What to expect from the iPhone 15 and more on September 12

Enlarge / This is the Steve Jobs Theater at Apple’s Cupertino campus, where the iPhone event on September 12 is likely to be hosted. Granted, it will probably be a pre-recorded video.

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Together, the iPhone and Apple Watch account for more than half of Apple’s business—and those two product lines get updated like clockwork every year around September.

The cat is already out of the bag for this year; Apple is expected to hold a live event on September 12 to announce its new iPhone and Watch lineup. And with the event just a couple of weeks away, we already know what to expect.

The iPhone’s long-rumored move to USB-C headlines the upcoming changes, but there’s a bit more going on.

iPhone 15 and iPhone 15 Pro

iPhone updates have been nothing if not iterative since the iPhone X shook things up in 2017. That’s largely going to remain the case with the iPhone 15 lineup.

Based on several reports and drops from journalists, analysts, and leakers, Apple plans to stick with the same basic lineup. The company will announce the iPhone 15 with a 6.1-inch screen

and the iPhone 15 Plus with a 6.7-inch screen, as well as the iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max in the same sizes.

USB-C

The big news is going to be a switch from Apple's proprietary Lightning charging and data port (which the iPhone has used since 2012) to the industry-standard USB-C. It seems Apple's hand has been forced by the European Union and elsewhere, but it's likely the company would have ended up here eventually anyway.

Moving to USB-C won't add any major new features or anything—though some analysts have speculated that the Pro phones will support faster transfer speeds than before.

That said, USB-C will make the iPhone and its accessories play nicer in the larger consumer tech landscape, and eventually, it could mean you need fewer types of cables in your drawer. I write "eventually" because folks upgrading from older iPhones will probably need to buy new cables, or at least some adapters, to make the shift.

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A (slightly) new design

Given that the screen dimensions will remain the same, don't expect anything too radical in terms of new designs for the iPhone 15 and 15 Pro.

The new iPhones are said to return to curved edges to some degree, moving away from the flat edges in the iPhone 4-inspired design we've had for a while now.

Last year, Apple traded the top-of-screen camera notch for the "Dynamic Island" in the iPhone 14 Pro and 14 Pro Max. The Dynamic Island makes the most of the space that needs to be set aside for front-facing cameras and sensors by putting a

revolving door of dynamic UI elements there. Leakers have said that this year, that feature will be found across the entire lineup—not just the Pro models.

Pictured below: Various behaviors of the Dynamic Island in last year's iPhone 14 Pro.

- Here are a few examples of the Dynamic Island's behavior. This is the charging indicator.
  Samuel Axon
- This shows the music that's currently playing in the background.
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- Long-pressing brings up these playback controls.
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- When there are two apps vying for the Dynamic Island, up to two can be shown, like this. In this case, it's Music and a timer in the clock app.
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- The smaller element is interactive as well; this comes up with a long-press on the timer.
  Samuel Axon

There will still be some Pro-specific design features in the iPhone lineup, though. The Pro phones are said to have thinner bezels with a more elegant curve at the corners. They'll still be distinguished from their non-Pro siblings with different materials for the enclosure, but that material is changing.

Recent iPhone Pro models have had stainless-steel edges, while the standard iPhones are aluminum. The iPhone 15 and 15 Plus will stick with aluminum, but the iPhone 15 Pro and 15 Pro Max will switch to titanium. Titanium is lighter than stainless steel, which could address some consumers' complaints that high-end iPhones tend to be heavier than the alternatives.

Processor and cameras

You can bet that the iPhone 15 Pro and 15 Pro Max will introduce a new iteration in Apple’s A-series CPU, GPU, and NPU. Typically, we expect anywhere from 10 to 30 percent faster performance with each iteration—and we sometimes see power efficiency improvements that allow for somewhat better battery life, too.

Not as much is known about changes to the iPhone’s cameras, but there is a rumor that the iPhone 15 Pro Max (and only that one) will get a new lens capable of up to 5x or 6x zoom, compared to the current model’s 3x.

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