



The iPod Classic Cheatsheet

A guide to our iPod world by yuuiko

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With help from the iPod Modding Discord!
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Welcome to the iPod Classic Guide!

I hope you'll have a good experience here. This guide is continually improving, so make sure you have the latest version. (check my user posts on reddit or ask community)

Additionally, even though the guide is continually improved, there may be some information that isn't correct, but haven't been realised to be so as of this version. Be sure you double check everything before buying anything!

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

Thank you for visiting! -yuuiko

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Identifying iPods

LEGEND

THIN BACK

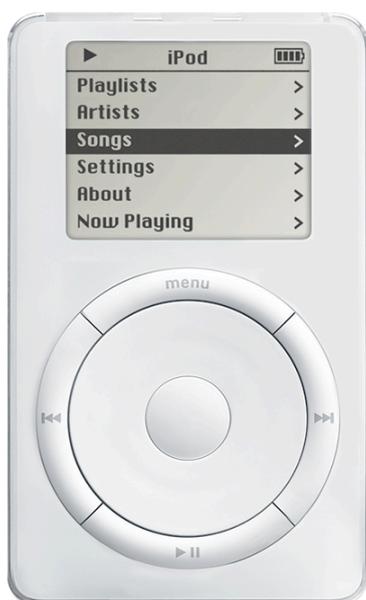
THICK BACK

Compatibility Warning

ABOUT BACK THICKNESS



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



1st Gen (2001, 2002)

Scroll wheel physically spins!
Top has no flap covers
Top has a big cutout from the metal for a plastic ports panel
Old iPod Font on Rear

Requires Firewire computer + charger

5GB

10GB

2nd Gen (2002)

Scroll wheel is solid state touch-based
Has flap covers on the top ports
Top is one metal piece that flows around holes
10gb and not THICC

Requires Firewire computer + charger

10GB

20GB



3rd Gen (2003 - 2004)

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

Firewire to 30pin cable + brick highly recommended

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

10GB

15GB

20GB

30GB

40GB

Identifying iPods 2



4th Gen (2004)

Has a black and white Display
Note the thicker screen bezels + clickwheel.

20GB

40GB

4th Gen (2004 - 2005)

officially called "iPod Photo"

Has a colour display
Note the thicker screen bezels + clickwheel.

20GB

30GB

40GB

60GB



5th Gen (2005)

officially called "iPod Video"

Does not have a search function in "Music" menu
Does not have a middle divider in brightness menu

30GB

60GB

5.5th (2006)

officially called "iPod Video"

The "Music" menu has a search function
The brightness menu has a black line, middle divider.
(has a brighter screen)
Serial ends with V9K, V9P, V9M, V9R, V9L, V9N, V9Q.

30GB

80GB



6th Gen (2007)

officially called "iPod Classic"

Has a metal faceplate
Black, metal iPods are always 6th gens.
Compare the clickwheel to the metal, usually it is very hard to see the edges of the clickwheel as the black metal is very dark, compared to grey versions.
A thick 160gb is always a 6th gen.
(If 160gb and thin, it's a 7th.)

80GB

160GB

Serial ends with Y5N, YMU, YMV, YMX.

128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit.

Identifying iPods 3



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

120GB

If the capacity is 120gb, it's a 6.5th gen.
(7th gens are space grey, but not 120gb.)
128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit.

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

160GB

7th gens are always thin with 160gb.
A 160gb, thin, metal space grey iPod is always a 7th.



iPod Mini Gen 1 (2004)
Has grey click wheel text
No storage indication on rear

4GB

Possible 128gb Storage Limit.



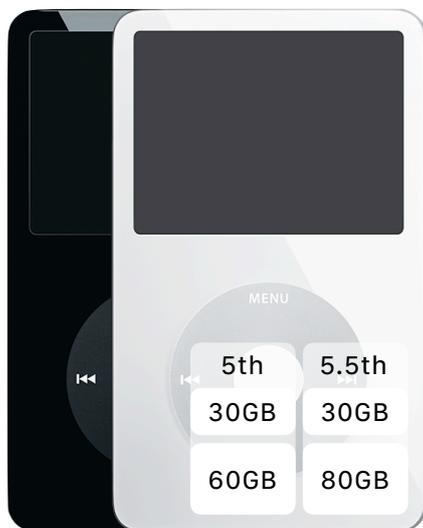
iPod Mini Gen 2 (2005)
Has coloured clickwheel text
Storage can be seen on the back

4GB

6GB

Recommendations

The Default



iPod Video 5th and 5.5th

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

Video Support

Largest screen on an iPod Classic

Arguably superior sound quality with Wolfson DAC

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

Many custom parts (Coloured faceplates and metal back cases)

Easy Mods

Very easy to disassemble

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

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

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

↳ More ram = can handle more songs, but only begins to take effect for libraries beyond 300gb, otherwise makes no noticeable difference.

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

The All-Out



iPod Classic 7th

All the benefits of the 5th gens above and:

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

Much faster processor and graphics chips

Runs Rockbox much snappier

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

All models have 64mb RAM.

Even brighter, more vibrant display

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

Headphone remote and mic support

All metal construction (Is more durable, but just a tad harder to disassemble)

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

The Simple



iPod Mini Gen 2

Easy to flash mod with just a CF adapter

Black and white screen.

Easy to disassemble

Has a greatly improved battery life over the mini 1

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

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

iPod Mini Gen 1

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

Caution

Know what you're doing before buying these iPods.



iPod 1st and 2nd Gen

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

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

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

Parts are hard to find.



iPod 3rd Gen

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

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

Software is known to act strange sometimes due to how it is the first generation to support USB while also supporting firewire

Parts are hard to find



iPod 6th and 6.5th Gen

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

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

iPod Mini 1st Gen

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

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

Storage Mod Compatibility

See the next page for more details about specific adapter boards.



