Apple Unveils iPad Mini, Starting at $329

Apple [1] just took the wraps off its latest gadget: the iPad mini [2]. As the name suggests, it's a smaller version of the company's popular iPad [3] tablet, with a screen that measures 7.9 inches diagonally.

The new model comes in both black and white. The 8-inch screen with 4:3 aspect ratio gives the iPad mini a size advantage over 7-inch competitors. The area measures 29.6 square inches to 21.9 on a 16:9 7-inch tablet. It has the same resolution as the original iPad and iPad 2, at 1,024 x 768.

The iPad mini packs an A5 chip, the equivalent of the current iPod touch. It has a front-facing FaceTime 720p camera, with 5-megapixel camera in back. It also includes Apple's new Lightning connector, which first debuted on the iPhone 5.

At 10.9 ounces, the iPad mini is less than half the weight of the full-size iPad. It's just 0.28 of an inch thick.

The iPad mini starts at $329 for the Wi-Fi-only version with 16GB capacity. Higher capacities and 4G LTE options are available. Prices for Wi-Fi-only versions are: $429 for 32GB, and $529 for 64GB. For the cellular versions, prices are $459, $559 and $659 for 16, 32 and 64GB, respectively. Pre-orders begin Oct. 26. Wi-Fi devices ship Nov. 2, and the cellular models will come about two weeks later.

The popular smart cover is getting shrunk as well for the new iPad, with multiple colors offered, including blue, green, pink and black.

Apple's marketing chief, Phil Schiller, unveiled the smaller-screen iPad at its "We've got a little more to show you" event in San Jose, Calif. *Mashable*'s Chris Talyor is on the scene, and you can follow along with events has they happen in our live blog [4].

Reports about a smaller-screen iPad predate even the original iPad unveiling. Steve Jobs [5] famously said smaller-screen tablets were "DOA," though that was before Amazon proved the viability of the market with the Kindle Fire [6] in late 2011. Other tablets — notably the Barnes & Noble Nook HD [7] and Google Nexus 7 [8] — have seen some success with 7-inch tablets as well.

Rumors surrounding a smaller version of the iPad have been escalating for months. Leaked photos [9] revealed a smaller device with a Lightning connector, and reports say Apple has ordered 10 million small-screen iPads [10] from its suppliers to capitalize on the holiday season.

In addition the the new iPad model, Apple also introduced a new MacBook Pro [11] computer with a retina display, a new version of its Mac mini and redesigned iMacs [12]. Also, Apple revealed it has sold more than 100 million iPads since the product was first introduced in 2010.

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