

LEARNING MADE EASY



# Samsung Galaxy® S21

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand



Set up your Galaxy® S21  
and explore its new features

Play games, navigate with Maps,  
use Samsung Pay®, and more

Take stunning photos with the  
latest camera system

**Bill Hughes**

Author of all editions of *Samsung  
Galaxy S For Dummies*



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by Bill Hughes

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## Samsung Galaxy® S21 For Dummies®

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# Introduction

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The Samsung Galaxy S21 5G, S21+ 5G, and S21 Ultra 5G are powerful smartphones, among the most powerful mobile phones ever sold. As of the publication of this book, the Galaxy S21s are the standard against which all other Android-based phones are measured.

Each cellular carrier offers a slightly customized version of the Galaxy S21 lineup. Some phones from cellular carriers come out of the box with preloaded applications, games, or files. This book doesn't dwell on these kinds of differences.

The name for each network is different, these phones are largely the same. (At least one marketing person at each cellular carrier is cringing as you read this.) This similarity allows me to write this book in a way that covers the common capabilities.

At a more core level, these phones are built for high-speed wireless communications, in particular the 5G networks you're seeing in ads. The cellular carriers have spent kajillions upgrading their networks to offer more coverage and better data speeds than their competition. Again, this book doesn't dwell on these differences in network technology because they don't really make much difference in ways that you can see in a book. (Again, at least one engineering person at each cellular carrier is cringing as you read this.)

Similarly, most of the capabilities among the different Galaxy S21 models are similar. The S21+ has a bigger screen and a bigger battery than the S21. Similarly, the S21 Ultra has a bigger screen with higher resolution, a bigger battery, and more camera capabilities than its little brothers. Actually, that's putting it mildly. The S21 Ultra has oh-my-goodness-you-cannot-be-serious kind of camera capabilities compared to every other mobile phone in the known universe. Otherwise, the three versions of the Galaxy S21 are practically identical. When there is an important distinction between the S21 5G, the S21+ 5G, and the S21 Ultra 5G, I mention it. Otherwise, I just call the phone the Galaxy S21 or just S21.

I assume that you already have a Galaxy S21, and I just hope that you have good coverage where you spend more of your time with your phone. If so, you'll be fine. If not, you need to switch to another network; otherwise, the experience

with your phone will be frustrating. I would advise you to return your phone to that carrier and buy your Galaxy S21 at another cellular carrier. As long as you have good cellular data coverage, owning a Samsung Galaxy S21 will be an exciting experience!

First, in much the same way that different brands of PCs are all based on the Microsoft Windows operating system, all Galaxy S phones use the Google Android platform. The good news is that the Android platform has proven to be widely popular, even more successful than Google originally expected when it first announced Android in November 2007. More people are using Android-based phones, and more third parties are writing applications. This is good news because it offers you more options for applications (more on this in Chapter 8 on the Play Store, where you buy applications).

In addition, all Galaxy S21 phones use a powerful graphics processor, employ Samsung's Super AMOLED touchscreen, and are covered in Corning's Gorilla Glass. The superior screen differentiates this product line from other Android phones. Because of these enhanced capabilities, you can navigate around the screen with multi-touch screen gestures with ease. Plus, the videos look stunning from many angles.

Smartphones are getting smarter all the time, and the Galaxy S21 is one of the smartest. However, just because you've used a smartphone in the past doesn't mean you should expect to use your new Galaxy S21 without a bit of guidance.

You may not be familiar with using a multi-touch screen, and your new phone offers a lot of capabilities that you may or may not be familiar with. There used to be a physical button on the front to bring you back to the Home screen. It's no longer a physical button; instead, it's now software based. It would be unfortunate to find out from a kid in the neighborhood that the phone you've been carrying around for several months could solve a problem you've been having because you were never told that the solution was in your pocket the whole time.

In fact, Samsung is proud of the usability of its entire Galaxy lineup — and proud that the user's manual is really just a quick start guide. You can find lots of instructions on the web. However, you have to know what you don't know to get what you want unless you plan to view every tutorial.

That's where this book comes in. This book is a hands-on guide to getting the most out of your Galaxy S21.



# About This Book

This book is a reference — you don't have to read it from beginning to end to get all you need out of it. The information is clearly organized and easy to access. You don't need thick glasses to understand this book. This book helps you figure out what you want to do — and then tells you how to do it in plain English.

