

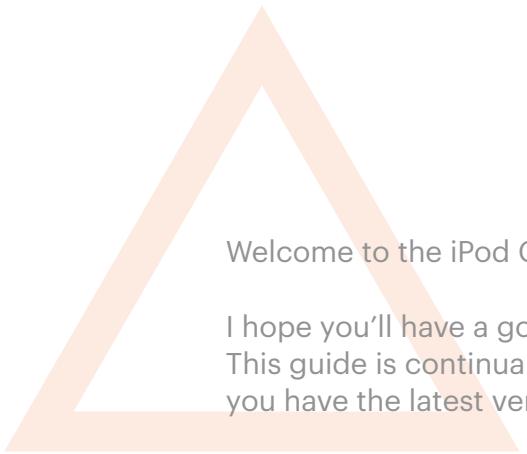


# The iPod Classic Cheatsheet

## A guide to our iPod world by yuuiko

Version 2 - compiled march 23, 2021

With help from the iPod Modding Discord!  
[discord.gg/4FZMtyN](https://discord.gg/4FZMtyN)  
[patreon.com/yuuiko](https://patreon.com/yuuiko)    [u/yuuiko](https://www.reddit.com/u/yuuiko)



## Welcome to the iPod Classic Guide!

I hope you'll have a good experience here.  
This guide is continually improving, so make sure  
you have the latest version.

Additionally, there may be some information that  
isn't correct, but haven't been realised as such at  
the time of writing. Be sure you double check  
everything before buying anything!

This guide is not yet a definitive resource, but it  
will continually improve as I look through your  
comments and as new information arises.

Thank you for coming! -yuuiko

- 1 Cover
  - 2 Disclaimer
  - ▶ **Contents**
  - 4 Identifying iPods
  - 5 Recommendations
  - 9 Storage Mod
  - 11 Battery Mod
  - 12 Appearance and Software
  - 13 Version Notes**
- 
- ♥ Support

# Identifying iPods

## LEGEND

THIN BACK

THICK BACK

Compatibility Warning

## ABOUT BACK THICKNESS



Classic iPods use spinning hard drives to store data, (yes, actual spinning disks inside. how charming!). Higher capacities needed two disks, so resulted in a thicker hard drive. This is why iPods usually come in two thicknesses, Thin and Thick for the different storage models.



### 1st Gen (2001, 2002)

Scroll wheel physically spins!

Old iPod Font on Rear

Requires Firewire computer + charger

5GB

10GB

10GB

20GB

### 2nd Gen (2002)

Scroll wheel is solid state touch-based

Has flap covers on the top ports

10gb and not THICC

Requires Firewire computer + charger



### 3rd Gen (2003 - 2004)

Touch controls

Requires Firewire charger to charge, but you can sync with USB.

Firewire to 30pin cable + brick highly recommended

10GB

15GB

20GB

30GB

40GB

Known to behave strangely due to its 1st generation USB + Firewire implementation.

# Identifying iPods 2



## 4th Gen (2004)

Has a black and white Display

Note the thicker screen bezels + clickwheel.

20GB

40GB

20GB

30GB

40GB

60GB

## 4th Gen (2004 - 2005)

officially called "iPod Photo"

Has a colour display

Note the thicker screen bezels + clickwheel.



## 5th Gen (2005)

officially called "iPod Video"

30GB

60GB

Does not have a search function in "Music" menu

Does not have a middle divider in brightness menu

30GB

80GB

## 5.5th (2006)

officially called "iPod Video"

The "Music" menu has a search function

The brightness menu has a black line, middle divider.

(has a brighter screen)

Serial ends with V9K, V9P, V9M, V9R, V9L, V9N, V9Q.



