

Smart Speakers

Available Speakers



[Rega Kyte Loudspeakers](#)

£399.00

Analogue Seduction

+£19.99 delivery

80 W

[By Google](#)



[Echo Dot \(Newest gen\) | Big vibrant sound Wi-Fi and Bluetooth smart speaker with Alexa | Deep Sea Blue](#)

£54.99

Amazon.co.uk

Free delivery

30-day returns (most)

15 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi · Amazon Alexa · Voice Control · Amazon Echo Dot (1st Generation)

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Bang & Olufsen - Beolit 20 Portable Bluetooth Speaker, Black](#)

£319.99

A1 Tech Deals

Free 2-day

Free 30-day returns

240 W · Bluetooth, USB, AUX · 2 Channel · Beolit

[By Google](#)



[Bose Portable Smart Speaker - Triple Black](#)

£379.95

bose.co.uk

Free delivery

11.9 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, NFC, USB · Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa · Voice Control

[By Google](#)



[IKEA SYMFONISK Wi-Fi bookshelf speakers, black/set of 2 gen 2, Cord length: 150 cm](#)

£230.00

IKEA

Wi-Fi · Bookshelf

[By Swoop](#)



[xdoxo X Series Wireless Bluetooth Speaker - 30W Best Portable Speaker, Wireless Speaker, Outdoor Speaker for Music](#)

£99.99

Shopsta UK

Free by 4 days

£14.51/100g

30 W · Bluetooth, AUX · 2 Channel

[By Producthero](#)



[Bang & Olufsen BeoSound Explore Portable Waterproof Bluetooth Speaker](#)

£185.54

John Lewis

Free delivery

138 W · Bluetooth, USB · Bookshelf · 2 Channel · Mini · Computer · Beosound

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Apple HomePod mini - Midnight](#)

£99.00

Apple

Free delivery

9.79 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi · Siri · Voice Control, Touchscreen · Mini · HomePod

[By Google](#)



[Bose SoundLink Max Portable Speaker - Black](#)

£299.95 (~~£400~~)

bose.co.uk

Free delivery

26.4 W · Bluetooth, USB, AUX · Google Assistant · Floor Standing · SoundLink

[By Google](#)



[Naim Mu-So 2 Wireless Speaker + Extra Grille Package Naim Mu-So 2 \(Black Grill\) / with Terracotta grill](#)

£899.00

Doug Brady HiFi

Free 1-day

450 W · Google Assistant · MU-SO

[By Google](#)



[Amazon Echo Dot \(5th Gen\) Smart Speaker with Alexa – Charcoal](#)

£42.99

A1 Tech Deals

Free by 10 days

Free 30-day returns

19 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi · Amazon Alexa · Voice Control · Amazon Echo Dot (1st Generation)

[By Google](#)



[Bose SoundLink Flex Portable Speaker \(2nd Gen\) - Black](#)

£149.95

bose.co.uk

Free delivery

8 W · Bluetooth · Google Assistant, Siri · SoundLink

[By Google](#)



[Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin Wireless Smart Speaker: Wifi, Bluetooth, AirPlay 2, Spotify, Alexa, Hi-Res Audio, 240W, Midnight Grey](#)

£469.00

electricshop.com

Free delivery

80 W · Bluetooth · Amazon Alexa · Voice Control · Bookshelf · Soundbar · Computer · Zeppelin

[By High Street One](#)



[Echo Show 8 \(Newest gen\) | HD smart touchscreen with spatial audio, smart home hub and Alexa | Glacier White](#)

£149.00

Amazon.co.uk

Free delivery

30-day returns (most)

30 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi · Amazon Alexa · Camera, Display Screen, Voice Control,
Touchscreen · Amazon Echo Show

[By Kelkoo](#)



[KEF T101 Ultra Slim HiFi Home Theatre Satellite Speakers \(Pair\)](#)

£300.00

CyberMarket

Free delivery

30-day returns

100 W · Floor Standing · 2 Channel

[By Producthero](#)



[Sonos Era 100 - Black](#)

£199.00

Sonos

Free 3-day

(9k+)

15 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, USB · Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa · Bookshelf · 2 Channel

[By Google](#)



[Denon Home 150 Wireless Smart Speaker, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, AirPlay 2, Google Assistant/Siri/Alexa Built-In, HEOS Multiroom, Music Streaming - Black](#)

£199.00

Amazon.co.uk

Free delivery

60 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, USB, Ethernet · Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa,
Siri · Voice Control · HEOS

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Bang & Olufsen BeoSound Explore Portable Waterproof Bluetooth Speaker](#)

£197.10

John Lewis

Free delivery

(834)

60 W · Bluetooth, USB · Beosound

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Amazon Echo Studio Smart Speaker with Alexa - Charcoal](#)

£219.99

Argos

+£3.95 delivery

330 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi · Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa · Voice Control · Amazon Echo

[By Google](#)



[Bang & Olufsen Beosound Explore - High-end Wireless Portable Bluetooth Speaker for Outdoor, Home and Travel, 360 Degree IP67 Waterproof with](#)

£219 Amazon.co.uk

Free delivery

30-day returns (most)

138 W · Bluetooth, USB · Bookshelf · 2 Channel · Mini · Computer · Beosound

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Bose Portable Smart Speaker - Luxe Silver](#)

£379.95

bose.co.uk

Free delivery

(4k+)

11.9 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, NFC, USB · Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa · Voice Control

[By Google](#)



[Home Assistant Voice - Preview Edition](#)

£55.80

Pimoroni

+£3.90 delivery

(77)

15 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, AUX

[By High Street One](#)



[Vebos speaker stand Bose Home Speaker 500 white set XS \(60cm\)](#)

£124.66

vebos.co.uk

+£13.92 delivery

Stand

[By Google](#)



[Sony SRS-XB13 Wireless Extra Bass Portable Compact Bluetooth Speaker with 16 Hours Battery Life, Type-C, IP67 Waterproof, Dustproof, Speaker with](#)

£37.64

Amazon.co.uk

Free delivery

13 W · Bluetooth · Floor Standing · Mini · Computer

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Bose SoundLink Flex Portable Speaker \(2nd Gen\) - Blue Dusk](#)

£149.95

bose.co.uk

Free delivery

8 W · Bluetooth · Google Assistant, Siri · 2 Channel · SoundLink

[By Google](#)



[IKEA SYMFONISK speaker combination with shelf, black/gen 2, Total height: 22 cm](#)

£130.00 (€154)

IKEA

+£6.00 delivery

Bookshelf

[By Swoop](#)



[Sonos Era 100 Smart Speaker with Voice Control](#)

£199.00

John Lewis

Free delivery

15 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, USB · Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa · Bookshelf · 2 Channel

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Echo Dot \(Newest gen\) | Big vibrant sound Wi-Fi and Bluetooth smart speaker with Alexa | Charcoal](#)

£54.99

Amazon.co.uk

Free delivery

30-day returns (most)

19 W · Bluetooth, Wi-Fi · Amazon Alexa · Voice Control · Amazon Echo Dot (1st Generation)

[By Kelkoo](#)



[Edifier MS50A Wireless Wi-Fi Smart Speaker](#)

£129.99

Digitalis Audio

Free 1-day

60-day returns

40 W · Wi-Fi · Amazon Alexa · Voice Control · Bookshelf

[By Google](#)





What is a smart speaker and how does it work?



When it comes to technology, the world gets smarter every day. With each new model, your phone, computer, TV, and even refrigerator provide a greater number of options and features that take them beyond their traditional uses. Smart devices are here to stay, too. Today, [tens of millions of homes have at least one](#).

But what is a smart speaker, exactly, and what sets them apart from a simple Bluetooth® speaker? In a smart speaker, Bluetooth is merely one feature among many, including long-lasting rechargeable batteries and an internal amplifier all inside one little device. Smart speakers, however, go beyond this by adding Wi-Fi® capabilities and built-in voice assistants that provide access to the entire online world and enable command of it, whether you're checking the weather, playing your favorite song, or getting answers to any question you have.

Here's what you need to know about how smart speakers can transform the audio experience for the better.

What is a smart speaker?

While traditional speakers are often fixed in a specific position and require a separate amplifier to power them, smart speakers are generally self-contained, with an internal amplifier and a powerful, rechargeable battery to drive performance. You only need to switch on your smart speaker, link your device, and hit play.

The [best smart speakers](#) contain a range of additional perks, too, including:

- **Portability:** In many cases, smart speakers are small, compact, and easy to transport. This means you can more easily add audio to chores in the house, gatherings in the yard, and hikes in the woods.
- **Streaming capability:** Thanks to Bluetooth and Wi-Fi connections, smart speakers can easily sync up with your music libraries and streaming platforms at the click of a button, allowing you to stream music from your preferred smart device.
- **Voice assistants:** Many of the smartest speakers today include a virtual assistant like Alexa and Google Assistant, enabling you to perform hands-free tasks.



How do smart speakers work?

Smart speakers can assist you in your everyday tasks. When connected to Wi-Fi, the voice command feature will learn your voice and become familiar with your use of words to efficiently assist you. For example, you can tell the speaker to "Play my country playlist," ask about the weather, or instruct it to "Set a timer for 10 minutes."

You can connect your phone, computer, or tablet to the speaker via Bluetooth and play your music, podcasts, or movies anywhere life takes you. Bose speakers allow more customization, allowing you to fine-tune the connection and playback using the [Bose app](#).

How can smart speakers make your life smarter?

