

LEARNING MADE EASY



2025-2026 Edition

iPad®

FOR SENIORS

for
dummies®
A Wiley Brand



Navigate the
newest iPadOS

Connect with email, social
media, and video chat

Enjoy your favorite books,
music, and movies

Dwight Spivey

Author of *iPhone For Seniors For Dummies*, father of four, and coffee connoisseur



iPad[®] For Seniors

2025–2026 Edition

by Dwight Spivey

**for
dummies[®]**
A Wiley Brand

iPad® For Seniors For Dummies®, 2025–2026 Edition

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Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part 1: Getting to Know Your iPad	5
CHAPTER 1: Buying Your iPad	7
CHAPTER 2: Exploring Your iPad	25
CHAPTER 3: Beyond the Basics	65
Part 2: Beginning to Use Your iPad	81
CHAPTER 4: Making Your iPad More Accessible	83
CHAPTER 5: Conversing with Siri	117
CHAPTER 6: Expanding Your iPad Horizons with Apps	135
CHAPTER 7: Organizing Contacts	151
CHAPTER 8: Getting Social with Your iPad	165
CHAPTER 9: Browsing with Safari	191
CHAPTER 10: Working with Email in Mail	213
Part 3: Enjoying Media	237
CHAPTER 11: Shopping the iTunes Store and Apple TV	239
CHAPTER 12: Reading Books	249
CHAPTER 13: Enjoying Music and Podcasts	265
CHAPTER 14: Taking and Sharing Photos	287
CHAPTER 15: Creating and Watching Videos	305
Part 4: Living with Your iPad	319
CHAPTER 16: Keeping on Schedule with Calendar and Clock	321
CHAPTER 17: Working with Reminders and Notifications	343
CHAPTER 18: Making Notes	367
CHAPTER 19: Using Utilities	385
CHAPTER 20: Troubleshooting and Maintaining Your iPad	407
Index	421

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	3
Beyond the Book	3
Where to Go from Here	3
PART 1: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR IPAD	5
CHAPTER 1: Buying Your iPad	7
Discover the Newest iPads and iPadOS 18	8
Choose the Right iPad for You	12
Decide How Much Storage Is Enough	13
Know What Else You May Need: Internet and Computer	15
Use basic internet access for your iPad	15
Pair your iPad with a computer	16
Choose Wi-Fi Only or Wi-Fi + Cellular	16
Consider iPad Accessories	18
Explore What's in the Box	19
Take a First Look at the Gadget	19
CHAPTER 2: Exploring Your iPad	25
See What You Need to Use the iPad	26
Turn On Your iPad for the First Time	26
Meet the Multitouch Screen	28
Say Hello to Tap and Swipe	31
Browsing the App Library	36
The Dock	40
Display and Use the Onscreen Keyboard	40
Keyboard shortcuts	42
QuickPath	44
Use the Small Keyboard	44
Flick to Search	46
Easily Switch Between Apps	47
Use Slide Over and Split View	48
Starting with Slide Over	49

Moving to Split View	50
Examine the iPad Cameras	52
Discover Control Center	52
Understand Touch ID	55
Take a Look at Face ID	56
Lock Screen Rotation	57
Explore the Status Bar	58
Wonderful Widgets	59
Take Inventory of Preinstalled Apps	60
Lock iPad, Turn It Off, or Unlock It	63
CHAPTER 3: Beyond the Basics	65
Keep Your iPad's Operating System Updated	66
Charge the Battery	67
Sign into an Apple Account for Music, Movies, and More	68
Sync Wirelessly	71
Understand iCloud	72
Turn On iCloud Drive	75
Set Up iCloud Sync Settings	76
Browse Your iPad's Files	77
PART 2: BEGINNING TO USE YOUR IPAD	81
CHAPTER 4: Making Your iPad More Accessible	83
Use Magnifier	84
Set Brightness and Night Shift	86
Change the Wallpaper	88
Set Up VoiceOver	90
Use VoiceOver	93
Make Additional Vision Settings	95
Use iPad with Hearing Aids	98
Adjust the Volume	99
Set Up Subtitles and Captioning	100
Say It with Live Speech and Personal Voice	102
Turn On and Work with AssistiveTouch	103
Turn On Additional Physical and Motor Settings	106
Focus Learning with Guided Access	106
Control Your iPad with Voice Control	109
Control Your iPad with Your Eyes	111