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

## Foolish Assumptions

You know what they say about assuming, so I don't do much of it in this book. But I do make a few assumptions about you:

- » **You have a Galaxy S21 phone.** You may be thinking about buying a Galaxy S21 phone, but my money's on your already owning one. After all, getting your hands on the phone is the best part!
- » **You're not totally new to mobile phones.** You know that your Galaxy S21 phone is capable of doing more than the average phone, and you're eager to find out what your phone can do.
- » **You've used a computer.** You don't have to be a computer expert, but you at least know how to check your email and surf the web.

## Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, I used *icons* (little pictures in the margin) to draw your attention to various types of information. Here's a key to what those icons mean:



TIP

This whole book is like one big series of tips. When I share especially useful tips and tricks, I mark them with the Tip icon.



REMEMBER

This book is a reference, which means you don't have to commit it to memory — there is no test at the end. But once in a while, I do tell you things that are so important that I think you should remember them, and when I do, I mark them with the Remember icon.



WARNING

Whenever you may do something that could cause a major headache, I warn you with the, er, Warning icon.



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

These sections provide a little more information than is necessary to use your phone. The hope is that these sections convey extra knowledge to help you understand what is going on when things go wrong, or at least differently than you might have expected.

## Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading right now, this product also comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet. To get to this Cheat Sheet, simply go to [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) and type **Samsung Galaxy S21 For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

## Where to Go from Here

You don't have to read this book from cover to cover. You can skip around as you like. For example, if you need the basics on calling, texting, and emailing, turn to Part 2. To discover more about photos, games, and apps, go to Part 4.

Many readers are already somewhat familiar with smartphones and won't need the basic information found in Parts 1 and 2. A reasonably astute mobile phone user can figure out how to use the phone, text, and data capabilities. Parts 1, 2, and 3 are not for those readers. For them, I recommend skipping ahead to the chapters in Parts 4 through 6.

Former iPhone users, on the other hand, are a special case. (First, welcome to the world of Android!) The reality is that the iPhone and Galaxy S series have very similar capabilities, but these functions are just done in slightly different ways and emphasize different approaches to the similar problems. iPhone users, don't

worry if you find that this book spends a fair amount of time explaining capabilities with which you're familiar. You can read through those chapters quickly, focus on the *how* instead of the description of *what*, and bypass potential frustration.

Current Samsung Galaxy S9, S10, and S20 users are also a special case. The Samsung Galaxy S21 is very similar to the earlier Galaxy S phones in many ways. Galaxy S21 operates mostly like these earlier models, but has improvements in usability, power consumption, and performance. Plus, the camera has even more capabilities (if you can believe it!). If you're comfortable with the earlier Galaxy models and now have a Galaxy S21, Chapters 15 and beyond will be of interest to you.

The majority of readers of this book are actually very astute and get the fact that this book covers the basics of using the Samsung Galaxy S21. A subset of readers complain in Internet reviews that a *For Dummies* book is too basic. If you do this, people will know that you did not read the title. Be sure to read the title and avoid public embarrassment.



# 1 Getting Started with the Samsung Galaxy S21

**IN THIS PART . . .**

Review the capabilities of cellphones and what sets smartphones apart.

Turn off your phone and manage sleep mode.

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Reviewing the basic capabilities of just about any mobile phone
- » Understanding what sets smartphones apart
- » Mapping out what makes Samsung Galaxy S21 phones so cool
- » Getting you prepared to enjoy your phone

# Chapter 1

# Exploring What You Can Do with Your Phone

**W**hether you want just the basics from a mobile phone (make and take phone calls, customize your ringtone, take some pictures, maybe use a Bluetooth headset) or you want your phone to be always by your side (a tool for multiple uses throughout your day), you can make that happen. In this chapter, I outline all the things your Samsung Galaxy S21 can do — from the basics to what makes Galaxy S21 phones different from the rest.

