

# Samsung Galaxy Z Flip 5 review: a big screen inside and out

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Samsung's popular folding-screen flip phone gains a bigger, more useful screen on the outside for its fifth generation, while keeping its stylish looks with a sleeker gapless design when shut. The new Z Flip 5 costs £1,049 (\$999/A\$1,649) – £50 more than last year's model – and comes with twice the starting storage and a collection of small but meaningful upgrades. There is no doubt that folding tech still commands a premium, with prices similar to high-end Androids and iPhones. The Flip 5 feels like a plush piece of technology, and more refined than previous versions. A new hinge allows the two halves of the phone to close flush rather than leaving a gap at one end, which is more aesthetically pleasing and stops pocket fluff from getting in there. The new design also makes the phone thinner and slightly reduces the size of the crease in the screen, similar to that seen on the Oppo Find N2 Flip. You can still feel a depression across the middle of the fold and see it in the glare of lights but it isn't generally noticeable in use. The big 6.7in screen is great: bright, crisp, smooth and responsive. Samsung says the screen is 25% more durable than previous models, but it is still made of a softer material than a traditional phone, so it has to be treated with more care to avoid scratching it. The big new 3.4in cover screen on the outside of the phone is the standout feature. It shows the time, notifications and other types of information typical of always-on displays on regular phones. It also has an eight-button quick settings panel for toggling wifi and other bits, which is handy but, annoyingly, cannot be customised. A delightfully retro little red dot appears when you have notifications, and there are lots of ways to personalise the look of the display with different designs, images and animations. The cover screen also has a collection of useful widgets, allows access to a full keyboard to reply to messages, and can run a small selection of apps such as WhatsApp without opening the phone. Specifications Main screen: 6.7in FHD+ 120Hz AMOLED Infinity Flex Display (425ppi) Cover screen: 3.4in AMOLED Processor: Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Gen 2 RAM: 8GB Storage: 256 or 512GB Operating system: One UI 5.1 based on Android 13 Camera: dual 12MP rear, 10MP front-facing Connectivity: 5G, nano sim + esim, wifi6E, NFC, Bluetooth 5.3 and GNSS Water resistance: IPX8 (1.5-metre depths for 30 minutes) Folded dimensions: 84.9 x 71.9 x 15.1mm Unfolded dimensions: 165.2 x 72.2 x 6.9mm Weight: 187g Snappy performance with a good day's battery life The Flip 5 has the same top Qualcomm chip as the Galaxy S23 series from the start of the year, and performs just as well. It is one of the fastest smartphones on the market and significantly more powerful than the folding competition – excellent for just about anything you would want to do with the phone. The battery lasts a good 35 hours between charges, with the screen used for about five hours and a couple of hours spent on 5G during that time. That's a couple of hours longer than the Flip 4 but it is likely you will still need to charge it nightly. A full charge takes about 90 minutes, hitting 50% in 30 minutes using

a 25W charger (not included). Sustainability Samsung does not provide an expected lifespan for the battery but it should last in excess of 500 full-charge cycles with at least 80% of its original capacity. The phone is generally repairable. Inside screen repairs cost £314, while the battery is replaceable by authorised service centres. Samsung offers a self-repair programme in the UK and US, as well as Care+ accidental damage insurance that reduces the cost of repairs to £99. The Flip 5 is made from recycled aluminium, glass and plastic. Samsung offers trade-in and recycling schemes for old devices. The company publishes annual sustainability reports but not impact assessments for individual products.

**One UI 5.1 Android software** The Flip 5 runs Samsung's One UI 5.1, which is based on Android 13. It generally behaves the same as standard Samsung phones, offering one of the most refined Android experiences available. There are a few fun extras, such as "Flex Mode", which pushes apps to the top half of the display when the phone is folded in an L-shape, and the ability to use apps or the camera on the cover screen. The phone will receive at least five years of software updates from release, including four major Android version updates and monthly security patches, which is longer than folding screen rivals but short of the best, such as Fairphone.

**Camera** The Flip 5 has two 12-megapixel cameras on the outside next to the cover screen, and a 10MP selfie camera at the top of the inside screen. The main cameras are both good but very little has changed since last year's model. They are slightly sharper, with slightly better night photography. That means they generally shoot good images and decent video with a fair few fun tricks in the camera app but the lack of an optical zoom holds them back from being truly great. The 10MP selfie camera is solid but is most useful for video calls. That's because you can take selfies using the main cameras and the large cover display as a view finder, producing much better results across a range of lighting conditions.

**Price** The Samsung Galaxy Z Flip 5 starts at £1,049 (\$999/A\$1,649). For comparison, the Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra costs £1,249, the Galaxy Z Fold 5 costs £1,749, the Google Pixel Fold costs £1,749, Oppo's Find N2 Flip costs £849 and the Motorola Razr 40 Ultra flip phone costs £1,049.

**Verdict** Samsung's flip phone doesn't break the mould for its fifth generation, still squeezing a big-screen smartphone into a much more compact folded form. But a collection of small, meaningful changes remove more of the compromises of the still-developing tech, making it feel like a more mature product. It now folds closed without a gap between the two halves of the device, making it thinner. The large cover screen on the outside is a far more useful and attractive addition. The inside screen is excellent, feeling slightly firmer under your finger than the competition. You can still see the crease where it folds and it isn't as robust as a regular glass screen, so it needs treating with care – a compromise still required by the folding tech. Accidental damage insurance might be worth considering just in case. The phone is water-resistant, has the fastest chip available to Androids, and will see five years of software support. The battery life is decent and the camera is good, but neither can match the best non-folding phones. The Flip 5 is no longer the only folding-screen flip phone in town, with good rivals from Oppo and Motorola available. But it is the best on the market, and a more interesting alternative to a standard premium phone.

**Pros:** a great large screen that folds in half, big cover screen, folds fully shut, IPX8 water-resistant, decent camera, good software with five years of updates, nano sim and esim, fun.

**Cons:** less durable than a regular phone, no telephoto camera, battery life a day but short of best, expensive.