	Control Your iPad with Vocal Shortcuts	113
	Adjust Accessibility Settings on a Per-App Basis	114
CHAPTER 5:	Conversing with Siri	117
	Activate Siri	119
	Discover All That Siri Can Do	121
	Get Suggestions	125
	Call Contacts via FaceTime	125
	Create Reminders and Alerts	126
	Add Events to Your Calendar	127
	Play Music	128
	Get Directions	129
	Ask for Facts	130
	Search the Web	130
	Send Email, Messages, or Tweets	131
	Use Dictation	131
	Translate Words and Phrases	132
CHAPTER 6:	Expanding Your iPad Horizons with Apps	135
	Search the App Store	136
	Get Applications from the App Store	138
	Organize Your Applications on Home Screen Pages	139
	Organize Apps in Folders	142
	Delete Apps You No Longer Need	143
	Update Apps	145
	Purchase and Download Games	147
CHAPTER 7:	Organizing Contacts	151
	Add a Contact	152
	Sync Contacts with iCloud	155
	Add Photos to Contacts	157
	Designate Related People	160
	Set Individual Ringtones and Text Tones	161
	Delete a Contact	163
CHAPTER 8:	Getting Social with Your iPad	165
	What You Need to Use FaceTime	166
	An Overview of FaceTime	167
	Make a FaceTime Call with Wi-Fi or Cellular	168

Use a Memoji with FaceTime	170
Accept, Enjoy, and End a FaceTime Call	170
Switch Views	172
Set Up an iMessage Account	172
Use Messages to Address, Create, and Send Messages.	174
Read Messages.	176
Clear a Conversation	177
Send Emojis with Your Text	178
Use Messages Apps and Tools.	179
Send and Receive Audio	181
Send a Photo or Video.	181
Send a Map of Your Location	182
Understand Group Messaging.	183
Find and Install Social Media Apps	185
Create a Facebook Account	187
Create an X Account.	188
Create an Instagram Account.	189
CHAPTER 9: Browsing with Safari	191
Connect to the Internet.	192
Explore Safari	193
Navigate Web Pages	195
Use Tabbed Browsing	197
Organize with Tab Groups	199
View Browsing History.	202
Search the Web	204
Add and Use Bookmarks.	204
Save Links and Web Pages to Safari Reading List	208
Enable Private Browsing	209
Download Files	210
Translate Web Pages	211
CHAPTER 10: Working with Email in Mail	213
Add an Email Account	214
Manually Set Up an Email Account	216
Open Mail and Read Messages	218
Reply To or Forward Email	220
Create and Send a New Message	222
Format Email.	224

Search Email	228
Mark Email as Unread or Flag for Follow-Up	229
Create an Event from Email Contents.	231
Delete Email	232
Organize Email	233
Create a VIP List	235
PART 3: ENJOYING MEDIA	237
CHAPTER 11: Shopping the iTunes Store and Apple TV	239
Explore the iTunes Store.	240
Buy a Selection	242
Rent or Buy Movies and TV Shows	243
Use Apple Pay and Wallet.	245
Set Up Family Sharing	246
CHAPTER 12: Reading Books	249
Find Books with Apple Books	250
Explore Other E-Book Sources.	253
Buy Books	255
Navigate a Book	256
Customize Your Reading Experience.	259
Select and customize themes.	259
Modify your book's font.	260
Adjust Accessibility & Layout options	261
CHAPTER 13: Enjoying Music and Podcasts	265
View the Music Library	266
Create Playlists	269
Search for Music.	270
Play Music	271
Shuffle Music	276
Listen with Your Earbuds	276
Listen with Spatial Audio.	277
Use AirPlay	279
Play Music with Radio	279
Find and Subscribe to Podcasts.	281
Play Podcasts	284