## Discovering the Basics of Your Phone

All mobile phones on the market today include basic functions, and even some entry-level phones are a little more sophisticated. Of course, Samsung includes all basic functions on the Galaxy S21 model. In addition to making and taking calls (see Chapter 3) and sending and receiving texts (see Chapter 4), the Galaxy S21 sports the following basic features:

- » **64MP digital camera:** This resolution is for the S21 and S21+. The S21 Ultra has a mind-boggling 108MP. The mere 64MP is far more than is needed for

posting good-quality images on the Internet. It is about right for making 24-x-36 posters that are photo quality. There is also a front-facing camera with 10MP that is useful for videoconference calls and selfies along with some combination of specialty lenses, depending upon the model. Your phone has some amazing capabilities (see Chapter 9 for more information on cameras and photographs and Chapter 10 on videos).

- » **Ringtones:** You can replace the standard ringtone with custom ringtones that you download to your phone. You also can specify different rings for different numbers.
- » **Bluetooth:** The Galaxy S21 phone supports stereo and standard Bluetooth devices. (See Chapter 3 for more on Bluetooth.)
- » **High-resolution screen:** The Galaxy S21 and the S21+ have screen resolutions of 2,400 x 1,080 pixels. The S21 Ultra offers the highest-resolution touchscreen on the market (3,200 x 1,440 pixels).
- » **Capacitive touchscreen:** The Galaxy S21 phone offers a very slick touchscreen that's sensitive enough to allow you to interact with the screen accurately, but not so sensitive that it's hard to manage. In addition, it has an optional setting that adjusts the sensitivity for special circumstances, like when you want to use one hand or add a screen protector!

## Taking Your Phone to the Next Level: The Smartphone Features

In addition to the basic capabilities of any entry-level phone, the Galaxy S21, which is based on the popular Android platform for mobile devices, has capabilities associated with other smartphones, such as the Apple iPhone:

- » **Internet access:** Access websites through a web browser on your phone.
- » **Wireless email:** Send and receive email from your phone.
- » **Multimedia:** Play music and videos on your phone.
- » **Contact Manager:** The Galaxy S21 lets you take shortcuts that save you from having to enter someone's ten-digit number each time you want to call or text a friend. In fact, the Contact Manager can track all the numbers that an individual might have, store an email address and photo for the person, and synchronize with the program you use for managing contacts on both your personal and work PCs!



- » **Digital camcorder:** The Galaxy S21 comes with a built-in digital camcorder that records live video at a resolution that you can set, including 4K/UHD (ultra-high definition, which is the resolution that is available on the newest televisions). If you want to future-proof your videos, you can even select 8K for when you obtain a TV that operates at this resolution.
- » **Mapping and directions:** The Galaxy S21 uses GPS (Global Positioning System) along with other complementary positioning systems to tell you where you are, find local services that you need, and give you directions to where you want to go.
- » **Fitness information:** The Galaxy S21 automatically tracks important health information within the phone and with external sensors.
- » **Business applications:** The Galaxy S21 can keep you productive while you're away from the office.

I go into each of these capabilities in greater detail in the following sections.

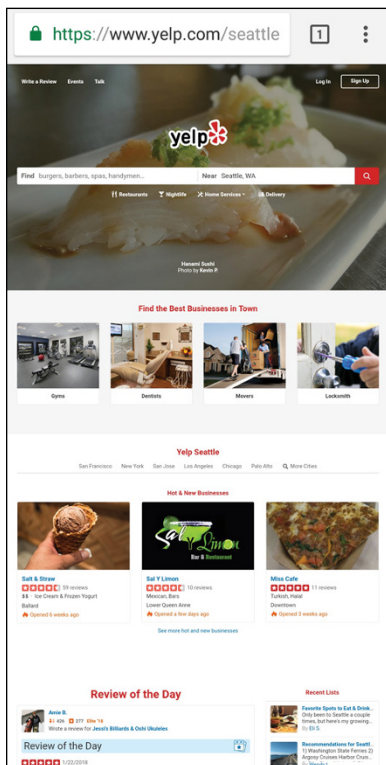
## Internet access

Until a few years ago, the only way to access the Internet when you were away from a desk was with a laptop. Smartphones are a great alternative to laptops because they're small, convenient, and ready to launch their web browsers right away. Even more important, when you have a smartphone, you can access the Internet wherever you are — whether Wi-Fi is available or not.