Once you start using smart [Bluetooth speakers](#), you may wonder how you ever lived without them. Here are just some of the ways these speakers can enhance your daily life:

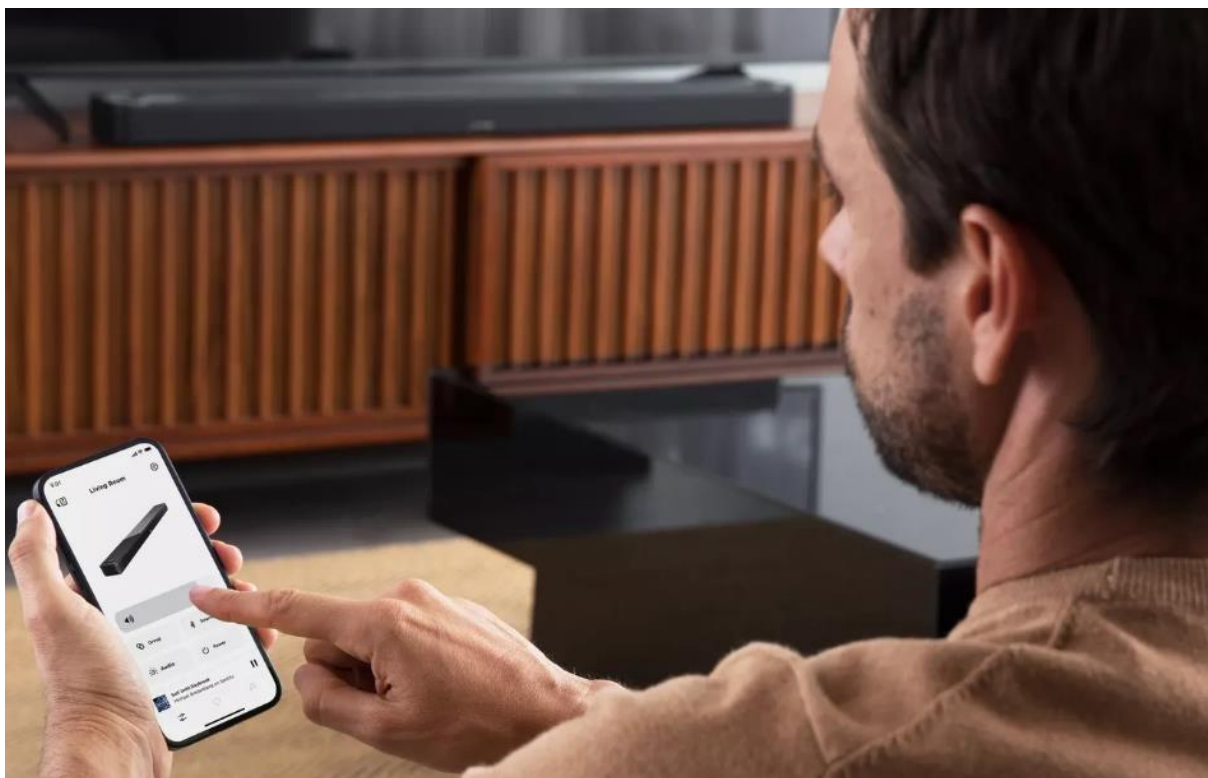
Voice automation and operation

If you've ever scrambled to find your phone, receive a call, or send a text on short notice, you'll love smart speakers' voice control features. [Smart Bluetooth speakers](#), like the Bose Portable Smart Speaker, provide voice-activated access to phone calls, so you don't have to pause what you're doing. Access to Alexa and Google Assistant also makes it easier to check the weather forecast, traffic, show times, and other critical information. You can even control other linked home appliances and devices in the house through a simple voice command.

For even more voice control, the [Bose Smart Ultra Soundbar](#) features exclusive Bose Voice4Video technology that lets you turn on and control your TV, cable, or satellite box with just your voice. Try asking Alexa to jump to your favorite station, even if your TV is on a different input.

Support for chores, tasks, and activities

The wall-to-wall sound of many smart speakers means your favorite audio can accompany you wherever you go and for whatever you need to do around the house. The Bose Smart Speaker 500 includes two custom drivers that point in opposite directions to bounce sound off the walls, resulting in a powerful, room-filling sound. Connecting devices is simple, and you can flip from song to song with voice commands.



Connections with friends and family

Gatherings with friends and family are even better with a customized soundtrack. The Bluetooth connectivity in Bose smart speakers enables everyone to get in on the fun by linking their own devices and playing music they love. As a bonus, the 360-degree projection of smart speakers like [Bose SoundLink Revolve+ II](#) and Bose Portable Smart Speaker also means you can play DJ for the whole party.

Expansion and enhancement of the soundscape

Smart speakers not only pair with your phone, tablet, or computer but also with other smart speakers, creating a multi-room soundscape. This means you can transmit whatever's playing on the TV or your device to two speakers, expanding coverage to more rooms and spaces. With Bose SimpleSync pairing technology, you can even split the sound into left and right channels, creating a stereo mix of the audio signal.

Reminders and alarms

Smart speakers are an excellent way to set reminders and alarms for the things you need to remember — be it your friends' birthdays, a doctor's appointment, a promise to carpool, or the truffle mac and cheese baking in the oven. This [feature is particularly helpful for older adults](#) who may be hard of hearing and need a bit more volume in their reminders. This becomes even easier with Bose smart speakers, thanks to the integration of Alexa and Google Assistant.

Streaming services

With a connection to a Wi-Fi network, Bose smart speakers can access a host of popular streaming platforms and services, including Chromecast, Apple AirPlay 2, Spotify, Amazon Music, and YouTube Music Premium. That means you can tap a near-universal library of audio, allowing you to embrace your old favourites or discover new ones.

Knowledge is power

Bose smart speakers don't just enhance the listening experience — they offer the opportunity to live smarter. With their breadth of features, smart speakers can energize daily activities, save time, keep you on track, and help you share your passions. When it comes to portable smart speakers, the knowledge and know-how they can provide truly add power to your life.

SAGA What is a smart speaker?



What is a smart speaker and how do they work?

We explain what smart speakers are, how to set them up and what they can do for you.

By Alistair Charlton | Published - 23 May 2023 | Reviewed - 25 Nov 2024

Smart speakers have exploded in popularity in recent years, with [three quarters of UK homes](#) now boasting smart technology.

But what exactly are they? And what can they do? In short, a smart speaker is a device that uses voice commands to control your music, get information, and automate your home.

They are powered by virtual assistants, which can understand and respond to your spoken requests. Smart speakers are incredibly versatile.

You can use them to play music, get news and weather updates, set timers and alarms, control smart home devices, and much more. They can also be used to make hands-free calls, send messages, and even order food.

The first smart speaker, the Amazon Echo with its Alexa voice assistant, which arrived in 2014. Essentially a search engine controlled with your voice, Alexa can answer general knowledge questions, read out the weather forecast, play music, and much more.

The Echo range has since grown to include several models of the Echo smart speaker, from the small Echo Dot and the latest Echo Pop to the larger, louder and more expensive Echo Studio.

Similarly, Google has its own range of smart speakers under its Nest brand, powered by the voice-activated Google Assistant.

Lastly, Apple has its Home-Pod smart speakers and a voice assistant called Siri.

What is a smart speaker?

A smart home speaker is a speaker that connects to the internet and can be controlled by issuing spoken commands to its voice assistant, or by using a smartphone application.

Each virtual assistant has its own set of capabilities and integrations with various third-party services and smart home devices, which means they can tell you what the weather will be like in your area and even add items to your online shopping bag.

Smart speakers are constantly listening for their “wake word”, which is the word or phrase used to get their attention.

Only after hearing that do they react to what is being said. Depending on the make of smart speaker you have, wake words include “Alexa”, “Hey Siri” and “Okay Google”.

Did you know that you can change the wake word on any Amazon smart speaker?

There are five other command words you can choose - Alexa, Amazon, Computer, Echo and Ziggy. It's very straightforward to [change the Alexa command word](#). This can be useful to change if you have more than one smart speaker in your household or someone has a similarly sounding name to Alexa.

Unfortunately, you can't change the Google command word.

Worried that you're being listened to?

[Northeastern University](#) found that smart speakers may be accidentally set off by certain TV shows, with The Office and Gilmore Girls being the most popular shows for waking them up.

Smart speakers can occasionally mistake other sounds for their wake word and start listening by accident.

Some people are worried about privacy issues with smart speakers, so the ability to switch off the microphone is really useful," explains Jayne Cherrington-Cook, a technology writer.

"Just remember to switch it back on if you do want to tell your smart speaker to do something. They're clever, but not that intelligent!"

Other options to consider



Image credit: Shutterstock

You can mute the microphone on smart speakers if you're worried about privacy issues

Bluetooth speakers

When it comes to [bluetooth speakers vs smart speakers](#), it's all down to the voice assistant.

Bluetooth speakers connect directly to devices like smartphones and simply act as a loudspeaker.

They also don't generally connect to the internet and of course don't have a voice assistant, although there are some exceptions such as the Sonos Roam speaker.

Sonos Roam 2 Portable Bluetooth Speaker, RRP £179.99. Currently £129.99 [at Amazon](#) and £139.99 at [Argos](#).

Bluetooth speakers are good for music lovers. Product tester Philip Sowels, says these will generally have a better sound quality, representing the music as it's meant to be heard, whereas some smart speakers can make music sound “flat or squashed”.

If the lure of the virtual assistant is too much, most smart speakers can be wirelessly connected and turned into a stereo pair for improved music quality. This will though make for a more expensive option.



Image credit: Google

A smart display gives you more options than a speaker, but they are pricier

Smart displays

There are also [smart displays](#) which, as the name suggests, are smart speakers with a screen attached. As well as replying audibly, they can show extra information to answer your questions.

Some smart displays also have integrated cameras and can be used for making video calls. Others offer touch controls for smart home systems.

For more information read our article [Smart speaker vs smart display](#) to find out which is best for you.

How do smart speakers work?

Smart speakers are powered from a plug socket and connect to the internet using wi-fi. This is how the speaker's voice assistant answers your questions – it performs a web search to understand what you asked, then finds the answer and says it aloud.

The hardware of a smart speaker is often very simple, with the product housing one or more individual speakers, microphones for the voice assistant to hear you, buttons for adjusting the volume, and a status light to indicate when the assistant is listening, thinking or has a problem.



Image credit: Shutterstock/Prostock Studio

You can connect other devices, such as headphones, to most smart speakers

Some voice-controlled speakers can also be connected to other devices like phones and other speakers or sound systems, using a 3.5mm (1/8in) auxiliary audio cable. Smart speakers are usually set up using a smartphone application. You can read more about [how to set up a smart speaker](#).

Amazon's setup process is one of the simplest and is especially slick if you already have the Amazon or Alexa app on your phone.

Once you have gone through the setup process once, adding a second or third Echo speaker takes just a few seconds.

What can smart speakers do?

It's like having your own personal assistant.

As well as answering questions by scanning the web, smart speakers can play music from streaming services like Spotify, set alarms and timers (especially handy in the kitchen), make phone calls and even add items to your shopping list.

"Smart speakers really can be a help in busy, modern households," says Cherrington-Cook.

"Some voice assistants, such as Alexa, have a library of skills they're able to help you with, so it's something to research before deciding upon what smart speaker to buy."

You can find out more about [Alexa skills to make your home smarter](#) and we've shared [10 things you didn't know you could ask Alexa](#).



Image credit: Amazon

Smart speakers can do so much more than just streaming music, such as setting timers or even making phone calls

They also work well in pairs and groups. For example, it's possible to create a home intercom system using a pair of Amazon Echo smart speakers in different rooms, or to play music throughout your home with a set of Apple HomePods.

Some smart speakers such as the Amazon Echo Dot can also be used as a smart hub, allowing you to control smart home devices like light bulbs (such as Philips Hue), plugs, security systems and thermostats with just your voice.

Again this might sway your choice as to which model to purchase.