CHAPTER 14: Taking and Sharing Photos	287
Take Pictures with the iPad Cameras	288
View Your Photos	292
Edit Photos	295
Organize Photos	296
Share Photos via Mail, Social Media, or Other Apps	298
Share a Photo Using AirDrop	300
Share Photos Using iCloud Photo Sharing	300
Print Photos	301
Delete Photos	302
CHAPTER 15: Creating and Watching Videos	305
Capture Your Own Videos with the Built-In Cameras	306
Edit Videos	308
Play Movies or TV Shows with the TV App	310
Content from third-party providers	310
Content from Apple	312
Turn On Closed-Captioning	315
Delete a Video from the iPad	316
PART 4: LIVING WITH YOUR IPAD	319
CHAPTER 16: Keeping on Schedule with Calendar and Clock	321
View Your Calendar	322
Add Calendar Events and Reminders	326
Add Events or Reminders with Siri	327
Create Repeating Events	328
View an Event	329
Add an Alert to an Event	330
Select a default Calendar alert	330
Set up an alert for an event	330
Search for an Event	332
Add a Calendar Account	333
Use a Family Calendar	335
Delete an Event	337
Display the Clock App	338
Delete a Clock	339
Set an Alarm	340
Use Stopwatch and Timer	342

CHAPTER 17: Working with Reminders and Notifications	343
Create a Reminder	344
Edit Reminder Details	345
Schedule a Reminder by Time, Location, or When Messaging	347
Create a List	350
Sync with Other Devices and Calendars	352
Mark as Complete or Delete a Reminder	353
Get Notified!	355
Notification summaries	356
Set notification types	358
View Notification Center	360
Stay Focused and Undisturbed	362
Set up a focus	363
Turn on a focus	364
CHAPTER 18: Making Notes	367
Open a Blank Note	368
Use Copy and Paste	371
Insert Attachments	373
Add a Drawing or Handwriting	374
Apply a Text Style	376
Create a Checklist	377
Delete a Note	379
Speeding Along with Quick Notes	380
Smarten Things Up	382
CHAPTER 19: Using Utilities	385
Use the Calculator App	385
Record Voice Memos	389
Measure Distances	392
Find a Missing Apple Device	395
Get the Latest Weather Updates and Alerts	398
Translate Words and Phrases	400
Manage Passwords and Other Stuff	404
CHAPTER 20: Troubleshooting and Maintaining Your iPad	407
Keep the iPad Screen Clean	408
Protect Your Gadget with a Case	409

Extend Your iPad's Battery Life	410
What to Do with a Nonresponsive iPad	412
Update the iPadOS Software	413
Restore the Sound	414
Get Support.	415
Back Up to iCloud.....	416
INDEX	421

Introduction

Because you bought this book (or are thinking about buying it), you've probably already made the decision to buy an iPad. The iPad is designed to be easy to use, but you can still spend hours exploring the preinstalled apps, configuring settings, getting help from Apple Intelligence, and finding out how to sync the device to your computer or through iCloud. I've invested those hours so that you don't have to — and I've added advice and tips for getting the most from your iPad.

This book helps you get going with your iPad quickly and painlessly so that you can move directly to the fun part.

About This Book

If you're a mature person who is relatively new to using a tablet, or you want to update to iPadOS 18 and learn about all the new features of that version, you need this book. In *iPad For Seniors For Dummies*, you discover the basics of buying an iPad, working with its preinstalled apps, getting on the internet, and using social media.

This book uses a few conventions to assist you:

- » **Bold:** I use bold type to make figure references stand out in the text.
- » **Italics:** I use italics for emphasis and for placeholder text that substitutes for what you might be seeing onscreen, such as *Price* when the actual price is what you would be seeing.
- » **Command sequences:** When you need to follow a series of actions, you might see it presented like this: Tap Settings ⇨ General ⇨ Date & Time. That means to first tap the Settings icon, and then tap General on the screen that appears, and then tap the Date & Time option.

» **URLs:** Web addresses appear in monofont type in the printed book and as clickable links in the e-book, like this:
`www.dummies.com.`



TIP

The Tip icon in the margin of a page alerts you to brief pieces of advice to help you to take a skill further, provide an alternative way of doing something, or, occasionally, to be aware of a problem an action might cause.