## 6th Gen (2007)

officially called "iPod Classic"

80GB

160GB

Metal, Black Faceplate

Capacity is 80gb

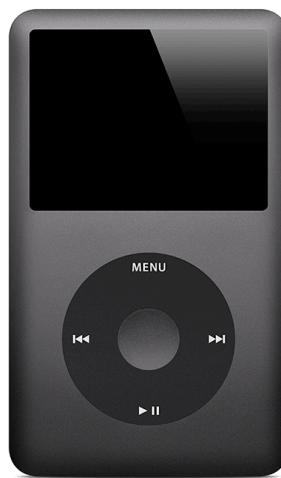
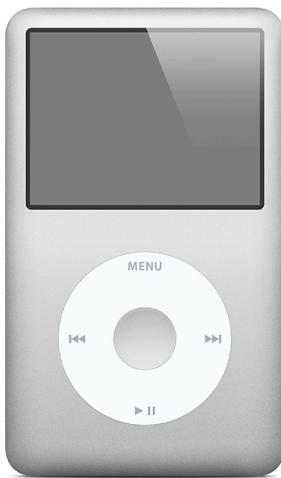
Capacity is 160gb with Thick Case

(If 160gb and thin, it's a 7th.)

Serial ends with Y5N, YMU, YMV, YMX.

128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit.

# Identifying iPods 3



**6.5th Gen** (2008)  
officially called "iPod Classic"

120GB

Capacity is 120gb  
Space grey and 120gb  
**128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit.**

160GB

**7th Gen** (2009 - 2015)  
officially called "iPod Classic"

7th gens are always thin with 160gb.  
7th gens are never black, but space grey or silver.



**iPod Mini Gen 1** (2004)  
Has grey click wheel text  
No storage indication on rear  
**128gb Storage Hard Limit.**

4GB



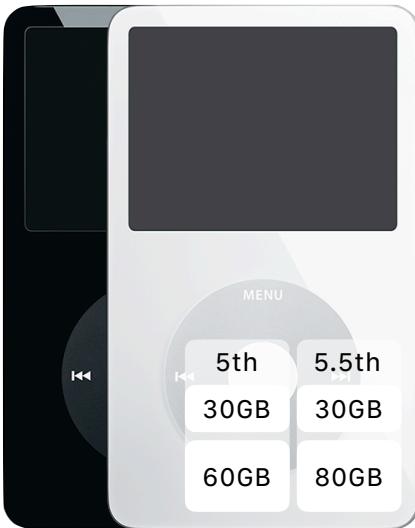
**iPod Mini Gen 2** (2005)  
Has coloured clickwheel text  
Storage can be seen on the back

4GB

6GB

# Recommendations

## The Default



### iPod Video 5th and 5.5th

Most common, Cheapest priced iPod. Price to Performance++

Video Support

Largest screen on an iPod Classic

Superior sound quality with Wolfson DAC

Most researched iPod with lots of spare parts and custom software available

Many custom parts (Coloured faceplates and metal back cases)

Easy Mods

Very easy to disassemble

Big Battery, up to "3000mAh - 1 month life"

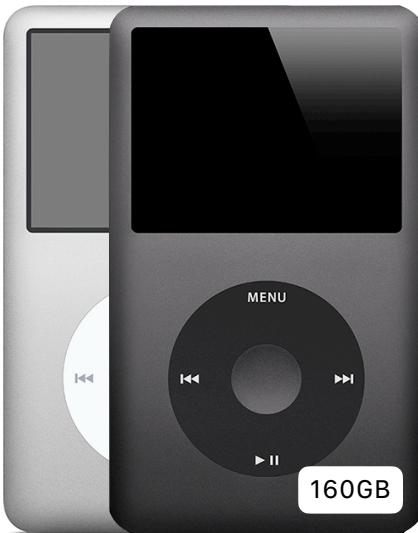
Flash mod, good up to 512GB. Can go further to 2TB, but is unstable.

↳ 30gb models have 32mb RAM, 60gb, 80gb models have 64mb RAM

↳ More ram = can handle more songs, but only takes effect for flash mods beyond 300gb, otherwise should make no difference.

Rockbox may run slow if you run too many CPU intense tasks (FLAC, EQ...)