"If you love all things Apple and are heavily invested in that eco-system then the HomePod is definitely the one to choose, whereas those with an android phone for example, might prefer Google's selection of smart speakers," advises Cherrington-Cook.

Current smart speaker models

Not sure what the best smart speaker is for you? Think about price, whether you have other tech from that same brand and what you want to use it for.

When you know that, it's easier to choose the right smart speaker for your household.

Amazon smart speakers

Amazon's smart speaker range begins with the compact [Amazon Echo Pop](#) and Echo Dot extends to the larger and more acoustically impressive Echo, and is crowned by the Echo Studio flagship.

Crucially, while their maximum volume and sound quality differ, all models have the same Alexa voice assistance.

- Echo Pop, [Amazon](#), RRP £44.99 / **£18.99** in the Black Friday sale.
- Echo Dot, [Amazon](#), RRP £54.99 / **£22.99** in the Black Friday sale.
- Echo (4th gen), [Amazon](#), RRP £109.99 / **£49.99** in the Black Friday sale.
- Echo Studio, [Amazon](#), RRP £219.99.

They may look identical, but there are differences between Amazon's two most popular smart speakers.

Our article [Amazon Echo vs Echo Dot](#) will help you decide which speaker is right for you.

Google smart speakers

Both have a living room-friendly fabric finish available in several colours, and both work with the voice-activated Google Assistant.

- Google Nest Audio Smart Speaker, [Argos](#), RRP £89
- Google Nest Mini (2nd Gen), [Currys](#), RRP £49

Apple smart speakers

Although more expensive than their rivals, these smart speakers use the same Siri voice assistant as the iPhone and are best for buyers who already own other Apple products.

- Apple HomePod mini Smart Speaker, [John Lewis](#), RRP £99
- HomePod, [Apple](#), RRP £299

Other brands

Other smart speaker brands include Bang & Olufsen and Bose.

Bang & Olufsen have a great Black Friday deal on their Beosound A1 (2nd Gen), at £152 instead of £259 [at Amazon](#). Or, you could get the Bose SoundLink Revolve+ (Series II), which is currently reduced on [Amazon](#) from £299.95 to £229.

While they also use Alexa and Google Assistant, they don't have all the features offered by smart speakers from Amazon and Google themselves.

How to change the Alexa command word



Image credit: Amazon Dot

How to change the Alexa command word

Farewell Alexa! How to change the command word on your smart speaker with this easy-to-follow guide.

By Jayne Cherrington-Cook | Published - 15 Jun 2023

Fed up with shouting 'Alexa' at your Echo smart speaker? Then shout no more, as with just a few simple steps you can change the wake word to something else.

The command word – also known as the wake word – is used to get your Echo smart speaker to listen to you. Once it hears the wake word, your smart speaker begins listening to what you ask it to do.

Why change your Echo's wake word?

Changing your Echo's wake word can make it feel more personalised and unique to you. Then again, most people change it because they have multiple Echo devices in the home.

Changing the command word can help differentiate between devices, making it easier to control the one you want to use.

It can also help to prevent accidental activations by other people. If you've ever been listening to the radio or watching the TV when someone says 'Alexa', you'll know what happens.

What name can I choose?

Unfortunately, you can't choose any old name for your Echo's wake word.

Unlike the Google Assistant though where you have no way of changing the wake word, on the Echo you're at least given the choice of five pre-chosen words: Alexa, Amazon, Computer, Echo and Ziggy – the last of these launched in 2022 as a tribute to the late David Bowie.



Image credit: Saga Magazine/Ralf Liebhold

Ask Ziggy to play Ziggy and your smart speaker will begin playing the eponymous album.

There are also seasonal variations such as 'Hey Santa', but to access this you must enable it via the app. Alas, Santa can't help with every command, so Alexa will jump in on occasion.

Before you choose one of the five, bear in mind that if any of them sound like family members, pet names or even just words you use regularly, it could all get confusing. Go for something reasonably different to avoid triggering accidental activations.

How to change it on the app

The app is an easy way to change your Echo command word – here's how to do it.

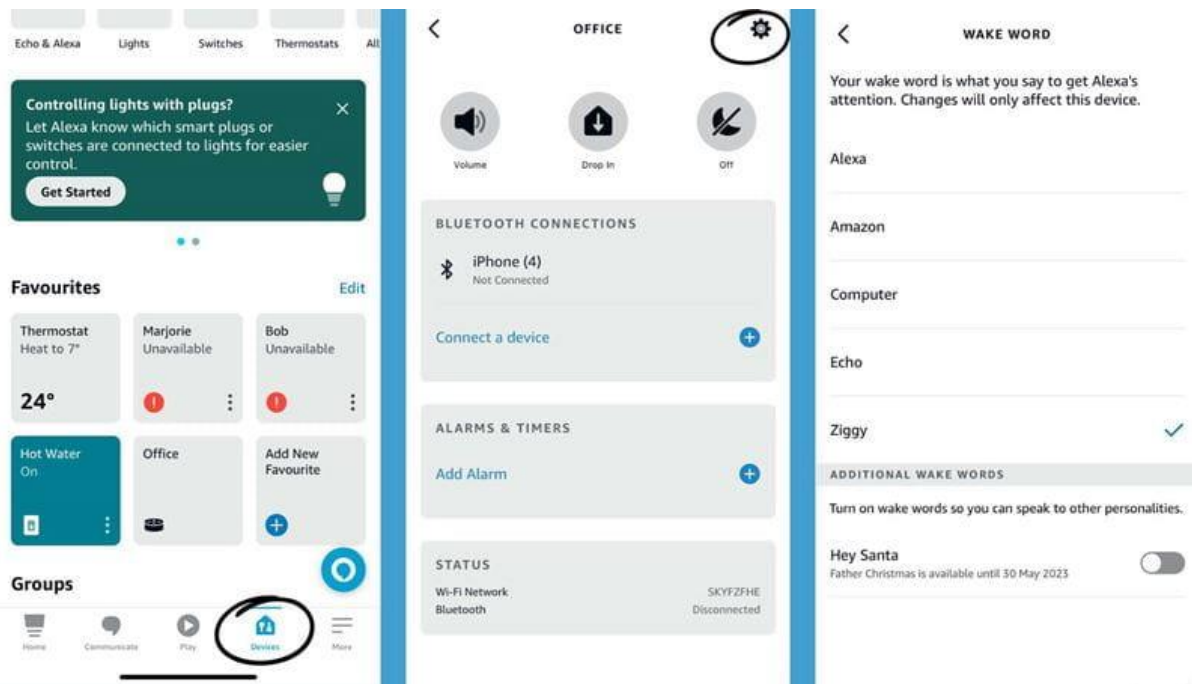


Image credit: Saga Magazine

It just takes a few taps in the Alexa app to change the command word

1. Once you've opened the Alexa app, tap on 'Devices'.
2. Select 'Echo & Alexa' and then select your device.
3. From here, select 'Settings'. This is a little cog located at the top right-hand corner of the screen.
4. Scroll down to the 'General' section and select 'Wake Word'.
5. Select a wake word from the list, and then select OK from the pop-up screen. Updating your wake word may take a couple of minutes. It's a good idea to test it out after this time to make sure it worked.

More than one device?

When you change the wake word, it only applies to one device. If you have more than one device and want to change the wake word for any of your other smart speakers, then you'll have to follow the same process for each one.

Can I ask Alexa to change it?

The answer to this is... kind of. You can ask but you'll basically be redirected to the app!



Image credit: Shutterstock/Diego Thomazini

The Alexa app is the only way to change the wake word

Troubleshooting

You've got to love technology – sometimes it just doesn't want to play ball. If you're having trouble with changing the wake word, there are a few things you can try.

- Restart your smart speaker. Unplug the power adapter from your device and wait for 10 seconds. Plug it back in to restart it.
- Check for any software updates on your Alexa application. You can do this by going to the Play Store on android phones or the App store for Apple phones.
- Check for software updates on the Echo smart speaker. For software updates on your Echo Dot device, just ask Alexa. Say 'Alexa, check for software updates'. If there are any updates found, the device will install them.
- If this doesn't help, you can try a device reset. To do this, press and hold the 'Action' button for 20 seconds (the Action button is the little dot on the controls). Wait for the light ring to turn off and on again and then your device will enter set-up mode. You'll then have to [follow the instructions](#) from Amazon on how to set up you Echo Dot.
- If all else fails, you can try a factory reset but bear in mind that this erases all your personal information and any connections you might have to other devices and smart home applications.

Full factory reset

To do a full factory reset, press and hold the 'Volume down' and 'Microphone off' buttons at the same time for 20 seconds. Then wait for the light ring to turn off and on again. You'll then be in set-up mode and can follow the instructions above.



What Is a Smart Speaker and What Does It Do?



carousel

Smart speakers have proven to be an indispensable device for many smart technology enthusiasts by blending convenience, connectivity and control into a single compact speaker. From streaming music and managing schedules to controlling smart home devices and searching the web, these voice-activated assistants have evolved well beyond their initial functionalities.

Smart speakers have reshaped the way we live, work and interact with technology by unraveling a world of boundless potential and unmatched convenience. We will go through the transformative automation of these innovative devices and unravel exactly what smart speakers are capable of.

What is a smart speaker?

A voice-controlled device that combines the functionality of a traditional speaker with the capabilities of a virtual assistant, the [smart speaker](#) is so much more than just an output for audio. Smart speakers utilize both natural language processing and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to understand and respond to questions, perform various tasks and provide entertainment.

You can access information and control various aspects of your digital life by simply speaking commands or asking questions to a smart speaker. Because of this and with continuous advancements in technology, smart speakers are increasingly becoming central hubs for managing and automating tasks in modern homes.

What does a smart speaker do?

If you are looking into [how to choose a wireless Bluetooth speaker](#), understanding the various possibilities that portable smart speakers offer should be seriously considered. More than just playing back audio, common functions and features of smart speakers include:

- **Voice commands.** Built-in microphones let you ask questions, give commands or initiate actions using natural language that is internally processed to provide relevant responses or perform requested tasks.
- **Calls and communication.** Sending voice text messages or making phone calls without even touching your smartphone makes communication more convenient than ever.
- **Smart home control.** Most smart speakers integrate with other smart home devices, allowing you to control various aspects of your home just by speaking.
- **Music playback and streaming.** The best smart speakers for music have access to all of the popular streaming services, letting you request specific songs, playlists, artists or genres.
- **Entertainment and media control.** Podcasts, audiobooks and radio stations can all be easily streamed. Televisions can also be voice controlled if the speaker is integrated with a [smart TV](#).
- **Personal organization.** Managing schedules and calendars, setting reminders and alarms, creating to-do lists, setting up appointments and jotting down notes all help keep things organized.