This book uses nontechnical language, like all *Dummies* books, as it guides you through the basic steps of working with your iPad. To make the content of this book easily accessible, it's organized into sets of tasks in the following parts:

- » **Part 1: Getting to Know Your iPad:** The first chapter in this part guides you through buying an iPad, in case you don't have one yet, as well as any accessories you might need. Also in this part, you learn what buttons to push and screen elements to tap, and what movements to make to turn on and use your iPad effectively. If you need to update your iPad's operating system to the latest version, you can find out about that and more in this part.
- » **Part 2: Beginning to Use Your iPad:** This part begins by showing you how to enable accessibility features that may help you use your iPad more easily. You then learn more about Apple's virtual assistant, Siri, and how to manage apps and contacts and use communication tools such as FaceTime, Messages, and social media apps. Finally, I give you a good start on surfing the web and sending and receiving email.
- » **Part 3: Enjoying Media:** Your iPad will quickly become indispensable for all things media related. From reading books to watching movies and television shows to listening to your favorite tunes and podcasts, this part shows you the ropes for acquiring and enjoying new content. You also find out how to take stunning pictures and videos using your iPad's built-in cameras.
- » **Part 4: Living with Your iPad:** Finally, this part of the book helps you to stay on top of your busy life by taking notes and by setting calendar events, appointments, and reminders of important

items on your to-do lists. You also explore several helpful utilities that come with iPadOS 18 and learn how to troubleshoot and maintain your iPad.

Foolish Assumptions

This book assumes that you are a mature iPad user who wants to get straight to the basics of using an iPad. It assumes also that you may not be familiar with using a tablet, or that you are updating to iPadOS 18 and want to discover all the new features that come with that update. In writing this book as a quinquagenarian myself, I've tried to consider the types of activities that might interest someone who is 50 years old or older.

Beyond the Book

Like every *Dummies* book, this one comes with a cheat sheet that brings together some of the most commonly needed information for people learning to use, in this case, the iPad. To get the cheat sheet, head to www.dummies.com and enter *iPad For Seniors For Dummies Cheat Sheet* in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

You can work through this book from beginning to end or simply open a chapter to solve a problem or acquire a specific new skill whenever you need it. The steps in every task quickly get you to where you want to go without a lot of technical explanation.

At the time I wrote this book, all the information it contained was accurate for the 13-inch iPad Pro (M4), 12.9-inch iPad Pro (third through sixth generations), 11-inch iPad Pro (first through fifth generations), iPad (seventh through tenth generations), 13-inch

iPad Air (M2), iPad Air (third through sixth generations), iPad mini (fifth and sixth generations), version 18 of iPadOS (the operating system used by the iPad), and version 12.8 (for Macs) or 12.12 (for PCs) or later of iTunes. Apple may introduce new iPad models and new versions of iOS and iTunes between book editions. If you've bought a new iPad and found that its hardware, user interface, or the version of iTunes on your computer looks a little different, be sure to check out what Apple has to say at www.apple.com/ipad. You'll no doubt find updates there on the company's latest releases.

1

Getting to Know Your iPad

IN THIS PART . . .

Choosing and purchasing your iPad

Navigating the Home screen, discovering preinstalled apps, and customizing your experience

Updating and synchronizing your iPad and understanding iCloud

- » Discover what's new in iPads and iPadOS 18
- » Choose the right iPad for you
- » Understand what you need to use your iPad
- » Explore what's in the box
- » Take a look at the gadget

Chapter 1

Buying Your iPad

You've read about it. You've seen the lines at Apple Stores on the day a new version of the iPad is released. You're so intrigued that you've decided to get your own iPad. Perhaps you're not new to tablet computers but are ready to make the switch to the ultimate in such devices. With your iPad, you can have fun with apps, such as games and exercise trackers; explore the online world; read e-books, magazines, and other periodicals; take and organize photos and videos; listen to music and watch movies; and a lot more.

Trust me: You've made a good decision, because the iPad redefines the tablet computing experience in an exciting way. It's also a perfect fit for seniors.

In this chapter, you learn about the advantages of the iPad, as well as where to buy this little gem and associated data plans from providers for iPads that support cellular data. After you have one in your hands, I help you explore what's in the box and get an overview of the little buttons and slots you'll encounter. Luckily, the iPad has very few of them.

Discover the Newest iPads and iPadOS 18

Apple's iPad gets its features from a combination of hardware and its software operating system, which is called iPadOS (short for iPad operating system). The most current version of the operating system is iPadOS 18. It's helpful to understand which new features the latest iPad models and iPadOS 18 bring to the table (all of which are covered in more detail in this book).