## The All-Out



### iPod Classic 7th

All the benefits of the 5th gens above and:

Much better UI compared to 5th gen, with fancy graphics and album art everywhere. Cover Flow, Games, Album Art UI, Quick Shuffle/Repeat menu

Much faster processor and graphics chip

Runs Rockbox much smoother

Flash mod good up to 1TB, Can go further to 2TB, but may be unstable.

All models 64mb RAM

Brighter, more vibrant display

Since they were sold until 2015, you're likely to get a younger stock battery, which should be healthier and last longer out the box.

Headphone inline controls support

All metal construction (Is more durable, but hard to disassemble)

Lesser sound quality with Cirrus DAC. Probably won't bother normal people.

## The Simple



### iPod Mini Gen 2

Easy to flash mod with just a CF adapter

Black and white screen.

Easy to disassemble

Has a greatly improved battery life over the mini 1

It's a simple little guy that only plays music.

Only 4gb or 6gb stock storage, upgradable tho.

### iPod Mini Gen 1

If you can only find a gen 1, you'll be limited to 128gb flash mod. otherwise Gen 1 is good too.

# Caution

Know what you're doing before buying these iPods.



## iPod 1st and 2nd Gen

**Requires a computer, charger and cable with firewire to sync AND charge.**

There is no USB to firewire dongle. They aren't possible so far. You need a computer with firewire, or thunderbolt with a bunch'o' extra adapters.

**Not recommended for new-to-iPod people**, as Firewire is an additional investment.

Parts are hard to find.



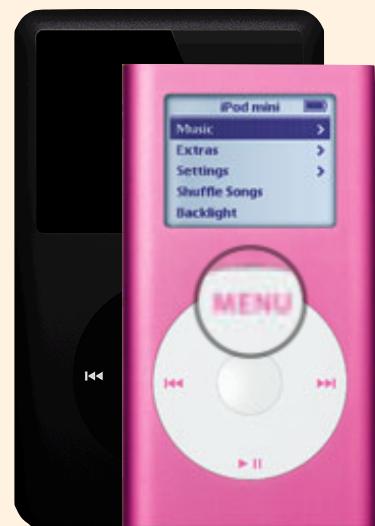
## iPod 3rd Gen

Requires a firewire charger and firewire 30pin cable to charge, but you can use USB to sync.

**Not recommended for new-to-iPod people**, as Firewire is an additional investment. Thankfully you just need a charger for this one.

Software is known to act strange sometimes

Parts are hard to find



## iPod 6th and 6.5th Gen

For flash mods, it has a hard limit of 128gb maximum.

If you don't plan to upgrade storage though, it's perfectly a good pod.

## iPod Mini 1st Gen

For flash mods, it has a hard limit of 128gb maximum.

If you don't plan to upgrade storage though, it's perfectly a good pod.

# Storage Mod Compatibility



## 1st Gen and 2nd Gen

Cannot sync using firewire when flash mod installed. You need to either pre-sync the drive somehow or use Rockbox to use a flash mod with these.



## 5th Gen, 5.5th gen and 7th gen

Hard Drive swap between 5th, 5.5th, 6th, 6.5th, 7th gens.

5th gen stable up to 512gb.  
7th gen stable up to 1TB.  
Either can exceed, but may be buggy.

- Hard Drive swap between 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th gen.
- ATA to CF adapter with either:
  - CF to SD adapter + SD card
  - CF card
- iFlash ATA
- ZIF to IDE cable + newer iFlash boards

- iFlash Solo
- iFlash Dual
- iFlash Quad

- “iPod storage upgrade CF Adapter” and either:
  - CF to SD adapter + SD card
  - iFlash CF to SD adapter + SD card
  - CF card



## 3rd Gen

128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit.

Does not sync using firewire with flash mod. Just use USB to sync instead.



## 6th gen, 6.5th gen

128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit.

Hard Drive swap between 5th, 5.5th, 6th, 6.5th gens.

