A quick look at Android release names, tags and build numbers

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Introduction

Android releases are identified in many different ways

- Major version, e.g. 16.0
- Code name, e.g. Baklava
- API level, e.g. 36
- Quarterly Platform Release (QPR), e.g. QPR2
- Build ID, e.g. BP4A.251205.006
- git branch or tag, e.g. android-16.0.0_r4

Let's see if we can make sense of them all

Major version, code name, and API level

Major version

- Since Android 5.0, there has been one major release per year, latest is 16.0
- This is the official identifier used by marketing

Code name

- Since Android 1.5, every release has had a code name, from Cupcake to Upside Down Cake. Then Baklava (see later)
- This is the identifier used by the Android development team

API level

- API level identifies the version of the API exposed to apps, starting with 1.0
- Incremented everytime the API changes or is extended: current level is 36
- This is the identifier used by app developers

Quarterly Platform Release

- Since Android 12 there have been four releases per year: the major release followed by three Quarterly Platform Releases (QPRs)

Major release	Q3
QPR1	Q4
QPR2	Q1 in the next year
QPR3	Q2

- With Android 16 the whole cycle moved forward one quarter

Major release	Q2
QPR1	Q3
QPR2	Q4
QPR3	Q1

API bumps

- Up to 16.0 the API level was only bumped on the major release(*)
- Since 16.0, the API is bumped on major **and** QPR2 releases

(*) not entirley true: there were bumps also on 5.1, 8.1 and 12.1, but they were exceptions

Build ID

- Each release has a unique Build ID, stored in `$AOSP/build/core/build_id.mk`
- For example `BP4A.251205.006`
- The format is `PVBB.YYMMDD.bbb[.Cn]`
  - P: Release code: B is "Baklava"
  - V: "Support Vertical"
  - BB: a code that identifies Google branch
  - YYMMDD: date branched from main development branch
  - bbb: version number since branch, starting with 001
  - Cn: optional "hotfix" number, starting with A1

https://source.android.com/docs/setup/reference/build-numbers

Putting everything together

Version	Codename	QPR	Year	Quarter	API	Build ID
13	Tiramisu		2022	Q3	33	TP1A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR1	2022	Q4		TQ1A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR2	2023	Q1		TQ2A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR3	2023	Q2		TQ3A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
14	Upside down cake		2023	Q3	34	UP1A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR1	2023	Q4		UQ1A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR2	2024	Q1		AP1A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx N.1
		QPR3	2024	Q2		AP2A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
15	Vanilla Ice Cream		2024	Q3	35	AP3A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR1	2024	Q4		AP4A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR2	2025	Q1		BP1A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx N.2
16	Baklava		2025	Q2	36	BP2A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR1	2025	Q3		BP3A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx
		QPR2	2025	Q4	36.1	BP4A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx N.3
		QPR3	2026	Q1		CP1A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx

N.1 From here on first letter is year (A=2024, B=2025, C=2026), digit is quarter
N.2 There was no QPR3 for 15
N.3 Departure for API levels: 36.1

Getting the code

- AOSP code is stored in a large number of git repositories
- Typically you get AOSP code using the repo tool:

  `repo init -u <manifest> -b <branch>`
- `<manifest>` is the url to the manifest file. For canonical Google AOSP use `https://android.googlesource.com/platform/manifest`
- `<branch>` is the git branch or tag that you want to clone
- The mapping between build ID and git tag is in `https://source.android.com/docs/setup/reference/build-numbers`

GIT Branches and tags

https://source.android.com/docs/setup/reference/build-numbers

Build ID	Tag	Version	Supported devices	Security patch level
BP4A.251205.006	android-16.0.0_r4	Android16		2025-12-05
BP3A.250905.014	android-16.0.0_r3	Android16		2025-09-05
14367590	android-security-16.0.0_r3	Android16		2025-08-05
14094968	android-security-16.0.0_r2	Android16		2025-08-05
13943552	android-security-16.0.0_r1	Android16		2025-08-05
BP2A.250605.031.A3	android-16.0.0_r2	Android16		2025-06-05
BP2A.250605.031.A2	android-16.0.0_r1	Android16		2025-06-05

GIT Branches and tags

For example to get the Android 16.0 QPR2 code

- Note from before, 16 QPR2 has a build ID like this: `BP4A.xxxxxx.xxx.xx N.3`
- From the previous slide, the only match is Build ID `BP4A.251205.006`, tag `android-16.0.0_r4`
- So, the repo init command is:

```
repo init -u https://android.googlesource.com/platform/manifest -b android-16.0.0_r4
```

Security releases

- Git tags with names like `android-security-xx` contain only security fixes based the original release, e.g. for 16, android-16.0.0_r1
- They do not contain any of the QPR code
- Note that the build ID is different, numerals only

Frequency of public code releases

Up to, and including, AOSP 15 there are branches for all major and QPR releases, as well as many intermediate releases

But, from January 2026 the only public branches are major and QPR2, and four security releases

Header on each page at https://source.android.com/ since early January:

"Effective in 2026, to align with our trunk stable development model and ensure platform stability for the ecosystem, we will publish source code to AOSP in Q2 and Q4. For building and contributing to AOSP, we recommend utilizing android-latest-release instead of aosp-main. The android-latest-release manifest branch will always reference the most recent release pushed to AOSP"

The last slide

Link to these slides:
https://fosdem.org/2026/events/attachments/W3LZJZ-android-release-names-tags-and-numbers/slides/255776/2026-aosp_pa7mxex.pdf

You might also want to check out this presentation from Stefan Lengfeld:
Insights and statistics about the Android Open Source Project
https://fosdem.org/2026/events/attachments/9DRDS7-deep-dive-aosp/slides/255599/slides_3d3wf7x.pdf

While you are here, you might be interested in:

- **aosp-devs** Discussion, blogs, newsletter https://aosp-devs.org/
- **The AOSP and AAOS Meetup** Bimonthly on-line talks and chat https://aospandaaos.github.io/