In addition to any aforementioned functions and features, smart speakers can also provide general voice assistance. This includes translating languages, calculating math problems, offering suggestions to common problems, telling jokes, providing daily news and weather briefings and more.

How does a smart speaker work?

Regular Bluetooth speakers use wireless technology to stream audio from a source device, such as a [smartphone](#), tablet or computer, without relying on physical cables. A smart speaker takes this Bluetooth pairing technology and integrates it with voice recognition and smart technology, turning the device into a home assistant speaker. A smart speaker is capable of so much thanks to utilizing the following mechanics:

- **Built-in microphones.** Capturing sound from the surrounding environment, microphones pickup both voice commands and other sounds.
- **Wake word detection and voice processing.** Specific wake words, such as “Alexa,” “Hey Siri” or “OK Google,” are easily detected by the smart speaker, prompting it to start recording and send the information to a cloud-based service for processing.
- **AI assistance.** The processed information from the cloud uses AI algorithms to generate the appropriate responses based on the question or command.
- **Speaker output.** Every response generated is converted back into speech by using text-to-speech technology, playing back the audio through the smart speaker.

Additionally, smart speakers can conveniently communicate with other compatible [smart home devices](#), letting you control more than just the speaker with voice commands.

Smart home speakers and other smart home tech

Among [the ten best smart home devices](#) available, portable smart speakers are an integral part of the growing smart home ecosystem. Through Bluetooth connectivity, home speakers with Wi-Fi and voice command act as the control center for other smart devices. Essentially, a smart speaker makes it more efficient to use and organize your other connected smart home devices. Smart home devices that can be controlled through a smart speaker include cameras, doorbells, locks, thermostats, plugs and outlets, lighting and more.

Are there different types of smart speakers?

Whether you are an audiophile seeking out the best sounding smart speaker or if you spend most of your time out on the patio and need an outdoor smart speaker, there are slight variations of what specific devices are capable of. Features and capabilities can vary depending on the brand, model and the virtual assistant that is used. However, [Amazon Echo devices with Alexa](#) and [Google Home devices with Google Assistant](#) are among the most well-known smart speakers.

Acting as both virtual assistant and the center for smart home entertainment, smart speakers offer an efficient hands-free experience that makes everyday tasks that much easier. They have changed the way we interact with technology in our daily lives by combining powerful voice recognition, AI and wireless connectivity. And, as technology continues to advance, so will smart speakers and what they are capable of, expanding the landscape of possibilities and new conveniences.



How to use a smart speaker to make a home more accessible for disabled people

Smart speakers and connected devices can make your home more accessible if you're a disabled or older person. We explain what devices are available and how to make the most of them.

Last updated: January 2025

Contents include

- [1. What are smart speakers?](#)
- [2. What are the different types of smart speakers?](#)
 - [What smart speakers are available from Amazon?](#)
 - [What smart speakers are available from Google?](#)
- [3. How can smart speakers help disabled people?](#)
- [4. What devices can I control using a smart speaker?](#)
- [5. What happens if you have speech difficulties or cannot use your voice at all?](#)
- [6. Environmental controls](#)
- [7. How AbilityNet can help you](#)
 - [My Computer My Way](#)
 - [Advice and information](#)
 - [IT support at Home](#)

1. What are smart speakers?



Some 50% of us own a smart speaker (2021) in the UK, up from 20%. It means we're all becoming dependent on our tech companion to answer a variety of questions.

However, by making a smart speaker the hub of a connected home - and connecting it to a variety of connected devices or "Internet of Things" (IoT), you can create a smart home that's more accessible and can help disabled and older people to continue to live independently.

Smart speakers are connected devices, which you can interact with using voice recognition technology. In addition, they connect to the internet, so you can "ask" them to access various services.

Examples include the ability to check the weather, access news headlines, add to the shopping list for your online supermarket of choice, and listen to the radio. In addition, some now have screens enabling people to use an intelligent "speaker" to video conference with friends and family.

You can also use a smart speaker to control your home. For example, you can turn lights on and off - and more.

2. What are the different types of smart speakers?

Amazon and Google are the leading providers of smart speakers - and the best-known.

What smart speakers are available from Amazon?

Amazon's smart speakers have Alexa as the voice assistant, so you "Ask Alexa" when you're looking to perform a task. Amazon now has a suite of products within its Alexa range. These include:

- **Amazon Echo:** the basis smart speaker. A small 'orb-shaped device.'
- **Amazon Echo Studio:** Amazon's biggest, loudest and most advanced speaker. It offers stereo sound.
- **Amazon Echo Show:** The Echo Show is a smart speaker with a built-in screen.

What smart speakers are available from Google?

Like Amazon, Google has a range of smart speakers that come with Google Assistant. Google speakers use the brand of "Nest". To engage, say, "Hey Google."

- **Nest Mini:** The smallest, entry-level version of Google's smart speaker.
- **Nest Audio:** Improved speaker quality over the Mini.
- **Nest Hub:** The Nest Hub includes a screen. You can use it for entertainment and video conferencing. You can control it with Quick Gestures (using motion sense) as well as your voice.
- **Net Hub Max:** The largest devices with a bigger screen, but the cost is comparable with a mid-priced tablet.

3. How can smart speakers help disabled people?

A smart speaker is a helpful device for anyone to have in the home. The Voice Assistants mean they are easy to use. Simply say "Alexa" or "Hey Google" to wake up the device. For example, you can say, "Alexa, what is the weather in 'my home town today?"

Our Head of Digital Inclusion, Robin Christopherson MBE, is a powerful advocate for smart speakers. Robin, who is blind, runs podcasts on making the most of Alexa.

- [Dot-to-Dot, the daily 5-min Alexa podcast](#)
- [The Echo Show: all things Alexa](#)

The voice assistants are an easy way of tapping into podcasts, including Robin's.

You can also use a smart speaker to control your home by connecting devices. For example, one of our volunteers has [helped a woman with Multiple Sclerosis \(MS\)](#) use a smart speaker to operate her lights.

[Watch a recording of our webinar recording on smart devices](#)

4. What devices can I control using a smart speaker?

There is an increasing number of smart devices you can connect to a network and - in turn - control via your smart speaker. For example, you can buy smart doorbells from companies such as [Ring](#). You can also purchase smart lightbulbs and thermostats.

Smart light bulbs can cost around £15 each, which is pricier than a standard light bulb. Smart doorbells from established brands such as Ring and Nest cost around £180-£330. Smart thermostats and wireless security cameras often cost £100-£200.

[TL Tech](#), which featured on our FREE webinar, specialises in creating smart homes. The company recommended "smart buttons" to create a smart home. For example, Samsung SmartThings to control individual functions.

You can also buy [smart plugs](#). Once you pair your [Alexa](#) or [Google](#) device, you can then turn the device on or off that you plug into the smart plug.

A device is either "on or off". So, for example, if you have a bedside light, you could name your device "Bedside light" in the app, and then every time you said "Alexa, turn on bedside light", your light would turn on. Now obviously, if you have two bedside lights, you'd have to set them up as perhaps "Bedside light 1 and 2".

If you want to connect other devices such as security cameras, white goods, heating, and smart door locks to Google Home or Alexa, you'll need to get access to a smart hub such as the [Hive hub](#) or [Google's Nest hub](#).

You can also use smart technology with your TV, either by buying a [smart TV](#) or by using an [Amazon Firestick](#).

[See more tips on How to use your smart speaker based on our FREE webinar](#)

5. What happens if you have speech difficulties or cannot use your voice at all?

Alexa and Google Home will recognise you if you have impaired speech. It might be slightly harder for the device to understand what you say, but you will get fairly good functionality. If you don't have speech or if your speech is unintelligible, you will need to consider some alternative technology such as computer-controlled environmental controls.

6. Environmental controls

An environmental control will allow you to control your environment (lights, doors, music) by using a computer or device running specialist software. Examples are [Possum's Qwayo device](#) and the controllers made by [Abilla](#). Several NHS departments around the country can advise on the best environmental control for you. We suggest you talk directly to your GP, who can start the referral process.

7. How AbilityNet can help you

My Computer My Way

My Computer My Way is an AbilityNet run website packed with articles explaining how to use the accessibility features built into your computer, tablet, or smartphone. We update the site as new features and changes occur to the Windows, MacOS, iOS, Chrome OS, and Android operating systems. The site has four sections:

- [Vision](#): computer adjustments to do with vision and colour
- [Hearing](#): computer adjustments to do with hearing, communication, and speech
- [Motor](#): computer adjustments to do mobility, stamina, and dexterity
- [Cognitive](#): computer adjustments to do with attention, learning and memory

Use it for free at mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk

Advice and information

If you have any questions please contact us at AbilityNet and we will do all we can to help.

- Call: 0300 180 0028
Please note: calls to our helpline number cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls, and AbilityNet does not receive any money from these calls.
- Email: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

IT support at Home

If you're looking for in-person support, you can book a free visit from one of our disclosure-checked volunteers. Many of our volunteers are former IT professionals who give their time to help older people and people with disabilities to use technology to achieve their goals. Our friendly volunteers can help with most major computer systems, laptops, tablet devices and smartphones.

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/at-home>

Which? 10 genuinely useful things you can do with a smart speaker

Making a smart speaker part of your daily routine can save time and hassle – here's 10 ways to make the most of your voice assistant



[Oliver Trebilcock - Senior researcher & writer](#)



Most people only scratch the surface of what smart speakers can offer. It's well known Alexa would win at a game of trivia, play songs on request and act as a convenient kitchen timer, but it's capable of far more.

And while you can get in on the action from as little as £50, keep your eyes open for a sale and you can halve this price. It's a remarkably cheap way to save time, avoid hassle and have a bit of fun around the home.

Our experts have rounded up the most useful day-to-day functions of smart speakers – see how many you've tried, and what more smart speakers can do to help you make the most of your day.

[Best smart speakers](#) – see the top recommendations from our expert tests.

1) Control smart devices with routines



Smart speakers can be linked up with a whole range of smart devices, including smart lights (turn off all lights at once), [smart thermostats](#) (change the temperature with your voice) and [smart doorbells](#) (so you can catch those speedy delivery drivers who've left before you get out your phone).

One of the simplest and most useful commands is for freestanding lights in your home – if you connect one with a [smart plug](#) (prices start from under £10), you can turn it off with your voice – saving you reaching for a switch. Or if you want to check in on your home while on holiday - and perhaps even switch the lights on every now and again to deter potential intruders, just check in through the plug's app on your smartphone.

2) Timers and reminders



Being a handy kitchen timer is one of the most popular uses of smart speakers, but this only one way they can be helpful in the home.

If you need a reminder on a recipe, why not ask Alexa rather than clean your hands to get out your cookbook or phone. Plus if you have a smart display like the Amazon [Echo Show 8](#), you can even follow through recipes you're unfamiliar with step-by-step on the screen.