- Hard Drive swap between 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th gen.
- ATA to CF adapter with either:
  - CF to SD adapter + SD card
  - CF card
- iFlash ATA
- ZIF to IDE cable + newer iFlash boards

- iFlash Solo
- iFlash Dual
- iFlash Quad

- “iPod storage upgrade CF Adapter” and either:
  - CF to SD adapter + SD card
  - iFlash CF to SD adapter + SD card
  - CF card



## 4th Gen

Hard Drive swap between 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th gen.



## iPod Mini 1\* and Mini 2

\*128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit. (but Mini 2 does not have this limit.)

- ATA to CF adapter with either:
  - CF to SD adapter + SD card
  - CF card
- iFlash ATA
- ZIF to IDE cable + newer iFlash boards

Either:

- CF card
- CF to SD adapter + SD card

# Storage Mod Recommends

## 5th, 5.5th, 6th, 6.5th, 7th gens



### The Default

iFlash Solo

"It just works"

Little bit of a premium price tag



### The All-Out

iFlash Quad

- enables big battery mod in a thinback

- enables practically infinite storage

- Premium price tag. It's the flagship of mods



### The Budget

Generic Chinese Thingy

50/50 chance it'll work  
but it's \$5



### The New Kid

Unbranded Integrated SSD board

Appears with a SATA SSD socket or with built-in onboard flash chips

Really nice, small and thin,  
**but can you trust him?**

## 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Gens



### The Quality

iFlash ATA

"It just works"

Little bit of a premium price tag



### The Budget

Another Generic Chinese Thingy

You might need to bend down or modify a component that sticks out of it

## iPod Mini



### The "No Adapter Required"

Any good Compact Flash card goes straight into the iPod Mini.



### The "but SD Cards"

That Generic Chinese Thing again but without the green adapter board. 50/50 chance it'll work but it's \$5.



### The Quality "but SD Cards"

iFlash SD-CF Adapter

Takes an SD card

"It just works"

**Caution** Know what you're doing before buying one of these.



### The Budgets

A lot of reports of it not working. Even if it does work, it may have slow, "buggy" transfer speeds.

A lot of owners say that using a different CF to SD adapter dramatically increases reliability over the red adapter, such as the iFlash SD to CF adapter.



### iFlash SATA

Known to overheat and "needs a break" every now and then. Getting SD cards are cheaper anyway, and you won't get much speed increase from the SSD drive because iPods are only USB 2.0 anyway.

# Battery Mod

## The Straightforwards



### 1st Gen and 2nd Gen:

Rare to upgrade battery.

Battery is already very large

Hard to find parts



### 3rd Gen

Rare to upgrade battery.

It's placed in an internal battery compartment, so getting a bigger battery isn't plug and play

Hard to find parts



### 4th Gens

Rare to upgrade battery.

It's placed in an internal battery compartment, so getting a bigger battery isn't plug and play

Parts exist, but seems like only stock spec replacements



### iPod Minis

No battery upgrade possible

It's too small for plug and play battery upgrades

You can get new batteries though, which should last longer.

## The Lots'o Considerations

5th 5.5th 6th 6.5th and 7th gen iPods.



### THINBACKS



If you have a thinback, you NEED to use an **iFlash Quad** (or slimmer) for big battery mod.

There are many batteries out there, but the most popular are either a 2000mAh Tall battery, or a 3000 mAh wide, thin battery. These both work in the iPod with a thin back ONLY if you use an iFlash Quad or thinner (2mm). **There is a thicker 3000 mAh version which will not work with a thinback.** Beware and make sure that the battery you are getting will fit. See reviews and ask the community as there are many different variations of these but no real way to tell listings apart.

### THICKBACKS



If you have a thick back with a thicker HDD, you'll need to replace the HDD with a thin HDD, or flash mod it with any flash-mod. You can also a thick back to a thin iPod if you wish. Then you can use any battery!

### Swapping Backs and Headphone Jacks

If you decide to obtain a new back of a different size, you'll need to also order a new headphone and hold switch assembly that fits the thickness. This assembly has a thick and thin version to match the back thicknesses.