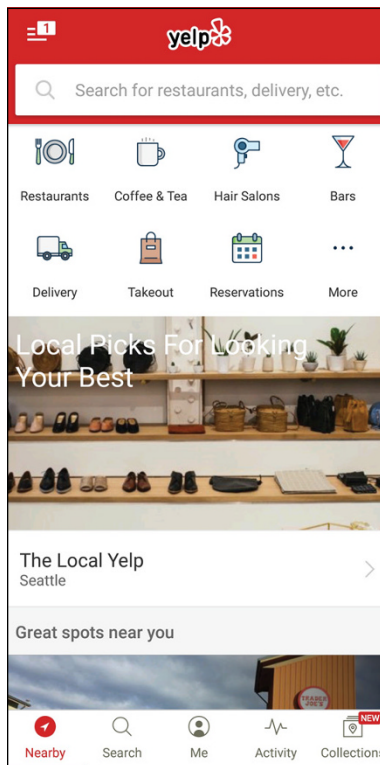
The drawback to smartphones, however, is that their screen size is smaller than that of even the most basic laptop. On the Galaxy S21 phone, you can use the standard version of a website if you want. You can pinch and stretch your way to get the information you want. (See Chapter 2 for more information on pinching and stretching. For more information on accessing the Internet from your Galaxy S21 phone, turn to Chapter 7.)

To make things a bit easier, most popular websites offer an easier-to-use app that you can download and install on your phone. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 8. Essentially, the website reformats the information from the site so that it's easier to read and navigate in the mobile environment. Figure 1-1 compares a regular website with the app version of that website.

Full Web Page



Mobile App Home Page



**FIGURE 1-1:**  
A website and the app version of the main site.

## Photos

The image application on your phone helps you use the digital camera on your Galaxy S21 phone to its full potential. It would almost make sense to call the Samsung Galaxy S21 a smart camera with a built-in phone! There are all kinds of smarts in these applications that automatically figure out what you're trying to do and make it so that you're suddenly the next Ansel Adams.

Studies have found that cellphone users tend to snap a bunch of pictures within the first month of phone usage. After that, the photos sit on the phone (instead of being downloaded to a computer), and the picture-taking rate drops dramatically.

The Galaxy S21 image management application is different. You can integrate your camera images into your home photo library, as well as photo-sharing sites such as Google Photos and Instagram, with minimal effort.

For more on how to use the Photo applications, turn to Chapter 9.

## Wireless email

On your Galaxy S21 smartphone, you can access your business and personal email accounts, reading and sending email messages on the go. Depending on your email system, you might be able to sync so that when you delete an email on your phone, the email is deleted on your computer at the same time so that you don't have to read the same messages on your phone and your computer.

Chapter 5 covers setting up your business and personal email accounts.

## Multimedia

Some smartphones allow you to play music and videos on your phone. On the Galaxy S21, you can use the applications that come with the phone, or you can download applications that offer these capabilities from the Play Store.

Chapter 12 covers how to use the multimedia services with your Galaxy S21 phone.

# Customizing Your Phone with Games and Applications

Application developers — large and small — are working on the Android platform to offer a variety of applications and games for the Galaxy S21 phone. Compared to the other smartphone platform, Google imposes fewer restrictions on application developers regarding what's allowable. This freedom to develop resonates with many developers — resulting in a bonanza of application development on this platform.

As of this writing, more than three million applications are available from Google's Play Store. For more information about downloading games and applications, turn to Chapter 8.

## Downloading games

Chapter 11 of this book is for gamers. Although your phone comes with a few general-interest games, you can find a whole wide world of games for every skill and taste. In Chapter 11, I give you all the information you need to set up different gaming experiences. Whether you prefer stand-alone games or multiplayer games, you can set up your Galaxy S21 phone to get what you need.

## Downloading applications

Your phone comes with some very nice applications, but these might not take you as far as you want to go. You might also have some special interests, such as philately or stargazing, that neither Samsung nor your carrier felt would be of sufficient general interest to include on the phone. (Can you imagine?)

Your phone also comes with preloaded *widgets*, which are smaller applications that serve particular purposes, such as retrieving particular stock quotes or telling you how your phone's battery is feeling today. Widgets reside on the extended Home screen and are instantly available.

Buying applications allows you to get additional capabilities quickly, easily, and inexpensively. Ultimately, these make your phone, which is already a reflection of who you are, even more personal as you add more capabilities.

## What's cool about the Android platform

The Samsung Galaxy S21 is a top-of-the-line Android phone. That means you can run any application developed for an Android phone to its full capability. This is significant because one of the founding principles behind the Android platform is to create an environment where application developers can be as creative as possible without an oppressive organization dictating what can and cannot be sold (as long as it's within the law, of course). This creative elbow room has inspired many of the best application developers to go with Android first.