And we've all had a situation where dinner's almost ready and we realise we forgot a step. Just say, 'Alexa, remind me in 20 minutes to...' and make your cooking routine a breeze.

3) Use it as an alarm clock



Smart speakers are much more flexible than even a dedicated alarm clock radio. Instead of being limited to two independent alarms with weekday/weekend settings like typical alarm clock radios, you can set a different wakeup time and method for each day of the week – perfect for flexible working to cover days in the office versus working at home, and help you make the most of your night's sleep.

With Alexa routines (see below), you can wake up to your favourite song or music streaming service like Spotify, or even get Alexa to lull you to sleep with the sound of waves or rain on the window (just don't forget to 'set a sleep timer' so it turns off automatically).

News, deals and stuff the manuals don't tell you. [Sign up for our Tech newsletter, it's free monthly.](#)

4) Use as an internet radio



Surprisingly, smart speakers start from prices lower than most DAB radios, despite them being more feature-rich. For example, the [Google Nest Mini](#) and [Amazon Echo Dot](#) start from around £50, and smart displays like the [Amazon Echo Show 5](#) and [Nest Hub](#) from around £90. Plus you'll often find them on sale for far less.

Smart speakers have internet radio built-in. Just say: 'Hey Google, play BBC Radio 4.' or 'Alexa, ask the BBC to play Radio 1.'

Most DAB radio stations are available on internet radio (as well as thousands more from all over the world), including BBC national radio and Classic FM. Local radio stations might not be, so if you listen to these, check before making the switch.

Dedicated internet radios also had a torrid time in 2023 with lots of older sets having the support dropped by [the BBC](#) and [manufacturer Pure](#), so if you're interested in internet radio, why not get a smart speaker instead. Which? checks periodically for ongoing support with smart speakers, and so far almost no models have had support limited for internet radio, including the original Echo which launched in 2015.

5) Set up stereo speakers



For most smart speakers, you can link two of them together for true stereo sound. This is true even of entry-level models like the Amazon Echo Dot and Google Nest Mini.

This can create a much more immersive listening experience, and allows you to improve sound and volume over time without needing to replace your existing speakers.

6) Use it as a portable speaker



Most smart speakers are mains-only, but there are battery-powered models, including the [Bose Portable Smart Speaker](#), [Sonos Roam](#) and [Sonos Move](#).

While voice control features only work in range of wi-fi, this lets you take your smart speaker down to the garden or on holiday, so you can continue making the most of voice capabilities wherever you like to relax.

7) 'Drop in' on friends and family



'Drop in' on Alexa devices is an instant communication service to another Alexa device, like an intercom. When you receive a Drop In, the light indicator on your Echo pulses green and you connect to your contact automatically.

You can also contact people via the Alexa app on their devices, via your Alexa contacts, and either start up a two-way conversation, or a group conversation with all supported Alexa-enabled devices in your Amazon household.

Google Assistant devices have a similar system called Google Duo.

8) Broadcast around the home



Alternatively, use the 'broadcast' feature to make announcements to devices registered to the same Alexa account.

Save making your voice hoarse by shouting up the stairs – ‘Announce, dinner is ready’ and all the connected Alexa devices throughout your home will mean no one has the excuse that the food's gone cold.

9) Get Cheaper access to music streaming services

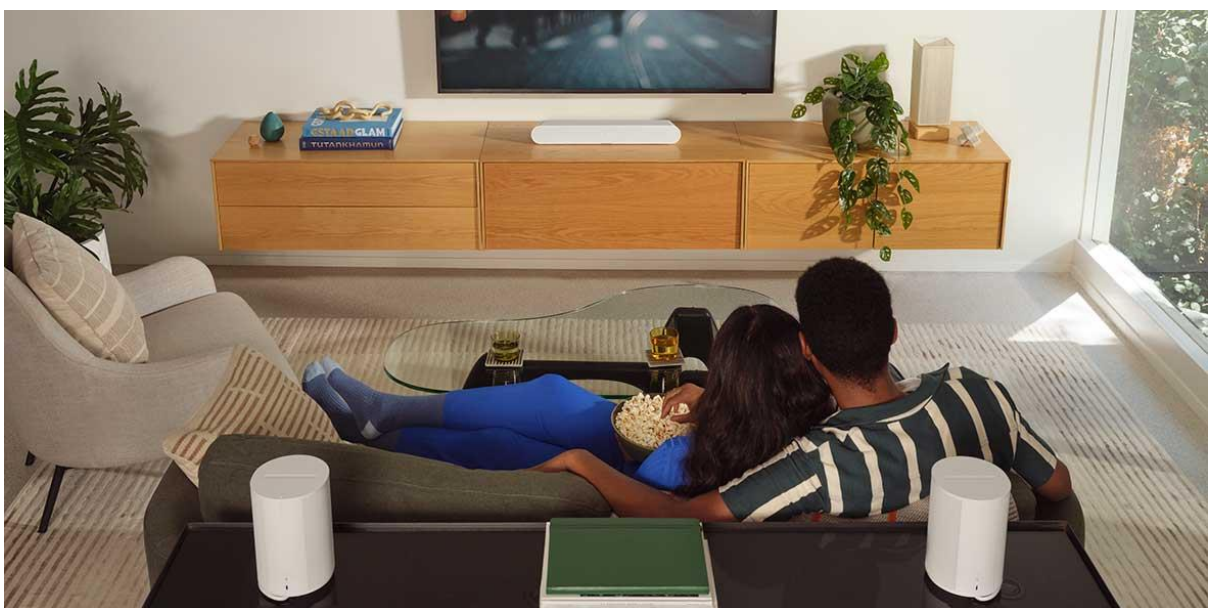


Music streaming services aren't cheap – typically running at £10-12 a month.

However, if you get an Amazon Echo speaker, there's an impressive [£5.99 per month option](#) for a single Echo device – much cheaper than the typical £10 for Amazon Music Unlimited. This is one of the cheapest options available to get unlimited music streaming without ads.

You can also get more from your music streaming through the Alexa app by using Groups. This allows you to categorise smart speakers by room, or use the default 'Everywhere' group to play music simultaneously on all speakers in the home.

10) Have fun with Skills



Skills are ways to extend the Alexa experience even further – think of it like an App Store to add extra functions to your phone.

For instance, ‘[Daily Affirmation](#)’ adds a positive, uplifting thought to your morning routine, and ‘[Sleep and relaxation sounds](#)’ gives you more than 125 nature sounds to choose from for your perfect drift off to sleep. Games and workout routine skills are common too – see our [complete guide to Alexa](#) for more.

Plus get extra benefits with a smart display



Smart displays are simply smart speakers with an added touchscreen. This makes them one of the best entry devices into voice control, as they can be completely set up on their touchscreens without a separate app on your phone, and you can see what's happening on the screen at all times.

Plus they offer additional functions too – see exactly what to do in a cooking recipe step-by-step, watch videos or see what programme is on while listening to radio. Plus you can even turn them into a photo frame of holiday moments when you're not using them, or even view who's at the door with a connected [smart doorbell](#).

To browse all our smart speakers, see our [smart speaker reviews](#).

Best smart speakers 2025: top voice-assistant speakers tested by our experts

[Best Buys](#)

By [Harry McKerrell](#) last updated 7 May 2025

The best wireless speakers with voice control smarts

When you purchase through links on our site, we may earn an affiliate commission. [Here's how it works.](#)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)

When smart speakers first emerged just over a decade ago, sound quality was not their strong point. With brands from [Apple](#) to [Sonos](#) now integrating voice assistants into their products, it's possible to get both AI-powered smart skills and top-notch audio performance from one device, as long as you know where to look.

Before scrolling down to find out which smart speakers our experts recommend, it's worth looking at which AI assistants are available. [Amazon's](#) Alexa is probably the most famous and widely supported, with [Google Assistant](#) a close second, while Siri is only found on Apple products.

All three have their strengths and weaknesses, and which one you're most used to using might dictate which of the products below are best-suited to you. If you just want to know which is the [best wireless speaker](#) or the [best Bluetooth speaker](#), we've got guides for those, too.

All of the smart speakers featured on this list have been comprehensively tested by our team of experienced experts, and as well as the usual focus on sound quality, build and features, we've also assessed how responsive they are to voice commands and how well they perform their various smart duties.

You can find out more about [how we test smart speakers](#) at the bottom of this page, but first, check out our pick of the best smart speakers we've reviewed.

The quick list

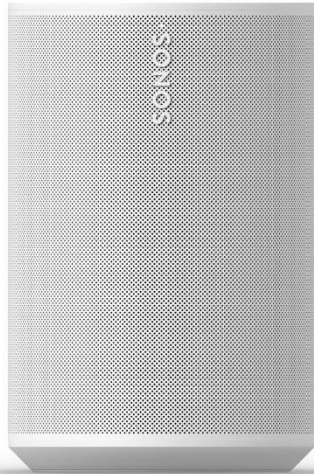
[Best overall](#)

1. Sonos Era 100

[£199 at Amazon](#)

[£199 at Argos](#)

[£199 at Sevenoaks Sound and Vision](#)



The Sonos Era 100 is the best smart speaker for most users, covering all the key bases, including sound, features and compatibility, with confidence. A superb-sounding, beautifully made all-rounder.

[Read more](#)

[Best for spatial audio](#)

2. Sonos Era 300

[£429 at Sevenoaks Sound and Vision](#)

[£429 at Peter Tyson](#)

[£449 at Argos](#)



If spatial audio is a priority, the Sonos Era 300 implements it beautifully. An immersive, refined performer, it is feature packed, easy to use and built to the highest standards.

[Read more](#)



[Best budget](#)

3. Apple HomePod Mini

[£84 at O2 Mobiles](#)

[£94 at Currys](#)

[£99 at Argos](#)

Not keen on spending a fortune? The diminutive HomePod Mini will give you streaming smarts and sophisticated sound without costing you an arm and a leg. A great choice for Apple lovers on a budget.

[Read more](#)

[Best for Alexa](#)

4. Amazon Echo Dot 5th Gen

[£44 at George at Asda](#)

[£54.99 at Amazon](#)

[£54.99 at Argos](#)



If you're an Amazon lover who just can't live without your beloved Alexa, the fifth generation of the Echo Dot brings together a pleasingly expansive sound and solid build with the smartest iteration of Amazon's AI assistant yet. A truly five-star product.

[Read more](#)



[Best portable](#)

5. Bang & Olufsen Beosound A1 (2nd gen)

[£157.99 at Amazon](#)

[£157.99 at Peter Tyson](#)

[£189.95 at Debenhams UK](#)

The B&O Beosound A1 (2nd Gen) combines AI-powered smarts with rugged portability to make one super-sounding, beautifully made portable speaker.