# Appearance and Software

## LEGEND

Easy physical mod

Difficult Physical Mods

Software Mods



### 1st Gen

Not much to plug and play.  
**LCD polariser colour change (destructive)**

Install Rockbox Firmware  
iPod Wizard Original Firmware  
customise (advanced)



### 5th and 5.5th gens

Colourful Plastic Faceplates  
Colourful Clickwheels  
Colourful Middle Buttons  
Colourful Backplates

Add 6th gen metal faceplate (advanced)  
Sand the front for a matte finish



### 3rd Gen

Not much to plug and play.

Sand the front for matte finish

I saw a website that allowed you to change button LED colours, but nobody has tried it yet.

**LCD polariser colour change (destructive)**

Install Rockbox Firmware  
iPod Wizard Original Firmware  
customise (advanced)



### 6th 6.5th 7th gens

Colourful Metal Faceplates  
Colourful Backplates  
Colourful Clickwheels  
Colourful Middle Buttons

Add 5th gen metal faceplate (advanced)  
Add 5th gen clickwheel (advanced), plastic only.

Install Rockbox Firmware



### All 4th Gens (Mono and Photo)

Black faceplates  
Red clickwheels

Install Rockbox Firmware  
iPod Wizard Original Firmware  
customise (advanced)



### 4th Gen mono only

**LCD polariser colour change (destructive)**

### iPod Mini 1 and 2

Case Swap with other minis  
Sand and Polish the Case (Silver version)  
**Clickwheel plastic swap between 5th 6th 7th and Minis (destructive)** \*clickwheel circuitry is not swappable, just the plastic.

Not many custom parts, just stock replacements

Install Rockbox Firmware  
iPod Wizard Original Firmware  
customise (advanced)

# iPod Classic Guide v2 Changes

## New

Welcome to v2 with the all new PDF format! Completely re-designed for A4 size.

To show you the power of pdf, I saw... the opportunity to add links! You can now click elements to jump between pages or open store websites.

Added a disclaimer to raise awareness of this growing guide, wouldn't want you to buy a part that does not work because of this guide!

Added new back thickness info in Identifying iPods

Added Headphone Jack thickness compatibility note in Battery Mod.

Caution the mini 1 when buying due to storage mod limitations

## Mistake Fixes

Fix grammatical errors and improved wording.

Removed 128gb storage limit for 1st to 4th gens in Storage Mod Compatibility.

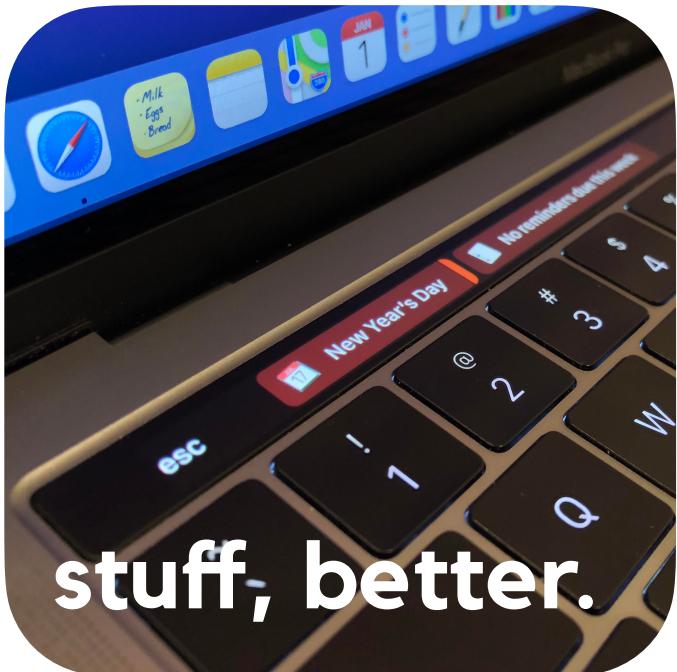
# Liked this guide?



support  
great design



exclusive  
iPod themes



stuff, better.



more  
coming soon!



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