The iPad is currently available in a variety of sizes and configurations, depending on the version of iPad:

- » **iPad:** The tenth-generation model takes the iPad up a notch with a touchscreen that measures 10.9 inches diagonally and boasts a fast 64-bit desktop-class A14 Bionic processor.
- » **iPad Air:** The sixth-generation iPad Air sports a powerful M2 processor and comes in two touchscreen sizes, one measuring 11 inches diagonally and the other at 13 inches diagonally.
- » **iPad mini:** The iPad mini 7's touchscreen measures 8.3 inches diagonally. This iPad uses an A17 Pro processor to do the behind-the-scenes work.
- » **iPad Pro:** The two seventh-generation iPad Pro models are the fastest of the bunch. One's touchscreen measures 11 inches diagonally, and the other's is 13 inches; they both come with blazing-fast M4 processors, which are the same processors used in many of Apple's newest Mac desktop and laptop computers.



TIP

Dimensions of devices are typically shown in the units of measurement commonly used in a region. This means, for example, that the basic tenth-generation iPad is shown on Apple's U.S. site as being 9.79 inches (248.6 mm) high and 7.07 inches (179.5 mm) wide. In metric-system countries, both dimensions are given, but the order is reversed. When it comes to screen sizes, however, the dimensions are given in inches.

In addition to the features of previous iPads, the latest iPad models offer the following:

- » **Ultra Retina XDR and Liquid Retina displays:** In addition to screen size, screen resolution has evolved so that Apple's Ultra Retina XDR and Liquid Retina displays, both of which support very high-resolution graphics, now appear across the line. The name derives from the concept that individual pixels on the screen are so small that they can't be distinguished at normal viewing distance.
- » **Apple Pencil:** Originally designed exclusively for use with iPad Pro models, the Apple Pencil now works with all the latest iPad models. (Be sure to check which version of Apple Pencil will work with your iPad by visiting www.apple.com/apple-pencil.) Apple Pencil lets you draw and write on the screen with a familiar pencil-style tool rather than with your finger. The Apple Pencil contains a battery and sophisticated processing powers that make the experience of using it very much like (and sometimes better than) a traditional pencil. Third-party pencils and drawing tools exist, but Apple's integration of Apple Pencil is remarkably smooth; the product has taken off quickly among graphic artists, illustrators, and designers. As other people have discovered its usability for marking up documents, it is becoming more and more common in business environments.
- » **Neural Engine:** The Neural Engine is a component of the processor in every iPad that focuses on handling specialized tasks related to artificial intelligence, image and speech processing, and more cool things.
- » **Touch ID:** This security feature is included on several iPad models. Sensors in the Home button (ninth-generation iPad) or top button (iPad Air, iPad mini, and tenth-generation iPad) allow you to train the iPad to recognize your fingerprint and grant you access with a finger press. Touch ID also allows you to use the Apple Pay feature to buy items without having to enter your payment information every time.
- » **Facial recognition:** Touch ID is replaced with Face ID on certain iPad models. Using Face ID and the front-facing camera, your iPad unlocks when it recognizes your face. It can be used also for purchases and other tasks.

- » **Barometric sensor:** On all iPad models, this sensor makes it possible for your iPad to sense air pressure around you. This feature is especially cool when you're hiking a mountain, where the weather may change as you climb. Perhaps more to the point, the changes in barometric pressure can be sensed on a smaller scale so that elevation can be measured as you move normally.
- » **Smart Connector for Smart Keyboard:** In addition to the onscreen keyboard, you can use a Smart Connector to hook up a Smart Keyboard, an external keyboard that makes getting complex work done much easier. Smart Connector is supported for all iPad models, with the exception of iPad mini.
- » **Live photos:** Using the 3D Touch feature, you can press a photo on the screen to make it play like a short video. The Camera app captures 1.5 seconds on either side of the moment when you capture the photo, so anything moving in the image you photographed, such as water flowing in a stream, seems to move when you press and hold the still photo.

The iPadOS 18 update to the operating system adds many features, including (but definitely not limited to) the following:

- » **Apple Intelligence:** Apple Intelligence is Apple's spin on generative artificial intelligence. This gamechanger includes a greater understanding of personal context for Siri, which will be able to better understand and interact intelligently when you ask something like, "When is my granddaughter's plane landing?" Apple Intelligence can assist with writing just about anything and includes built-in access to the latest incarnation of ChatGPT (a ChatGPT account is not required!). Information you request will never leave the comfort of your iPad and Apple's servers without your explicit permission. Some Apple Intelligence features are available now but more will be released in future updates of iPadOS. Apple Intelligence is available only for iPad mini (A17 Pro), iPad Pro 11-inch (3rd and 4th generations) and 12.9-inch (5th and 6th generations), iPad Air (5th generation), or newer. For much more information than I can squeeze in here, please visit www.apple.com/apple-intelligence.