[Read more](#)



[Best for Apple](#)

6. Apple HomePod 2

[£274 at O2 Mobiles](#)

[£299 at Argos](#)

[£299 at John Lewis](#)

If you're an Apple lover heavily embedded within the megabrand's ecosystem, you really can't do better than the brilliant HomePod 2. It's sleek, it's smart, and it sounds absolutely superb.

[Read more](#)



[Best for Google Assistant](#)

7. JBL Authentics 300

[£299 at Peter Tyson](#)

[£299.99 at JBL UK](#)

[£329 at AO.com](#)

The semi-portable JBL Authentics 300 also supports Alexa, but it's a great option if you happen to prefer Google Assistant as your helper of choice.

[Read more](#)

Recent updates

May 7th: No new entries, but we've updated our copy to make sure it's all up-to-date and accurate.



Harry McKerrell

Senior staff writer

I'm a senior staff writer at *What Hi-Fi?* and have reviewed dozens of products since joining two years ago, including wireless speakers and systems with smart features built-in. I've had hands-on experience with every smart speaker on the list below, testing out the responsiveness, accuracy and intelligence of their smart capabilities by asking each AI voice

assistant to play music in various ways and for various genres and use cases, along with the usual requests for time, weather and bad jokes. Sound quality remains our key priority when testing any smart speaker, while we also assess the range of features available and the build quality expected for the price, to ensure you get the best value for money.

Best smart speaker overall



A superbly made speaker that sounds great and won't leave you wanting for features. (Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



A superbly made speaker that sounds great and won't leave you wanting for features.(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)

1. Sonos Era 100

If you want a great Sonos speaker without spending Era 300 money, the 100 is the next best thing.

Specifications

Voice assistant(s): Sonos voice control, Amazon Alexa

Bluetooth : Yes (5.0)

Connections : Wi-fi, AirPlay 2, USB-C line-in (separate adapter required)

Features: Stereo pairing, TruePlay tuning, Spotify Connect, adjustable EQ, multi-room

Power : N/A

Dimensions (hwd): 18.25 x 12 x 13.05cm

Weight : 2.02kg

Today's Best Deals

[£199 at Amazon](#)

[£199 at Argos](#)

[£199 at Sevenoaks Sound and Vision](#)

Reasons to buy:

- Large, open sound
- Great detail
- Vast catalogue of streaming features
- Excellent, simple-to-use app

Reasons to avoid:

- Adaptor for wired connection costs extra
- Rival Apple HomePod 2 is more natural with voices

In terms of overall performance at a competitive price, there are few better smart speakers than the Sonos Era 100. Released as a cheaper, slimmer alternative to the superb Era 300, the Era 100 keeps up with its bigger, more expensive sibling by delivering a host of streaming playback features within a robust, deeply musical speaker. Most of the same smart capabilities are on display here, too, and while Google Assistant has been officially dropped, Sonos's voice control and Amazon Alexa are here to take over such duties.

If you're not keen on splashing a lot of cash to foot the £449 / \$449 / AU\$749 asking price for the [Era 300](#), the Era 100 is a great option as a smart home speaker that will suit most needs almost all of the time. The number of streaming features is vast, and everything is as well-made and reliable as you'd expect.

Just like its larger counterpart, the 100 delivers a spacious, open sound, a lovely sense of rhythmic drive and all the detail and precision you could hope for considering the money paid.


















As we said in our review: "There's an ease with which Sonos delivers every track we play through it. It never feels dull or distant, nor does it try to attract your attention unduly; this is an overall pleasing sound that is comfortable to listen to for hours". Nice.

No, we're not exactly happy to be spending extra money for a dongle to allow a wired connection, and the [HomePod](#) makes voices sound a touch more natural, but if you're still happy to spend a decent amount without making as much of a dent in your funds as the 300, the Era 100 works superbly as a dedicated music player and a clever smart speaker.

Job done.

Read our full [Sonos Era 100 review](#)

Today's best Sonos Era 100 deals

	 	£189	VIEW
		£199	VIEW
		£199	VIEW
		£199	VIEW
		£199	VIEW
		£199	VIEW
		£199	VIEW
		£199	VIEW

Best smart speaker for spatial audio



The Era 300 is a beautiful speaker, inside and out. (Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)

2. Sonos Era 300

The Era 300's immense soundstage and weighty presentation make it a very smart choice.

Specifications

Virtual assistant(s): Sonos voice control, Alexa

Bluetooth : Yes (5.0)

Connections : Wi-fi, AirPlay 2, USB-C line-in (separate adaptor required)

Features : Spatial audio with Dolby Atmos, stereo pairing, TruePlay tuning, Spotify Connect, adjustable EQ, multi-room

Power : N/A

Dimensions (hwd): 16 x 26 x 18.5cm

Weight : 4.47kg

Today's Best Deals

[£429 at Sevenoaks Sound and Vision](#)

[£429 at Peter Tyson](#)

[£449 at Argos](#)

Reasons to buy:

- Immense scale of sound
- Detailed sound with deep, punchy bass
- Great with spatial audio tracks
- Wide streaming support

Reasons to avoid:

- No Tidal Dolby Atmos support (yet)
- Adaptor for wired connection costs extra

If home spatial audio is a priority, then smart speakers don't come much more impressive than the Sonos Era 300. With the Era 300, Sonos has delivered a smart speaker capable of voice integration alongside revolutionary sound and an embarrassment of cutting-edge features to rival the best that Apple or other rivals have to offer.

Smart features are courtesy of Amazon Alexa and Sonos voice control, with Google Assistant dropped due to a change in Google's technical requirements for third-party devices. That's not the greatest loss considering it's never been *the* most popular AI helper, anyway.

With its unique, "cinched hourglass" shape, there's no question that the Era 300 is a bit more of an acquired taste than most of the brand's rather more conservative designs, but what isn't up for debate is how superbly the five-star Era 300 manages to perform. Per our review: "It all sounds detailed, engaging and accomplished, and it's fun, too".

That fun is key to the Era 300, as is its versatility. The Sonos is a versatile and confident performer, consistently filling our testing rooms with cohesive, spacious sound across a swathe of genres. Big choral numbers feel broad and immersive thanks to spatial audio (although there's no support for [Dolby Atmos](#) on [Tidal](#) yet), but the Era 300 excels across hip-hop, classic rock, movie soundtracks and more.

Yes, it's expensive and yes, it smacks of a rip-off having to pay extra for a wired connector, but the Era 300 has earned the right to be so impertinent.



A five-star performer and one of the best smart speakers you could hope to find, especially if you're mad about spatial audio.

Read our full [Sonos Era 300 review](#)

Today's best Sonos Era 300 deals

[114 Amazon customer reviews](#)

		£449 £429	VIEW
		£449 £429	VIEW
		£449	VIEW
		£449	VIEW
		£449	VIEW

NO IMAGE AVAILABLE	amazon.co.uk	No price information	CHECK AMAZON
	PETER TYSON HOME & ENTERTAINMENT	£449 £429	VIEW
	currys	£449	VIEW

We check over 250 million products every day for the best prices



Top Tip

Becky Roberts

Managing Editor

You're probably looking at the Sonos Era 100 and the Era 300 and wondering which is right for you. That decision will hinge on a few key factors, with price being a major player; the official £449 / \$449 / AU\$749 of the Era 300 is a substantial sum and a large increase on the £249 / \$249 / AU\$399 you'll have to pay for the Era 100 when at full price. That said, the larger speaker does boast peerless spatial audio performance, something the Era 100 doesn't have, as well as a broader sound and greater general sonic capabilities. Still, if you just want all those lovely streaming features and a speaker that will slot into your Sonos setup, the Era 100 makes sense as a more budget-friendly option.

Best budget smart speaker



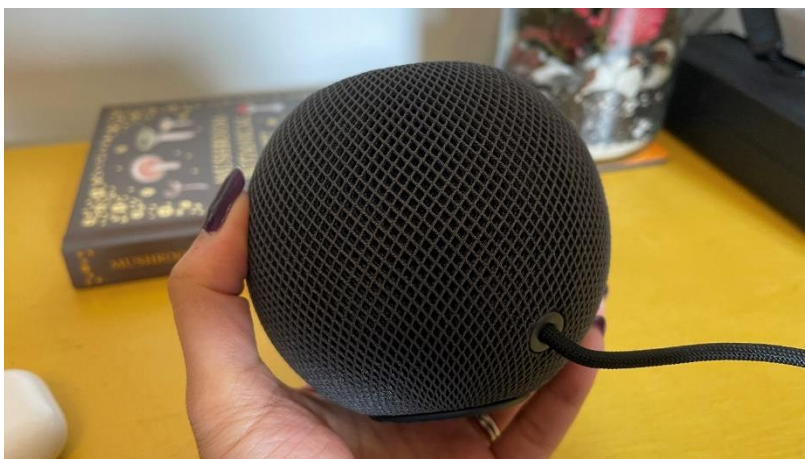
Apple's mini wonder is an awesome little performer. (Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



Apple's mini wonder is an awesome little performer.(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)

[3. Apple HomePod Mini](#)

What Hi-Fi? Awards winner. Apple's cheaper Siri-powered smart speaker is small but mighty.

Specifications

Voice assistant(s): Siri

Bluetooth : Yes (5.0)

Connections : Wi-fi, AirPlay 2

Features : Spatial Audio with Dolby Atmos, stereo pairing, multi-room

Power : 20W

Dimensions (hwd): 8.4 x 9.8 x 9.8cm

Weight : 0.345kg

Today's Best Deals

[£84 at O2 Mobiles](#)

[£94 at Currys](#)

[£99 at Argos](#)

Reasons to buy:

- Sophisticated, engaging sound
- Substantial smart skills
- Impressive music discovery

Reasons to avoid:

- Limited third-party service support
- Lacks a full control app
- Not designed for non-Apple users

If the [HomePod 2 \(below\)](#) is too big and expensive for your needs but you love the idea of an Apple-made smart speaker that will fit perfectly into your [iOS](#)-oriented ecosystem, the [HomePod](#) Mini is your best bet.

At just 8.4cm tall and 9.8cm wide, it's quite a bit smaller than the similarly spherical [Amazon Echo](#), but it certainly doesn't lack power. Get its swirling orb of coloured light up and running to signify that Siri is listening or processing and you're in for a real sonic surprise.

Siri, of course, is your voice assistant, and after a short period of learning it'll respond to the phrase "Hey Siri, play something I'll like" not by streaming your most played track of the last few weeks, but by playing something that you probably haven't heard before but which has been curated to fit in with your current tastes and habits. As a powerful way to discover new music, it's fantastic, and Alexa simply isn't as good at it.

