Samsung’s midrange Galaxy S10 Lite comes to the US for $650

reader comments

159 with 64 posters participating

Share this story

- The Galaxy S10 Lite.
- A closeup of the camera module.
- The display.

Samsung has declared that the Galaxy S10 Lite, a midrange phone announced in January, is coming to the United States on Friday for $650. The phone will be sold on Samsung.com, Best Buy, and Amazon.

The company has been reworking its phone lineup this past year, and this “Lite” branding is relatively new. The “S10” branding really makes it seem like this device is a year old—the Galaxy S10 was announced in February 2019, and you would think any flagship-adjacent phones announced this year would be branded “S20.” The S10 Lite was only announced in January 2020, though, and in the US, it’s launching two months *after* the S20. The S10 Lite doesn’t actually share any design motifs with the Galaxy S10 ether; instead, it takes after the S20, with a centered hole-punch front camera and the same style camera block on the back.

The name is somewhat justifiable when you look at the specs, which start with the Qualcomm Snapdragon 855, the same SoC that’s in the Galaxy S10. The 6.7-inch OLED display would make

the phone as big as the biggest Galaxy S10 phone, the S10 5G, albeit at a reduced 2400×1080 resolution. The phone has options for 6 or 8GB of RAM, plus 128GB of internal storage, and a 4500mAh battery. You get three cameras on the back: a 48MP main camera, a 12MP ultra-wide, and a 5MP macro camera. The 32MP front camera lives in a hole-punch cutout centered in the top of the display. It ships with Android 10.

As far as I can tell, Samsung's main phone lineup for 2020 starts with the Galaxy S20s, then the "Lite" phones like the S10 Lite and Note10 Lite, then a bunch of "Galaxy A" and "Galaxy M" phones. Samsung released 38 phones last year, so fully understanding the lineup at any given time is tough.

As of yesterday, anytime you mention the non-flagship market, you're pretty much required to bring up the new iPhone SE, which totally upended the smartphone value segment overnight. Apple equipped the iPhone SE with its latest A13 Bionic SoC, giving Apple's $399 smartphone a faster SoC than Samsung's flagship Galaxy S20 Ultra, a $1,399 smartphone. That's embarrassing for the entire Android ecosystem, but it doesn't seem like there is much anyone can do about it. The fastest Android SoC, the Qualcomm Snapdragon 865, was made more expensive and more complicated in order to push for early 5G connectivity. The added cost is so much that some smartphone executives have publicly complained about the higher price, while some manufacturers like Google and LG are reportedly looking at cheaper SoCs for their next "flagship" smartphones. Even if a company like Samsung wanted to cannibalize its higher-end devices by cramming the Snapdragon 865 in a cheaper device, it probably costs too much to compete with the iPhone SE and make any sort of profit.

There are a lot of articles out there right now saying the iPhone SE will destroy all midrange Android phones. The Android manufacturer's argument against the iPhone SE would probably be that the screen is too small and everyone wants the biggest screen possible. At only 4.7 inches, the iPhone SE

is smaller than nearly every other Android phone on the market, where 5.5 or 5.7 inches is the “normal” model and “XL” phones are 6.7 to 6.9 inches. Android OEMs seem to all believe that small phone designs are unsellable, and if that’s true, there’s really nothing to worry about. Right?

Listing image by Samsung

https://arstechnica.com/?p=1668940