The best Nintendo Switch controllers to buy right now

The best Nintendo Switch controllers aren’t the ones that come with it. The removable Joy-Cons included with all Switch consoles (except for the Switch Lite) are convenient since they can be detached to use as wireless controllers for two people. But their tiny contourless design isn’t that comfortable for long gaming sessions or large hands. (And don’t get me started on the dreaded Joy-Con drift.)

Thankfully, you have plenty of alternatives, though only some of them are worth your money. In this buying guide, I focus on wireless controllers that are comfortable and reliable as well as a few with unique features that enhance your play, like input customization and long battery life. I’m not covering wired controllers that plug into the Switch’s dock, as they’re almost all the same. (and PDP make decent ones that I can personally vouch for, but unless you detest recharging your controllers, it makes more sense to go wireless.)

If you buy a third-party wireless controller (as in: not one made by Nintendo), there are certain things that it likely won’t be able to do unless otherwise noted:

- It won’t have HD rumble (this is what Nintendo calls its haptics, which are precise and akin to Sony’s DualSense in their subtlety), though some more limited rumble may be present.
- It may not have motion controls for gestures or gyroscopic aiming in games that support it or an NFC reader for Amiibo cards or figures that unlock special features in some games.
- It also won’t be able to turn on the Switch remotely. (You’ll have to manually press the console’s power button.)

- Also, while some Switch controllers have 3.5mm headphone jacks, getting audio out of them can only happen through a wired USB connection, not wirelessly. For most people, pairing Bluetooth headphones to your Switch is a sufficient (and very easy) workaround.

**a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*The Switch Pro Controller works with every kind of Switch console. There are plenty of identical knockoffs available for less, but Nintendo’s is the most reliable.*

a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin

dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-white”>The best Switch controller for TV mode

Nintendo’s own Pro controller is still the best one out there. It launched alongside the Switch in 2017, and it’s my favorite on *any*

console. Aside from the Joy-Cons, it’s the only wireless Switch controller that includes HD rumble, gyroscopic movement support, and an NFC reader for Amiibo cards or figurines. It’s also the only controller I’ve tested (again, aside from the Joy-Cons) that can power on the Switch without

being plugged into it.

Beyond those qualities, the Pro controller has comfort and build quality rivaling the flagship console controllers of Microsoft and Sony. It’s built like a tank, and it has battery life so good that it sometimes seems like it’ll never run out.

Nintendo says that it lasts around 40 hours per charge, so it’ll likely take casual gamers a long time to run down the battery.

$ 70

The Switch Pro released alongside the Switch console in 2017, and it’s a tough controller to beat. It offers an

unmatched set of features (HD rumble, motion controls, NFC), and it’s one of the most comfortable Switch controllers out there.

The buttons and triggers have a satisfying bounce, while its directional pad is responsive and clicky enough to satisfy retro gamers.

Just like the Switch itself, the controller charges over USB-C. And it’s compatible with a slew of other devices you might game on, including PCs, Android devices, and Apple devices including Mac computers running macOS Ventura, iOS 16, iPadOS 16, and Apple TV.

Given the price, I wish

that it had other features, like programmable buttons or a 3.5mm headphone jack for audio, though wireless audio transmission from the Switch to a controller doesn’t seem possible. But at least you can connect headphones via Bluetooth if you have no more than two controllers connected

to your Switch at once.

a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-white”>GuliKit KingKong 2 Pro

a:hover]:text-black
[&>a:hover]:shadow-
underline-black
dark:[&>a:hover]:te
xt-gray-e9
dark:[&>a:hover]:sh
adow-underline-
gray-63
[&>a]:shadow-
underline-gray-13
dark:[&>a]:shadow-
underline-

gray-63″>*The 8BitDo Ultimate Bluetooth Controller works with the Switch as well as Windows PCs, Android, and iOS devices, and it comes with a 2.4GHz dongle, too.*

a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a]:s

hadow-underline-white”>A Switch controller for Steam Deck and PC

8BitDo’s Ultimate Bluetooth

Controller feels like a Switch Pro Controller, and it supports both Windows

PCs and the Steam Deck. Its haptics are decent but not as good as Nintendo’s,

and it’s missing Amiibo support, but it adds back paddles that can be

customized with its companion software. It also comes with a charging

dock, which stores the 2.4GHz dongle when not in use. The Ultimate controller

comes in several variants, but I recommend the Bluetooth

one over the 2.4GHz or wired options because the Bluetooth version

includes 2.4GHz as well and because it has GuliKit Hall effect sticks,

which the 2.4GHz-only version lacks.

$ 70

The 8BitDo

Ultimate Bluetooth Controller comes with its own charging dock,

features remappable controls, and is compatible with the Steam Deck

and Windows PCs thanks to its Bluetooth and 2.4GHz connectivity. Unlike the

2.4GHz-only version, it features GuliKit Hall effect sticks.

a:hover]:sha
dow-
highlight-
franklin
dark:[&>a:ho
ver]:shadow-
highlight-

franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-

white”>8BitDo Pro 2

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover

]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9

dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shad

ow-
underline-
gray-13
dark:[&>a]
:shadow-
underline-

gray-63″>*The 8BitDo USB Adapter 2 can connect to*

a range of current and older Bluetooth wireless controller

s, including the DualShock 4 shown here.

a:hover
r]:sha
dow-
highli
ght-


frankl
in
dark:[
&>a:ho
ver]:s

hadow-highlight-franklin


[&>a]:
shadow
-
underl
ine-


black
dark:[
&>a]:s
hadow-
underl

ine-
white”
>Use
your
own

controller

There aren't

many other devices in

this
catego
ry,
but

this one is the best

value.