- » **Notes:** This gem of an app is getting better all the time, with new features such as live audio transcription and Smart Script. With live audio transcription, you can record audio in a note and have Notes generate a transcription on the fly! Smart Script re-creates your own handwriting style from your notes when you jot them down using an Apple Pencil (or even your finger), smoothing and straightening the text.
- » **Customization:** You can customize your iPad more than ever before. Move apps and widgets anywhere you want on the Home screen pages. Lock and hide apps such as financial or medical apps to prevent other people from accessing them. Use custom colors for your app icons and text. Even Control Center has been given a big upgrade.
- » **Photos:** The Photos app has been heavily redesigned, making it easier for you to find photos based on a range of topics. A carousel helps you browse your photos and videos with ease.
- » **Built-in apps have been updated:** iPadOS 18 provides performance enhancements and interface upgrades for all the apps that come preinstalled with it, bringing many into the realm of their desktop computer counterparts.



TIP

Don't need all the built-in apps? You can remove them from your Home screen. (Note that built-in apps take up very little of your iPad's storage space.) When you remove a built-in app from your Home screen, you aren't deleting it — you're hiding it. And if you change your mind, you can easily add them back to your Home screen by searching for them in the App Store and tapping the Get button.

These are but a very few of the improvements made to the latest version of iPadOS. I highly suggest visiting www.apple.com/ipados to find out more.

Choose the Right iPad for You

The most obvious differences among iPad models (the current 11-inch and 13-inch iPad Air models are shown in **Figure 1-1**) are their size and weight, with the Pro being biggest, followed by iPad Air, then iPad, and finally the smallest, iPad mini. All models come in a variety of colors to suit everyone's taste.



Photo courtesy of Apple Inc.

FIGURE 1-1

All models come either with Wi-Fi only, so you access a Wi-Fi network for internet access, or with Wi-Fi + Cellular for connecting to the internet through Wi-Fi or a cellular network (as your cellphone does). The iPad models also differ in available memory and price based on that memory (prices are accurate as of this writing and are subject to change):

» **iPad Pro 11-inch:** Wi-Fi models come in 256GB for \$999, 512GB for \$1,199, 1TB for \$1,599, and 2TB for \$1,999; Wi-Fi + Cellular

models of each memory configuration cost \$200 more than their Wi-Fi-only counterparts.

- » **iPad Pro 13-inch:** Wi-Fi models come in 256GB for \$1,299, 512GB for \$1,499, 1TB for \$1,899, and 2TB for \$2,299; Wi-Fi + Cellular models of each memory configuration cost \$200 more than their Wi-Fi-only counterparts.
- » **iPad Air 11-inch:** Wi-Fi models come in 128GB for \$599, 256GB for \$699, 512GB for \$899, and 1TB for \$1,099; Wi-Fi + Cellular models of each memory configuration cost \$150 more than their Wi-Fi-only counterparts.
- » **iPad Air 13-inch:** Wi-Fi models come in 128GB for \$799, 256GB for \$899, 512GB for \$1,099, and 1TB for \$1,299; Wi-Fi + Cellular models of each memory configuration cost \$150 more than their Wi-Fi-only counterparts.
- » **iPad (tenth generation):** Wi-Fi models come in 64GB for \$349 and 256GB for \$499; Wi-Fi + Cellular models of each memory configuration cost \$150 more than their Wi-Fi-only counterparts.
- » **iPad mini:** The Wi-Fi model comes in 128GB for \$499, 256GB for \$599, and 512GB for \$799; Wi-Fi + Cellular models of each memory configuration cost \$150 more than their Wi-Fi-only counterparts.

iPad models vary in screen quality and resolution, camera quality, and so on. Logically, the bigger the iPad, the bigger the price and (usually) the higher the quality.

Decide How Much Storage Is Enough

Storage is a measure of how much information — for example, movies, photos, and software applications (apps) — you can store on a computing device. Storage can also affect your iPad's performance when handling such tasks as streaming favorite TV shows from the web or downloading music.



