

# 15in MacBook Air review: Apple's best consumer laptop, just bigger

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Apple's much-rumoured 15in MacBook Air is here, marking the firm's return to this part of the market and adding more screen to what is arguably the best consumer laptop available. The 15in MacBook Air starts at £1,399 (\$1,299/\$2,199) – £250 more than the excellent 13in version, which has been given a £100 price cut since its launch. The larger screen means it competes with the likes of the 15in Microsoft Surface Laptop 5 and Dell's popular XPS 15. But unlike many bulkier rivals, the MacBook Air retains all of the selling points of the original 13in version, just bigger. It has the same super-thin metal body, no-fan cooling system for silent running and the M2 chip. It is fast and power efficient, lasting as much as twice as long as the competition on battery. But that also means it does not have a discrete graphics card or any of the more powerful processors that are typically fitted to beefy 15in PCs from rivals. The Air is for consumers looking for a larger screen but not gaming or workstation performance. The display is very good indeed: bright, crisp, colourful and with a higher resolution than most full-HD laptops, though not the expensive 4K-screen versions of rivals. At 15.3in on the diagonal, there is significantly more space compared with 13in laptops to fit more than one window at a time. Using half the screen, websites display at almost full size and documents appear at full width, making split-screen working easier. There's also a fair bit more working space within image and video editing apps compared with smaller models. Films and TV shows look great on the screen too. It is capable of displaying HDR content, while the laptop's six-speaker system sounds far better than you'd expect. It'll easily fill a small room with music and doesn't sound tinny like most laptops. The Air runs the same macOS 13.4 Ventura software as Apple's recent Macs, with the Sonoma update to arrive later this year. Ventura runs well on the laptop and includes a collection of useful screen-sharing and proximity features for other Apple devices, such as using a recent iPad as a second screen or to control it remotely. You can use an iPhone as a wireless webcam, which works really well but is less necessary because the FaceTime HD camera is pretty good already. Specifications Screen: 15.3in LCD (2880x1864; 224 ppi) True Tone Processor: Apple M2 with 10-core GPU RAM: 8, 16 or 24GB Storage: 256GB, 512GB, 1TB or 2TB SSD Operating system: macOS 13.4 Ventura Camera: 1080p FaceTime HD Connectivity: wifi 6, Bluetooth 5.3, 2x USB-C/Thunderbolt 4, headphones Dimensions: 237.6 x 340.4 x 11.5mm Weight: 1.51kg Extremely long battery life The 15in Air has the same selection of ports as the 13in version, including two Thunderbolt 4/USB 4 ports, a headphones socket and a separate MagSafe charging connection. It would be been nice to have a memory card reader or a few more ports, but with extensive expansion options via the USB-C ports, it works. The battery life remains class-leading. It lasts up to 16 hours for office work such as browsing and word processing between charges depending on usage. Add more creative

tasks such as several hours of photo editing in Affinity Photo and it will still last a good 13 hours, so you won't need to carry the charger to lectures or work. Sustainability The MacBook Air is made with recycled materials including aluminium, cobalt, gold, steel, tin, rare earth elements and plastic. Apple breaks down the computer's environmental impact in its report. The computer is generally repairable, and the battery can be replaced for £189 by Apple. The company offers trade-in and free recycling schemes, including for non-Apple products. Price The 15in MacBook Air starts at £1,399 (\$1,299/A\$2,199) with 8GB of memory and 256GB of storage. For comparison, the 13in MacBook Air costs from £1,149, the 14in MacBook Pro from £2,149, the 15in Microsoft Surface Laptop 5 starts at £1,299 and the 15in Dell XPS starts at £1,399. Verdict The 15in MacBook Air is a great addition to Apple's laptop line, marrying the best-in-class 13in model with a bigger display for those who need more screen. It doesn't fundamentally change the winning formula of the laptop, which is a good thing. The no-fan design keeps things silent while the speedy but efficient M2 chip provides plenty of power and 16-hour battery life. Those looking for gaming or workstation-level power will have to look elsewhere, however. The screen is one of the best on the market. The speakers are fantastic, the webcam is pretty good and the mics are great for taking calls. It is super thin and well built, making carrying it about easier than many rivals without compromising function. The 15in Air isn't cheap, but it's also not overly expensive for a premium laptop of this size. I would pick the 13in version for portability, but if you want a quality consumer laptop with a big screen and you don't need Windows, this is it. Pros: speedy M2 chip, silent running, extremely long battery life, great 15.3in screen, great keyboard, enormous best-in-class trackpad, MagSafe, great speakers, good mics and webcam, lots of recycled materials, thin and light for the size, Touch ID. Cons: premium-priced, only two USB-C ports with no USB-A or SD card slot, can only drive one external display, no Centre Stage camera or Face ID.