1st Gen and 2nd Gen

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

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



5th Gen, 5.5th gen and 7th gen

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

5th gen stable up to 512gb.

7th gen stable up to 1TB.

Either can exceed, but may be buggy.

- iFlash Solo
- iFlash Dual
- iFlash Quad
- Cheap Green ZIF to CF Adapter Board and either:
 - CF to SD adapter + SD card
 - iFlash CF to SD adapter + SD card
 - CF card



3rd Gen

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

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



6th gen, 6.5th gen

128gb Storage Upgrade Hard Limit.

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

- iFlash Solo
- iFlash Dual
- iFlash Quad
- Cheap Green ZIF to CF Adapter Board and either:
 - CF to SD adapter + SD card
 - iFlash CF to SD adapter + SD card
 - CF card



4th Gen

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

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



iPod Mini 1* and Mini 2

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

- Either:
- CF card
 - CF to SD adapters + SD card

Storage Mod Recommends

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



The Default

iFlash Solo

"It just works"

Little bit of a premium price tag



The All-Out

iFlash Quad

- enables big battery mod in a thinback

- enables theoretically infinite storage

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



The Budget

Generic Chinese Thingy

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



The New Kid

Unbranded Integrated SSD board

Appears with a SATA SSD socket or with built-in onboard flash chips. A really nice, small and thin, **but a recent, unproven development.**

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



The Quality

iFlash ATA

"It just works"

Little bit of a premium price tag



The Budget

Another Generic Chinese Thingy

You might need to bend down a component that sticks out of it to prevent your battery from exploding.

iPod Mini / CF Cards for budget boards



The Guaranteed (SD cards)

iFlash SD-CF Adapter

Takes an SD card
"It just works"



The Good Deal (SD cards)

Digigear SD to CF Adapter

This thing has a good price and reputation, a lot of people have had success with it.



The "No Adapter Required"

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



The Sketchy

That Generic Chinese Thing again but without the green adapter board. it's \$5 but NOT RECOMMENDED

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



The Budgets

It does work but lots of reports of it not working. If it does, it may have slow, "buggy" transfer speeds.

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



iFlash Sata

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

Battery Mod

The Straightforwards



1st Gen and 2nd Gen:

Rare to upgrade battery.

Battery is already very large

Harder to find parts



3rd Gen

Rare to upgrade battery.

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

Hard to find parts



4th Gens

Rare to upgrade battery.

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

Parts exist, but stock spec replacements are most common.



iPod Minis

No battery upgrade possible

It's too small for plug and play battery upgrades

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

The Lots' Considerations

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



THINBACKS



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

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

THICKBACKS



If you have a thick back with a thicker HDD, replace the HDD with a thin HDD, or flash mod it with any flash-mod. Then you can use any battery with the thick case. If you have a thin iPod, you can purchase a thick back for it, and add any battery with your original thin HDD.

Swapping Backs and Headphone Jacks

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

Appearance and Software

LEGEND Easy physical mod Difficult Physical Mods Software Mods



1st Gen

Not much to plug and play.

LCD colour change
(destructive)

Install Rockbox Firmware
iPod Wizard Original Firmware
customise (advanced)



5th and 5.5th gens

Colourful *Plastic* Faceplates
Colourful Clickwheels
Colourful Middle Buttons
Colourful Backplates

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

Install Rockbox Firmware
Install iPod Linux
iPod Wizard Original Firmware customise
(advanced)
Install cracked firmware to install long lost
click wheel games (advanced)



3rd Gen

Not much to plug and play.

Sand the front for matte finish

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

LCD colour change
(destructive)

Install Rockbox Firmware
iPod Wizard Original Firmware
customise (advanced)



6th 6.5th 7th gens

Colourful *Metal* Faceplates
Colourful Backplates
Colourful Clickwheels
Colourful Middle Buttons

Add 5th gen plastic faceplate (advanced)
Add 5th gen clickwheel (destructive)
*clickwheel circuitry is not swappable,
just the plastic.

Install Rockbox Firmware



All 4th Gens (Mono and Photo)

Black faceplates
Red clickwheels
U2 Backplate

Install Rockbox Firmware
iPod Wizard Original Firmware
customise (advanced)

4th Gen mono only
LCD colour change
(destructive)



iPod Mini 1 and 2

Case swap with other minis
Sand and polish the case for chrome finish
Clickwheel plastic swap between 5th 6th 7th
and Minis (destructive) *clickwheel circuitry
is not swappable, just the plastic.
LCD colour change (destructive)

Not many custom parts, just stock
replacements

Install Rockbox Firmware
iPod Wizard Original Firmware customise
(advanced)

iPod Classic Guide v2.1 Changes

New

- Add some more differentiating details in Identifying iPods.
- Added Digigear CF Adapter in Storage Mod Recommendations.

Mistake Fixes

- Improved, less gimmicky wording in various areas.
- iPod Mini in Recommendations displayed 8GB storage for higher end model, Fixed to 6GB.
- iPod Mini 2 picture was displayed in caution, Fixed to picture a Mini 1.
- In the contents, Recommendations referred to page 5, fixed to refer to page 7.
- 6th gens stated it is possible to do a faceplate swap with 5th gen “*metal*” faceplates. Fixed to “5th gen *plastic* faceplates”.
- Storage Mod Compatibility: 3rd gen has no storage upgrade limit, and it is uncertain that 1st, 2nd, 3rd ipods work with 4th gen HDDs so this information was removed.

Liked this guide?



support
great design



exclusive
iPod themes



stuff, better.



more
coming soon!



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