### TAKE A DEEP BREATH

You don't have to rush to implement every feature of your Galaxy S21 phone the very first day you get it. Instead, pick one capability at a time. Digest it, enjoy it, and then tackle the next one.

I recommend starting with setting up your email and social accounts, but that's just me.

No matter how you tackle the process of setting up your Galaxy S21 phone, it'll take some time. If you try to cram it all in on the first day, you'll turn what should be fun into drudgery.

The good news is that you own the book that takes you through the process. You can do a chapter or two at a time.

## WHAT IF I DIDN'T GET MY PHONE FROM A CELLULAR COMPANY?

With a few exceptions, such as an “unlocked” phone, each phone is associated with a particular cellular company. (In this context, a *locked* phone can work only on its original carrier.) Maybe you bought a secondhand phone on eBay, or you got a phone from a friend who didn't want his anymore. If you didn't get your phone directly from a cellular provider, you will need to figure out which provider the phone is associated with and get a service plan from that company.

If there's no logo on the front, you'll have to figure out which cellular carrier it can work with. The quickest way is to take the phone to any cellular store; the folks there know how to figure it out.

In addition, Android is designed to run multiple applications at once. Other smartphone platforms have added this capability, but Android is designed to let you to jump quickly among the multiple apps that you're running — which makes your smartphone experience that much smoother.

## Surviving Unboxing Day

When you turn on your phone the first time, it will ask you a series of ten questions and preferences to configure it. Frankly, they are trying to make this book unnecessary and put me out of business. The nerve!

The good folks at Samsung are well-intentioned, but not every customer who owns a Samsung Galaxy S21 knows, from day one, whether he or she wants a Samsung account, what's a good name for the phone, or what the purpose of a cloud service, such as Dropbox, is and how it would be used.

You can relax. I help you answer these questions — or, when appropriate, refer you to the chapter in this book that helps you come up with your answer.

On the other hand, if your phone is already set up, you probably took a guess or skipped some questions. Maybe now you're rethinking some of your choices. No problem. You can go back and change any answer you gave and get your phone to behave the way you want.

The following are the kinds of questions you may be asked. These questions may come in this order, but they may not. They typically include the following:

» **Language/Accessibility:** This option lets you select your language. The default is English for phones sold within the United States. Also, the phone has some special capabilities for individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability and think you might benefit, take a look at these options. They have really tried to make this phone as usable as possible for as many folks as possible.

» **Wi-Fi:** Your phone automatically starts scanning for a Wi-Fi connection. You can always use the cellular connection when you are in cellular coverage, but if there is a Wi-Fi connection available, your phone will try to use this first. It is probably cheaper and may be faster than the cellular.

At the same time, you may not want your phone to connect to the Wi-Fi access point with the best signal. It could be that the strongest signal is a fee-based service, whereas the next best signal is free. In any case, this page scans the available options and presents them to you.

» **Date and Time:** This is easy. The default setting is to use the time and date that comes from the cellular network and the date and time format is the U.S. style. Just tap on the next button and move on. This date and time from the cellular network is the most accurate information you'll get, and you don't need to do anything other than be within cellular coverage now and again. If you prefer non-U.S. formatting, such as a 24-hour clock or day/month/year formatting, you can change your phone any way you want.

» **Sign Up for a Samsung Account:** Go ahead and sign up for an account. The Samsung account offers you some nice things to help you get your phone back should you lose it. All you need is an account name, such as an email account, and a password.



TIP

When you buy a Galaxy S21 smartphone, you are now a customer of multiple companies! These include Samsung for the phone hardware, Google for the phone operating system (Android), and the wireless carrier that provides the cellular service. Plus, if you bought the phone through a phone retailer, such as Best Buy, it is in the mix as well. All of them want to make you happy, which is a good thing for the most part. The only downside is that they want to know who you are so that they can provide you with more services. Don't worry. You control how much they offer you.

» **Google Account Sign-up:** *Google account* can mean an email account where the address ends in @gmail.com. If you already have an account on Gmail, enter your user ID and password on your phone. If you don't have a Gmail account, I suggest waiting until you read Chapter 5. The good news is that you