Instead of spendi

ng $70
on
multip
le

Switch Pro Controllers,

use this $19.99 8BitDo

USB Adapter 2 transm

itter

to

turn a

Blueto

oth co

ntroll

er you

alread

y own into a wirele ss

Switch controller. It

plugs into your Switch

dock and supports

controllers from the

latest Xbox and DualSe

nse

contro

llers

all

the way back to Wii

and PS3 controllers.

(Note: the first-gen

model can't connect to

most

Xbox

Blueto

oth

controllers due to a

Bluetooth incompatibil

ity,

so

make

sure

you
get
the
latest

model.

)

To my

surpri

se,

when I

paired

the adapter with a

DualSense controller

from my PS5, I didn’t

just get a control

experience that felt

like the Switch Pro —

I also experienced better

than
averag
e
rumble

and

respon

sive

motion

controls. What's more,

so

long

as

you're

using one of the newer

Xbox Series S or X contro

llers,

an

Xbox

One

Blueto
oth
contro
ller,

a DualSense, a DualSh

ock 4, or the Switch Pro

Contro
ller,
you
can

customize their button

mappin
g,
analog
stick

sensit
ivity,
and
more

within 8BitDo's comput

er and mobile app softwa

re.

$ 20
8Bitdo

’s USB Adapter 2 looks

like a flash drive, but

when connected to your

Switch
’s
dock,
it

enable

s you

to

wirele

ssly

pair

one of

a

number of older PlaySt

ation,
Xbox,
and
Ninten

do
contro
llers
to it.

8BitDo has an extensive

support page listing the

steps

requir

ed to

set up

your specific contro

ller

as

well

as

which features of those

controllers

it

suppor

ts. If you plan to use

a PlayStation or

Xbox controller with

this adapter, it’s

best

if you

know

the

Switch's button layout

by heart, as the layout

on your controller

will not match the

on-screen prompts in

games.

If you alread

y have controllers around

and
don’t
mind
jumpin

g

through a few

small hoops to get them

connec
ted,
this
afford

able

adapte

r

deserv

es a
spot
in
your

entertainment center

. If you want to use

more
than
one
third-

party

controller

at a

time,
you'll
need
an

adapter for each of

them (plus a USB hub to

give
yourse
lf
enough

ports)

, but

if you

have a

lot of
contro
llers
sittin

g

around

, it

might

be worth it.

a:hover]:shadow-

highlight-franklin


dark:[
&>a:ho
ver]:s
hadow-

highlight-franklin

[&>a]:
shadow
-
underl

ine-

black

dark:[

&>a]:s

hadow-
underl
ine-
white”

>Hori Split Pad Pro

a:hov
er]:t

ext-
black

[&>a:hover


]:sha
dow-

under
line-

black

dark:

[&>a:hover


]:tex
t-

gray-
e9

dark:

[&>a:

hover
]:sha

dow-
under

line-
gray-

63

[&>a]

:shadow-

under
line-

gray-13

dark:
[&>a]

:shadow-

under
line-

gray-
63”>T

he Split

Pad Pro

offer

s a

comfo
rtabl

e

grip,

and

each

side featu

res a
progr

ammable

back
butto

n.

The

Split Pad Pro

doesn
’t
have

batteries or

sensors, so

it’s

compl

etely

useless when

detac
hed
from

the Switch.

It's only for

handh

eld

mode

unless you purch

ase

the

Split

Pad

Pro

Attac

hment

that

turns

it

into

a

wired
contr
oller

. I don’t recom

mend

most

peopl

e go

that

route

since

the

attac

hment

alone

costs

more

than

a

Switch Pro Contr

oller

The company

also

sells

the

Split Pad Compa

ct, a

small

er

versi

on of

the

Split Pad Pro

that

also

costs

around $50.

If

you

want

something as

functional as

the Split Pad

Pro

but

close

r in

size

to a

Joy-

Con,

the

Split Pad Compa

ct

might

be

worth waiting

for.

$ 50

The Hori Split

Pad

Pro

is

here

to

help

allev

iate

hand

cramp

ing

while

playing on your

Switch. while

these

contr

oller

s are quite a bit

larger than

your

standard

Joy-

Cons,

they'

re

far

more

ergon

omic.

One

note:

they

lack

wirel

ess

suppo

rt

and

rumbl

e and

don’t

have

NFC for Amiib

0.

Updat

ed

Febru

ary

24th,

4:00P

M ET:

For 2023, we've

tested new model

s

like

the

Gulik

it

Kingk

ong 2

Pro

and

8BitDo's Ultim

ate

Bluet

ooth

Contr
oller
.

https://www.the

verge

.com/

23350

899/n

inten

do-

switch-
contr

oller

s-

best-

wirel
ess-
joy-

con-

gamep

ad