom into digital territory — but there’s detail, decent dynamic range, and true-to-life colors.

The 6.67-inch OLED display has a 1440p resolution and max refresh rate of 120Hz, and the sizable 5,300mAh battery is supported by both 120W wired charging and 50W wireless

charging. An IP68 rating means it should be durable too, though the panel is protected by Poco’s own Shield Glass, rather than the better known Corning Gorilla Glass.

True to form for Poco, the handset comes in a rather eye-catching yellow finish, though there is a black model if you’d prefer something subtler. Both versions feature glossy detailing around the camera, which I’m unexpectedly fond of. The end result is a phone that looks and feels slick for a Poco, especially since it’s slim at 8.39mm, though you can tell it isn’t one of the (admittedly more expensive) flagships it’s emulating.

The F7 Ultra is joined by a £499 (around $645) F7 Pro. This looks pretty similar, but uses the older Snapdragon 8 Gen 3 chipset. One upside is a bigger 6,000mAh battery, but it has slower 90W charging, and no wireless option at all. It also gets a serious camera downgrade: the main shooter is the same, but it’s only accompanied by an 8MP ultrawide and a 20MP selfie camera, with no telephoto at all. Both models are available now in the UK and Europe.

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