The HomePod Mini goes loud, too. From the moment we start playing music, it's clear that the Mini is happy to outperform its size and price, impressing us with the organisation and maturity of its bold, assertive sound that, as we stated at the time, "embarrasses its direct competition with the sophistication and maturity of its sound".

Apple products have occasionally laboured under the reputation of being a little overpriced, but the HomePod Mini, hovering around the £100 / \$100 mark, actually seems like superb, Award-winning value.



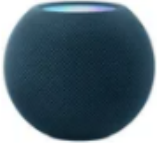




















Just be aware that there's no dedicated companion app, and you'll only get the most of it if you're committed to the rest of the Apple ecosystem, including [Apple Music](#).

As is the case with the HomePod 2, we're hoping for a new model, Mini or otherwise, to arrive in 2025, but for now, the current Mini makes for a superb budget option. A no-brainer for Apple lovers everywhere.

Read our full [Apple HomePod Mini review](#)

Today's best Apple HomePod Mini deals

		£84	VIEW
		£94	VIEW
		£99	VIEW
		£99 £79	VIEW
		£99	VIEW

		£104	VIEW
		£99	VIEW
		£109	VIEW
NO IMAGE AVAILABLE		No price information	CHECK AMAZON
		£99	VIEW
		£99	VIEW
		£99	VIEW
		£84	VIEW
		£99	VIEW
		£99	VIEW
		£99	VIEW
		£109	VIEW

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Best smart speaker for Alexa



For this price, smart speakers don't come much better. (Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)

4. Amazon Echo Dot (5th Generation)

The 5th Generation of Amazon's affordable smart speaker is small, cheap and perfect for Alexa lovers.

Specifications

Voice assistant(s): Alexa

Bluetooth : Yes

Connections : Wi-fi

Features : On-surface touch controls, snooze alarm

Power : N/A (mains-powered)

Dimensions (hwd): 10 x 10 x 8.9cm

Today's Best Deals

[£44 at George at Asda](#)

[£54.99 at Amazon](#)

[£54.99 at Argos](#)

Reasons to buy:

- Impressively expansive sound
- Great Alexa integration
- Pleasing, understated aesthetic

Reasons to avoid:

- Sound distortion at the higher ranges
- Very Amazon-focused

Love Alexa? We'd heartily recommend the inexpensive and very cheerful fifth generation of the Echo Dot as the direct, if cheaper, rival to the HomePod Mini above.

Amazon's smart speaker range has become big business in the last decade or so, with Alexa now almost synonymous with the whole concept of integrated, domestic AI. The Echo Dot (5th Generation) takes things to new levels, a powerful and clued-up smart speaker that practically gives itself away thanks to its meagre asking price and five-star quality.

Not that the Dot feels cheap - in fact, quite the opposite. Whereas once Alexa was a one-note performer capable of answering basic questions about the weather and or what the capital of Germany is, she's as filled to the brim with knowledge as Stephen Fry after a year in the British Library (with Alexa+ on the way to boost that even further).

The Dot's cybernetic assistant is more helpful than ever before, stuffed with so many tricks and quirks that you'll often find yourself falling into the trap of speaking to Alexa as though it, or rather she, were a real person. You can even use her to play *Skyrim*, albeit in a strange, truncated form.

Audio has come a long way, too. We weren't mad about the sound of Amazon's early Echo models, but the trajectory has been very much one of continual improvement courtesy of Jeff Bezos' tireless team of audio tinkerers.

Amazon's so-called "best-sounding Echo Dot yet" still distorts if you pump the volume too high, but it lives up to its billing thanks to a single 44mm front-firing speaker (4mm larger than the previous gen's 40mm). The result? A sound that, as our review surmised, is "peppy, robust and often genuinely musical from a small unit at an even smaller price".

Read our full [Amazon Echo Dot \(5th Generation\) review](#)

Today's best Amazon Echo Dot (5th Generation) deals



George.

£55
£44

[VIEW](#)



amazon.co.uk
prime

£54.99

[VIEW](#)

		£54.99	VIEW
		£54.99	VIEW
		£54.99	VIEW
	Debenhams	£54.99	VIEW
		£54.99	VIEW

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Best portable smart speaker



The classiest portable smart speaker you could ever hope to find. (Image credit: Bang & Olufsen)



(Image credit: Bang & Olufsen)

5. Bang & Olufsen Beosound A1 (2nd Gen)

The most stylish and refined little smart speaker we've heard - it's worth paying extra.

Specifications

Voice assistant(s): Alexa

Bluetooth : Yes (5.1)

Connections : Wi-fi, USB-C (for charging)

Features : Stereo-pairing mode, IP67 rating

Power : 60W

Dimensions (hwd): 4.6 x 13.3 x 13.3cm

Weight : 558g

Today's Best Deals

[£157.99 at Amazon](#)

[£157.99 at Peter Tyson](#)

[£189.95 at Debenhams UK](#)

Reasons to buy

- Expansive sound, weighty bass
- Competent Alexa integration
- Stunning build and finish

Reasons to avoid

- Not a budget option for Alexa voice control
- Getting a little long in the tooth

When we reviewed it a few years ago, we dubbed the Beosound A1 "the weightiest and most refined little speaker we'd heard in a while", all while praising its "classy, well-made design, easy to use

operation and the bonus of Amazon Alexa". Our initial affections, thankfully, haven't changed at all since the Beosound dropped in 2020.

Yes, the hugely impressive Beosound A1 qualifies as a smart speaker, even if you might think it's just a Bluetooth model at first glance. Thanks to its built-in Alexa compatibility and support from Qualcomm's [aptX Adaptive](#) codec, the A1 is a proper smart speaker, something that's made even more remarkable considering how rugged, well-made and superb-sounding this bap-sized wonder is.

Most smart speakers are wedded to the mains as part of their nature, but the A1 has Alexa capabilities while also being a well-made and sophisticated piece of portable tech. That's a winning combination in our book.

In fact, the Besound A1 is something of a Jack-of-all-trades, master of many. Sonically, the well-made, hugely attractive unit offers a pleasingly comfortable yet authoritative performance that you'd be happy listening to all day, complementing your musical catalogue with an expansive, meaty and assertive presentation.

At the higher ends, there's very little strain, while an expansive, weighty bass lays the groundwork with ease. Oh, and there's even a convenient strap for ease of transport for what is still a primarily portable unit.








It's expensive, sure, and it's certainly not the newest, but if you have money to spend, the smart Beosound A1 is a rather remarkable all-rounder, and one you'd be happy showing off to your friends.

There's good news for fans of B&O: there's a [new Beosound A1](#)! The third-gen model is more costly (boo!) at £299 / €349, and it won't have Alexa, so it won't qualify for inclusion on this list, but it *could* end up making its way into our rundown of the [best Bluetooth speakers](#) if promises of its "elevated sound" and "enduring design" ring true. We'll just have to review it first, of course...

Read our full [Bang & Olufsen Beosound A1 \(2nd Gen\) review](#)

Today's best Bang & Olufsen Beosound A1 (2nd gen) deals

	 	£259 £157.99	VIEW
		£259 £157.99	VIEW
		£299 £189.95	VIEW
		£259 £229	VIEW
		£259 £239	VIEW

	MYTHERESA	£240	VIEW
	amazon.co.uk ✓prime	£259 £157.99	VIEW
	amazon.co.uk ✓prime	£259 £157.99	VIEW
	amazon.co.uk ✓prime	£259 £180.98	VIEW
	PETER TYSON HOME & ENTERTAINMENT	£259 £169	VIEW
	amazon.co.uk ✓prime	£259 £205.85	VIEW
	amazon.co.uk ✓prime	£259 £224	VIEW

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Best Apple smart speaker



The HomePod 2 is still the best bet for Apple lovers everywhere. (Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: Future)



(Image credit: Future)

6. Apple HomePod 2

What Hi-Fi? Awards winner. The best smart speaker for Apple fans, the HomePod 2 boasts some considerable sonic chops.

Specifications

Voice assistant(s): Siri

Bluetooth : Yes (5.0)

Connections : Wi-fi, AirPlay 2

Features: Spatial Audio with Dolby Atmos, stereo pairing, multi-room

Power : N/A

Dimensions (hwd): 17 x 14 x 14cm

Weight: 2.3kg

Today's Best Deals

[£274 at O2 Mobiles](#)

[£299 at Argos](#)

[£299 at John Lewis](#)

Reasons to buy

- Natural, solid and energetic sound
- Spacious and three-dimensional, particularly with Atmos
- Brilliantly well-made

Reasons to avoid

- Still only suitable for dedicated Apple users
- No Siri control for Spotify, Tidal etc.
- Some rivals have a more direct sound

If you love Apple tech and want a great-sounding smart speaker with room-filling audio, the HomePod 2 is almost certainly the best option we've tested, and a fine alternative to the Sonos Era 100 above.

Apple's five-star model is the larger option in the Californian brand's current line-up, sitting above the smaller HomePod Mini in terms of weight and size. It's also one of the finest Apple products around today, even if we're been waiting for a while for a new model to drop. We're supposed to be getting a [HomePod with a screen](#) at some point in 2025, but as of yet, there's been no official sighting.

The HomePod 2's main draw is its ability to scan and optimise its audio settings for the room and position it's in on-the-fly, something which worked superbly during our own tests. Picking it from a place in free space and moving it close to a wall, our testers could hear it changing its settings in real time, mainly by reducing unnecessary bass that tends to muddy the sound when it isn't wanted.

We were particularly impressed with how well the HomePod 2 dealt with an Apple Lossless version of SBTRKT's *Trials Of The Past*, a taxing track that can often suffer from unwanted sibilance and harshness. No such problems with the HomePod (even if some rivals do sound more direct).

Once set up, the built-in mics and smart features all worked perfectly. Siri universally heard and enacted our voice commands, even while music was playing and we were talking to the speaker from across the room. We were also hugely impressed by the built-in temperature and humidity sensors which can be used to create custom automations using other smart home devices.

From top to bottom, the HomePod 2 is the smart speaker to beat for dedicated Apple acolytes (limited third-party support makes it less suitable for others), and the fact that it's still claiming *What Hi-Fi?* Awards only testifies to its supreme capabilities.

Read our full [Apple HomePod 2 review](#)











Today's best Apple HomePod (2nd Gen) deals



O₂

£274

VIEW

		£299	VIEW
	JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS	£299	VIEW
		£299	VIEW
	simply be.	£299	VIEW
NO IMAGE AVAILABLE		No price information	CHECK AMAZON
NO IMAGE AVAILABLE		£274	VIEW
		£299	VIEW

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Best smart speaker for Google Assistant



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)



(Image credit: What Hi-Fi?)

