

OnePlus Open review: the most phone-like folding tablet yet

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OnePlus's first foldable phone is the Open, which aims to give Samsung and Google a run for their money with a slightly different form for the tablet-phone hybrid that may just be the best shape yet. The Open costs £1,599 (€1,849/\$1,699.99), which makes it twice the price of the brand's regular smartphones but undercuts the Samsung and Google folders by £150. It still puts the OnePlus in the ultra-premium gadget world, although closer to the price of top standard models. Five years on from the first folding tablet-phone hybrid hitting the market, the form of these cutting-edge devices is still in flux. The Open is the most phone-like of all the folders when closed, with a 6.31in outside screen that is the same size and shape as a regular flat phone. The Open is only 3mm thicker than a regular OnePlus, so it doesn't feel overly chunky and is less bulbous than Samsung or Google's efforts. Apart from the enormous camera lump, which covers just under half the back glass when folded. Open the phone like a book to reveal the almost-square 7.82in inside screen, which is excellent for apps but less suitable for widescreen movies. The display is just as good as that from Samsung's best: sharp, super bright and smooth with a 120Hz refresh rate. Better still, the crease in the centre of the screen where it folds is the least visible of any rival. You can still feel a slight indentation with your finger and see it in the glare of overhead lights if you go looking for it, but otherwise you won't notice it. The slim hinge opens smoothly and is able to hold the internal screen open at a wide range of angles, snapping flat and shut at the extremes with no gap between the two halves when closed. It is rated for 1m folds, which is five times that of the latest Samsung and Google phones. The OnePlus only has splash water resistance and no official dust resistance, however, so drop it in the bath and you could have problems. Like all other folders, the screen is made from ultra-thin glass and plastic to enable it to fold. Press hard enough with your nail and you'll mark it, so it must be treated with more care than a traditional phone.

Specifications
Main screen: 7.82in 2K (426ppi) 120Hz AMOLED flexible display
Cover screen: 6.31in 2K (431ppi) 120Hz AMOLED
Processor: Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Gen 2
RAM: 16GB
Storage: 512GB
Operating system: OxygenOS 13.2 (Android 13)
Camera: 48MP main, 48MP ultrawide, 64MP 3x telephoto; 32MP and 20MP selfie
Connectivity: 5G, dual sim, esim, USB-C, wifi 7, NFC, Bluetooth 5.3, GNSS
Water resistance: IPX4 (splash)
Dimensions folded: 153.4 x 73.3 x 11.9mm
Dimensions unfolded: 153.4 x 143.1 x 5.8mm
Weight: 239g

Fast chip, long battery life

The Open has Qualcomm's Snapdragon 8 Gen 2 chip from the OnePlus 11 and other top Androids in 2023, backed with 16GB of RAM, which is as much as a laptop. That means the folder is capable of handling practically anything you'd want to do on a phone or tablet, including lots of multitasking. It is snappy and responsive, and has good battery life of about 46 hours between charges – about as long as the best regular phones. Sustainability OnePlus rates the battery for at least 1,600

full charge cycles, maintaining at least 80% of its original capacity. The phone does not contain recycled materials but is generally repairable by OnePlus, with screen replacements costing about £680 and batteries costing about £99 plus labour. OnePlus is included in parent company Oppo's yearly sustainability reports but it does not offer a trade-in or recycling scheme in the UK. OxygenOS 13.2 with "canvas" The device runs a customised version of Android 13 called OxygenOS similar to other OnePlus phones. But for the Open, OnePlus has added a new multitasking system, which takes a different approach to using multiple apps on screen to other manufacturers. When using multiple apps at the same time the "canvas" can virtually expand beyond the physical limits of the screen, which allows apps to remain full-size instead of being squished into thin or wide views. When you're using one app, another can be pushed almost entirely off the side of the screen. The pushed app then slides back into view when you tap on it. It is an elegant solution to the problem of apps that don't work well when resized and allows you a bigger view of each app, while still working with three or more at a time. A taskbar at the bottom of the screen makes adding or switching multiple on-screen apps easy. Most of the rest of the software follows Google's way of handling the multiple screens of the folder, and lacks the bells and whistles that make Samsung's way so powerful. For instance, the home screen is shared between the outside and inside screens rather than having the option of different layouts on each screen that Samsung provides. You can continue using apps from the inside screen on the outside when you shut it if you swipe up on the cover screen, which is good. But it would be better to have the option to always continue using particular apps such as Google Maps when you shut the phone, which is another Samsung option. OnePlus has no equivalent of Samsung's excellent "Flex mode" or a desktop computing "Dex" mode when plugged into an external monitor either. Overall, the software on the Open is good, with a bit more capability than Google's Fold and the excellent canvas system making multitasking easier, but it isn't as powerful as Samsung's implementation. OnePlus will offer four years of Android updates and five years of security updates, which is far short of market leaders such as Google offering seven years and Fairphone's 10 years. Camera The enormous camera bump on the back of the Open houses a 48MP main, 48MP ultrawide and 64MP telephoto camera with a 3x optical zoom. The telephoto also offers an additional 6x magnification by zooming in on the centre of the sensor similar to that used by recent Google and Apple phones. Without doubt the Open has the best camera on a OnePlus to date, and gives the folder camera market leader Pixel Fold a run for its money, only falling slightly short in some areas. The main camera is very good, capturing plenty of detail and handling mixed lighting well. The ultrawide is solid, too, while the telephoto captures good images at 3x in most light and 6x in bright light, with digital zoom available on top. All the cameras struggle a little with motion, particularly in dimmer lighting, resulting in photos that aren't sharp enough if you're not careful. Video capture is solid but not the best in town. The selfie camera on the cover screen is pretty good, while the internal screen selfie camera is great for video calls. But you can use the main camera to take selfies using a viewfinder on the cover screen for much better results. Price The OnePlus Open costs £1,599 (€1,849/\$1,699.99). For comparison, the Samsung Galaxy Z Fold 5 starts at £1,749 and the Google Pixel Fold costs £1,749. Verdict The OnePlus Open splits the difference between the shapes of incumbents Samsung and Google's folding phones, offering a better phone-like size when shut and a big square screen when open. It is lighter and less bulky to use for phone things and has some interesting ideas for how to handle multitasking on the tablet-sized internal screen. But it lacks a few bells and whistles from the best rivals, making it less powerful on the software front. Performance is excellent, as is battery life. The internal screen has the least visible fold crease yet, which is very welcome progress. The camera is also good, and gives Google a run for its money, too. The Open feels like quite a mature product, which is because OnePlus's parent company, Oppo, has made two folders before this, making the Open a third-generation product, not a first attempt. Durability is an area for concern for all foldables but the Open lacks proper water resistance and OnePlus does not have a proven record with the cutting-edge technology or repairs. Extended software support is also well overdue, particularly for a device this expensive. Pros: a phone and tablet in one, just like a normal phone when closed, less visible fold crease when open, top performance, great battery life, great camera, interesting software ideas. Cons: only splash-proof, still very expensive, more fragile than a regular phone and very costly to repair, software not as powerful as top rival, only five years of updates from release.