TIP

Streaming refers to playing video or music content from the web (or from other devices) rather than playing a file stored on your iPad. You can enjoy a lot of material online without ever downloading its full content to your iPad — and given that some iPad models have relatively small amounts of storage, streaming is a good idea. See Chapters 11, 13, and 15 for more about getting your music and movies online.

Your storage options with the various iPad models range from 64 gigabytes (GB) to 2 terabytes (TB), which is equivalent to 2,000GB. You must choose the right amount of storage because you can't open the unit and add more as you typically can with a desktop computer. However, Apple has thoughtfully provided iCloud, a service you can use to store content on the internet. (You can read more about iCloud in Chapter 3.)

How much storage is enough for your iPad? Here's a guideline:

- » If you regularly work with large media files, such as movies or TV shows, you might need 512GB or higher. For example, if you shoot 4K video at 60 frames per second, that will take roughly 1GB of storage space for every two-and-a-half minutes of footage. In light of this fact, at least 1TB of storage may be more appealing if you shoot a lot of video.
- » If you like lots of media, such as movies or TV shows, you may need at least 256GB or 512GB.
- » For most people who manage a reasonable number of photos, download some music, and watch heavy-duty media (such as movies) online, 128GB or 256GB is probably sufficient.
- » If you simply want to check email, browse the web, and write short notes to yourself, 64GB is likely plenty.



TIP

Do you know how big a gigabyte (GB) is? Consider this: Just about any computer you buy today comes with a minimum of 256GB of storage. Computers have to tackle larger tasks than iPads, so that number makes sense. The iPad, which uses a technology called *flash storage* for storing data, is meant (to a great extent) to help you experience online media and email; it doesn't have to store

much since it pulls lots of content from the internet. In the world of storage, 64GB for any kind of storage is puny if you keep lots of content (such as audio, video, and photos) on the device. As mentioned earlier, some iPad models are offering *terabytes* (TB) of storage; 1TB is equal to 1,000GB.

Know What Else You May Need: Internet and Computer

Although you can use your iPad on its own without any internet or Wi-Fi access and without a computer to pair it with, it's easier if you have internet access and a computer that you can (occasionally) use with your iPad.

Use basic internet access for your iPad

You need to be able to connect to the internet to take advantage of most iPad features. If you have an Apple Account, you can have an iCloud account, Apple's online storage service, to store and share content online, and you can use a computer to download photos, music, or applications from non-Apple online sources (such as stores, sharing sites, or your local library) and transfer them to your iPad through a process called syncing, which you learn about in Chapter 3. You can also use a computer or iCloud to register your iPad the first time you start it, although you can have the folks at the Apple Store handle registration for you if you have an Apple Store nearby. If you don't have a store nearby, visit www.apple.com/shop/help for assistance.

You can set up your iPad without an internet connection and without going to an Apple Store: The best way to find out more information is to contact <https://support.apple.com/> through an internet connection on another device or at a public library or internet cafe.

Can you use your iPad without owning a computer and just use public Wi-Fi hotspots to go online (or a cellular connection, if you have such a model)? Yes. To go online using a Wi-Fi-only iPad and to use many

of its built-in features at home, however, you need to have a home Wi-Fi network available.

Pair your iPad with a computer

For syncing with a computer, Apple's iPad User Guide recommends that you have

- » A Mac or PC with a USB 2.0 or 3.0 port and one of these operating systems:
 - macOS version 10.13 (High Sierra) or newer
 - Windows 10 or newer
- » iTunes 12.9 or newer on a Mac running macOS El Capitan (10.11.6) through macOS Mojave (10.14.6), Finder on Macs running macOS Catalina (10.15) and newer, and iTunes 12.12.10 or newer on a PC, available at www.apple.com/itunes/download or via the Microsoft Store
- » Internet access
- » An Apple Account

Apple has set up its iTunes software and the iCloud service to give you two ways to manage content for your iPad — including movies, music, or photos you've downloaded — and to specify how to sync your calendar and contact information.

There are a lot of tech terms to absorb here (iCloud, iTunes, syncing, and so on). Don't worry: Chapters 2 and 3 cover these in more detail.

Choose Wi-Fi Only or Wi-Fi + Cellular

You use Wi-Fi to connect to a wireless network at home or at locations such as an internet cafe, a library, a grocery store, or any public transportation that offers Wi-Fi. This type of network uses short-range radio to connect to the internet; its range is reasonably limited, so if you leave home or walk out of the coffee shop, you can't use it