7. JBL Authentics 300

Harbours dual voice assistants and a punchy sonic approach, the 300 is a handsome and versatile choice

Specifications

Voice assistant(s): Alexa, Google Assistant

Bluetooth: Yes (5.3)

Connections : Wi-fi, ethernet, aux in

Features : Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, Spotify Connect, Chromecast, AirPlay 2, Alexa Multiroom, JBL self-tuning

Power: N/A

Dimensions (hwd): 19.5 x 34.2 x 18cm

Weight: 4.9kg

Today's Best Deals

[£299 at Peter Tyson](#)

[£299.99 at JBL UK](#)

[£329 at AO.com](#)

Reasons to buy:

- Nicely made and a treat to behold
- Fortright, bold and assertive sound presentation
- Versatile and easy to use

Reasons to avoid:

- Can stray into sonic brashness
- Hefty if you're using it as a portable speaker
- On-unit controls could be improved

Alexa is by far the most common voice assistant when it comes to smart speakers, but if you're more Google than Amazon there's a lot to like about the [JBL Authentics 300](#), not least the fact that it actually supports both. It's not necessary to choose which one you want to use, it'll automatically respond to requests directed at either, with both responding equally eagerly.



Retro designs aren't to everybody's tastes, but it's hard to deny the appeal of the Authentics 300. The chunky controls on top could feel a bit nicer to twiddle, but on the whole we're big fans of its waffle-esque grille and sleek metallic trim. The handle and 4800mAh battery inside also mean that it's technically portable, but at almost 5kg it's not something you'd want to lug around for long.

When plugged into the mains and connected to Wi-Fi the JBL puts on an assertive sonic performance with plenty of punch. It's not quite as sharp over Bluetooth, and it can occasionally tip over into brashness with certain songs, but you can't fault its enthusiasm.

With multiple connectivity options, including AirPlay 2, Chromecast and Spotify Connect, plus a lesser-spotted aux input and an intuitive companion app, the JBL Authentics 300 makes for a versatile option to anyone who's committed to the Google ecosystem.

Read our full [JBL Authentics 300 review](#)

Today's best Authentics 300 deals

	PETER TYSON <small>HOME & ENTERTAINMENT</small>	£379 £299	VIEW
	ao.com	£329	VIEW
	JBL	£329.99	VIEW

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Also consider

[Sonos Move 2:](#) While it didn't quite hit the heights of a full five-star haul, there's so much to recommend the Move 2. As we've said many times before, part of the major appeal of a Sonos speaker is its compatibility with the peerless Sonos ecosystem, and while we felt the second-gen Move couldn't *quite* justify its hefty price tag, there's lots to like about that big, confident sound and excellent array of streaming features.

[Audio Pro Addon C5A:](#) What does the "A" in the Audio Pro Addon C5A stand for? Alexa, of course! Yes, the C5A is essentially the Alexa-enabled version of the excellent Addon C5 and that, as it turns out, is a winning combination. Merging the C5's detailed, engaging and snappy sound with frictionless Alexa integration, the C5A is like discovering how well salt goes with caramel. Delicious.

[JBL Authentics 500:](#) The biggest member of the Authentics family boasts Alexa and Google Assistant compatibility but also sports spatial audio support via Dolby Atmos. It's larger, louder and bolder

sounding than anything else in the range, although a lack of an internal battery means you'll need to connect it to the mains at all times.

How to choose a smart speaker

Compatibility

The first thing to consider is compatibility. Many smart speakers are platform agnostic, so they'll work with both Android and iOS devices, but Apple's HomePod range isn't much use without an iPhone or Apple OS device to set it up.

You also won't be able to make the most of it without an Apple Music subscription as support for third-party streaming services is limited. If you're a Spotify or Tidal subscriber, you'll be better off picking something that has Spotify Connect or Tidal Connect baked in.

Ecosystem

It's also worth thinking about which ecosystem you use most. While most voice assistants do work with other services, they're tightly integrated with those made by their creators, making them much slicker to use. If you frequently use Google's services, for instance – Calendar, Maps, Gmail – maybe a product with Google Home onboard would be best for you.

Love shopping at Amazon and have a Prime account? An Amazon Echo might be right up your alley. Or maybe you want more flexibility and a wider choice of streaming features (hi, Sonos).

Sound quality

We're *What Hi-Fi?*, so the audio quality of a smart speaker still matters over the AI tech. This can vary quite a lot between models and manufacturers, and while spending more doesn't always guarantee a better listening experience, you do get the benefit of your investment here.

Some of the smaller smart speakers are limited purely because of their dimensions, so be realistic about your budget and what to expect. Find the right balance between great sound for your tunes and a helpful AI assistant, though, and you're on to a winner.

Connectivity

Most smart speakers will do everything you need straight out of the box, so wired connectivity tends to be fairly limited. If you're looking for something that'll allow you to connect external sources, Sonos is probably your best bet – and even then, you'll need to buy an adaptor to do so.

How we test smart speakers

Everything we test at *What Hi-Fi?* is subject to the same stringent approach, but there are some differences depending on what type of product it is, and smart speakers throw up some challenges not found in most other product categories.

In many ways we approach smart speakers in the same way we would any other wireless speaker, setting them up in our state-of-the-art listening facilities where our team of expert reviewers perform the majority of our product testing. This is where we will test their sound quality by listening to various genres of music and judging how well the speaker reproduces all areas of the frequency range.

While we'll also test how responsive the voice control is at this point, we also like to try it out under more appropriate real-life conditions: with the TV on in the background, when the kettle's boiling, or over the sound of the dog barking. This gives us a better idea of how a smart speaker will perform day-to-day and how well it integrates into a wider smart home setup.

As well as testing every product in isolation, each one is also compared to the best in its class on design and build, features, and sound quality. *What Hi-Fi?* is all about comparative testing, so we keep our Award-winners on hand to enable unbiased comparisons between new products and ones we know to have performed highly in the category.

All review verdicts are agreed upon by the entire team, rather than an individual reviewer, to eliminate any personal preference and to make sure we're being completely thorough. There's no input from PR companies or our sales team when it comes to awarding star ratings or deciding on our overall verdicts.

You can read more about [how we test and review products on *What Hi-Fi?* here](#).

FAQ

What does a smart speaker do and do I need one?

Our definition of a smart speaker hinges on whether it has voice control. If not, we'd generally categorise it as a wireless speaker if it just has wi-fi capabilities for streaming music but no voice assistant tech built in.

Do you need one? "Need" may be a strong word, but if you like using voice commands to control things like music playback without having to physically touch your device or use your phone, plus you want to get a speaker that will integrate easily into your existing smart ecosystem, it's a, pun-incoming, smart choice.

Do consider, though, that mixing and matching speakers and ecosystems rarely works, so pick a lane – Amazon and Alexa, Apple and Siri – and then you'll be able to slot models more easily into a unified system. A Google Assistant speaker, for example, won't play well with Amazon, say, as the brands are rivals and want you to pledge your loyalty only to them.

What, or rather who, is the best voice assistant?

This depends on what you'll be using voice commands for and which ecosystem you're already using, plus which third-party apps and smart features each assistant works with. Alexa and Siri have come on massively, and we tend to find that the best-sounding wireless speakers have Alexa or Siri built-in - see the Sonos Era 300 or HomePod 2 for examples.

Google Assistant isn't dead and buried, though, and it does still have the world's most powerful search engine backing it. For answering questions, Google will behave exactly like Google Search (way more powerful than Siri's search engine, by the way). Google's products haven't sonically impressed us as much as their rivals, however, and the company's assistant isn't as prolific or commonplace at the moment.

If we had to pick, we'd currently go for Alexa – it works with more third-party services and is more fun and useful than its rivals, whereas Siri is still largely locked into the Apple way of doing things and sports a less extensive list of overall talents. Even in terms of speed and "alertness", Alexa has always felt more attentive and responsive to our questions. With Alexa+ now on the horizon it's likely to get even better, too.

Are smart speakers always listening?

The short answer is: yes. The more accurate answer is: yes, but they're only listening for certain things. All smart speakers have a particular 'wake word' that attracts their attention (like "Hey Siri")

on an Apple HomePod), so the microphones need to be listening at all times in case you say it, but 99% of what gets said in their presence is ignored. You can usually tell when they're really paying attention through audio or visual cues.

If that still makes you uncomfortable, most smart speakers have a mute button that will disable the microphones so you can chat away in their presence without them listening. More often than not there will be some sort of visual indicator to show that the mics have been disabled, so you can be sure it's safe to reveal your darkest secrets.

Can smart speakers make phone calls?

The fact that smart speakers are equipped with microphones to facilitate voice control means that many of them can also be used to make calls, although the way they do it varies.

Sonos speakers do not offer this functionality at all, and Apple's HomePod essentially just functions as a hands-free kit for your iPhone or iPad (the latter being limited to FaceTime Audio calls), but Amazon's Echo devices offer more options.

In some countries, including the UK and US, it's possible to make calls via an Echo speaker using standard phone numbers, either by asking to call a name in your contacts or by reading out their digits to Alexa. The recipient's phone will ring as normal and display a number from the US, but you can also call anybody with the Alexa app installed on their phone.

It's also possible to make calls directly from one Amazon Echo device to another, or to Amazon Fire tablets, so they're not phone calls *per se*, but to all intents and purposes it's the same thing.

[Recent updates](#)

May 2025: No new entries, but we've updated our copy to make sure it's all up-to-date and accurate.

March 2025: JBL Authentics 300 promoted from 'also consider' to the Best for Google Assistant slot due to lack of availability of the Sonos One, which has been removed. Expanded the FAQ section with two new questions. Refreshed the intro and added more detail to the 'how we test' section.

February 2025: Updated copy following recent Apple recent press event and improved intro readability.

January 2025: Ensured that all copy is up-to-date for the start of 2025.

October 2024: *What Hi-Fi?* Award winners labelled after the 2024 Awards Best Buys announcements.



















August 2024: Some small copy adjustments and added pictures to our image galleries.

May 2024: Added JBL Authentics 300 and 500 to our 'also consider' section.

March 2024: Added FAQ section to help with buying decisions and frequently asked questions and an 'also consider' section to offer alternative buying options for readers.

November 2023: *What Hi-Fi?* Award winners labelled after the 2023 Awards Best Buys and Product of the Year announcements.

Round up of today's best deals

	Sonos Era 100 Wireless Speaker		£189	VIEW
	Sonos Era 300 Wireless Speaker		£449	VIEW
	Apple HomePod Mini		£99	VIEW
	Amazon Echo Dot (5th Gen)		£54.99	VIEW
	Bang & Olufsen Beosound A1 (2nd gen)		£259 £157.99	VIEW
	Apple HomePod (2nd Gen)		£299	VIEW
	JBL Authentics 300		£329.99	VIEW
   				

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