# 5G is the least compelling thing about the iPhone 12

I’ve been testing the [iPhone 12](https://www.apple.com/iphone-12/) and [12 Pro](https://www.apple.com/iphone-12-pro/), the first Apple phones capable of running on next-generation cellular networks. Apple CEO Tim Cook, and endless commercials, tout 5G as the “super fast” upgrade you’ve been waiting for.

[Not so fast.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/09/08/5g-speed/?itid=lk_inline_manual_6) At home smack in the middle of San Francisco, my download speeds with an iPhone 12 are only a teensy bit faster than I get on last year’s 4G iPhone. We’re talking no more than a 6 Mbps improvement.

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So let’s be clear: Don’t buy an $800 (and up) iPhone 12 for the 5G. In 2020, Americans are more likely to find public pay phones than places with ultrafast 5G.

However, there may be other reasons you should consider an iPhone 12: a newish flat-edge design, hardened glass, a snappier processor and (especially) a better camera. To figure out what’s actually useful, I got some help from you.

Hundreds of Washington Post readers wrote me after [Apple unveiled the iPhone 12](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/10/14/iphone-12-first-look/?itid=lk_inline_manual_11). So to review the new phones, I’m answering your questions directly. I used your good suggestions to guide me as I ran around snapping test photos and comparing downloads across three networks on nine different phones. (Please [keep the questions coming.](https://hosted-washpost.submissionplatform.com/sub/hosted/5c7808290310870034cc0d8f))

So far, I’ve only been able to test the “normal”-size iPhone 12 and 12 Pro, which arrived in stores on Friday. A new mini model and Pro Max won’t arrive until mid-November.

Some of Apple’s claims will take more time to verify. For example, I couldn’t throw my test phones onto concrete to test screen strength, but I look forward to hearing what havoc your children wreak. Battery life, which Apple claims is about the same as last year’s phones, will also largely depend on how much you use power-hungry 5G.

My personal takeaway: I’m sticking with my existing iPhone 11 Pro Max for at least the next year. 5G service just isn’t useful in the areas where I spend time — especially during the pandemic. And while I obsess over photos more than most people, the differences between the iPhone 11 and 12 cameras aren’t worth a new phone.