

Starlink Mini brings space internet to backpackers

SpaceX's Starlink internet-from-space service is already available for boats, planes, vanlifers, Amazonian villages, and rural homes in over 75 countries – now it's coming to backpackers.

The new compact DC-powered Starlink Mini is about the size of a thick laptop and integrates the Wi-Fi router right inside the dish. And despite using less power than other Starlink terminals, it can still deliver speeds over 100Mbps.

"This product will change the world," claimed SpaceX CEO Elon Musk on X, saying it took less than five minutes to setup.

Notably, the Mini kit consumes an average of just 20-40W compared to the 33-62W we measured just two years ago with a Standard Actuated dish and separate AC-powered Wi-Fi router. That means you can power the Mini dish for two to three hours from something like an Anker Prime 27,650mAh (99.54Wh) power bank, or a little over an hour with smaller 10,000mAh (40Wh) portable batteries you probably already have laying about. It requires a USB-C PD power source with a minimum rating of 100W (20V/5A).

The Mini dish measures 11.75 x 10.2 x 1.45 inches (298.5 x 259 x 38.5mm) and weighs just 2.43 pounds (1.1kg), or 3.37 pounds (1.53kg) with the 49.2 foot (15m) DC power cable and kickstand. It has an IP67 rating meaning it's protected from dust and rain, including short periods of water immersion.

In the US, Starlink Mini is an add-on to Residential plans – at least for now. The Mini kit costs \$599 which is \$100 more

than the standard dish, and will cost an extra \$30 per month to add the Mini Roam service to existing \$120 Residential plans. That gives Starlink Mini users up to 50GB of mobile data each month, with the option to purchase more for \$1 per GB, according to early-access invitations sent to some exiting US Starlink customers.

While Starlink Mini is new to the US, a Starlink support page says it's already available in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Panama where it can be purchased with Mini Service or Mobile – Regional Service plans. In those countries, there's no data or speed caps to use Mini, and in-motion and ocean use is not allowed. SpaceX says it'll expand to more markets over time.

"Our goal is to reduce the price of Starlink, especially for those around the world where connectivity has been unaffordable or completely unavailable," reads the Starlink support page. "In regions with high usage, like the US, where Starlink Mini places additional demand on the satellite network, we are offering a limited number of the Starlink Mini Kits to start at a higher price point."

As a standalone service, Starlink Mini could be transformative for anyone in need of an inexpensive and sharable internet service that efficiently sips DC battery power. This includes families that depend upon a cobbled together solar generator for power, a squad of soldiers trying to fight back an invasion, or just bikepackers and overlanders taking the road less traveled.

<https://www.theverge.com/2024/6/21/24182970/starlink-mini-usb-power-specs-price>