The new iPad Air goes all-screen, adds Magic Keyboard support

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Apple announced a new CPU today for the eighth-generation iPad, the A12 Bionic. The A12 Bionic, featured in the base iPad model, offers a 40 percent faster CPU and 20 percent faster GPU than seventh-generation iPads, and Apple says that also means the A12 is twice as fast as the top-selling Windows laptop, three times faster than the top-selling Android tablet, and six times faster than the leading Chromebook.

iPad Air

- The new iPad Air features a 10.9″ Liquid Retina display, a new Touch ID sensor in the top button, camera and audio upgrades, and the new A14 Bionic CPU, Apple's most powerful CPU ever.
- The new iPad Air starts at $599, available beginning in October 2020.
- The iPad Air comes in five colors: silver, space gray, rose gold, green, and sky blue.

Just as many analysts and leakers predicted, Apple introduced an iPad Air during its "Time Flies" livestream event today.

The new iPad Air comes about a year and a half after the last refresh, but it does more than the previous update did: it overhauls the overall design of the device. The iPad Air will be available in October, starting at $599. It comes in five colors: silver, space gray, rose gold, green, and sky blue.

Taking cues from the more expensive iPad Pro, the iPad Air now has drastically reduced bezels, no home button, and rounded screen edges. It does not, however, have the front-facing TrueDepth sensor array that the iPad Pro uses for Face ID authentication. Rather, it introduces something new to Apple devices—albeit not new to consumer mobile devices in general. Apple designed a new version of touch ID, integrated into the top button (which does not appear visually different). Underneath the button is a laser-cut sapphire lens and custom sensor for reading users' fingerprints.

The iPad Air gets the new A14 Bionic CPU, built on 5nm process technology. It's a six-core CPU with two high-performance cores and four lower-power, more efficient cores for simpler background tasks. The A14 Bionic offers a 30 percent GPU performance boost compared to previous generations, and Apple says it puts up double the graphics performance of typical laptops.

It also offers a 16-core neural engine for machine-learning performance—which can include many features used in graphics editors, voice assistants, and more—as well as a new DJ application which allows "air scratching" gestures made above the iPad.

- The new iPad Air's camera is 12MP and offers 4K video with enhanced stabilization.
- The front camera on the iPad Air is 7MP and shoots at 1080p.

The iPad Air will also bring a USB-C connector, allowing connections to devices such as external cameras, and a 60

percent faster LTE modem. The camera has been updated to 12MP with 4K video and enhanced video stabilization. The speaker system is also redesigned, with stereo delivery in landscape mode.

Enlarge / The Smart Keyboard Folio for iPad Air will be available for $179 and offers layouts for over 30 languages, including simplified Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

Also in the realm of design, the iPad Air now has a connector compatible with the Magic Keyboard peripheral the company launched for the iPad Pro a few months ago. That peripheral offers a trackpad (trackpad support was added to iPadOS last

year) and roughly the same type of keyboard found in Apple’s desktop keyboard of the same name. The Magic Keyboard will cost $279, and Smart Keyboard Folio for iPad Air will be $179.

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