

Aside from a [good pair of headphones](#), a portable Bluetooth speaker is the best way to hear music whenever and wherever you are. Not only can you stream your tunes from a [phone](#), [tablet](#) or [computer](#), but some Bluetooth speakers have built-in microphones so you can use them as a speakerphone for [calls or meetings](#).

Luckily, wireless Bluetooth speakers have improved with time, and now offer better sound, longer battery life, more reliable connectivity and increased durability, particularly when it comes to water resistance. In fact, several models are fully waterproof and a few can even float.

Prices have come down a bit too, so you're getting more for your money. True, when it comes to smaller portable Bluetooth speakers — I call them mini or micro speakers, depending on how small they are — there are some limitations to their sound; usually they can only output just so much bass and volume. But for their compact size, many models manage to exceed expectations when it comes to sound quality.

We continue to review mini Bluetooth speakers at a steady clip here at CNET, so we update this list fairly frequently. This buyer's guide offers a look at our current favorites, with a focus on small and lightweight models that are well suited for travel and still have excellent sound output. We're also highlighting the models that produce great sound for their compact size, have solid battery life and don't cost too much. If you're looking for the best portable Bluetooth speaker, read on.

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

David Carnoy/CNET

When it launched, Bose made some bold claims about its new SoundLink Flex Bluetooth speaker, particularly its bass performance. But it mostly lives up to the hype and arguably is the best-sounding wireless speaker for its relatively compact size. Available in three color options — black, white smoke and stone blue (pictured) — the speaker is IP67 dust- and waterproof, and rated for 12 hours of battery life at

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moderate volume levels.

It's also equipped with Bose's PositionIQ technology to automatically detect the speaker's orientation and deliver optimized sound based on whether upright, hanging or flat on its back. The speaker is IP67 dust- and waterproof, and rated for 12 hours of battery life at moderate volume levels. The Flex also floats and Bose says it can survive drops and bumps, with a soft silicone back and powder-coated steel grille that "won't peel or flake and is resistant to corrosion and UV light."

Bose's [SoundLink Micro](#) also delivers impressive sound for its tiny size and this speaker is bigger, weighing just over a pound (0.45 kg) and measuring 7.9 inches wide, 2.1 inches deep and 3.6 inches high (20 by 5.3 by 9.1cm), so it sounds significantly better than the Micro. For some reason, it uses the older Bluetooth 4.2 instead 5.0, but I didn't have any problems with connectivity.

Bose says it can fill a living room with sound. From my tests, I'd say it would have to be a relatively small living room — it can only output so much sound as a single speaker. However, if you pair two of them together in stereo mode, the sound gets to a whole other level and indeed fills a larger room with sound.

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David Carnoy/CNET

The JBL Bluetooth speaker that received the biggest improvements for 2021 is among the company's smallest. The JBL Go 3 has a completely new look — it's now covered in durable fabric instead of having the naked plastic design of its Go predecessors — and that new design, coupled with surprisingly decent sound for its small size, makes the Go 3 (\$50) one of the top micro Bluetooth speakers out there.

Available in multiple color options, it has an IP67 water-resistance rating, meaning it can be dunked in water and is dust-proof. Battery life is rated at up to five hours.

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

David Carnoy/CNET

Tribit's StormBox Micro is one of the best sounding pocket-sized Bluetooth speakers I've tested, with a decent bass and the loudest Bluetooth speaker in its class size. It lists for \$50, but it sometimes sells for less at Amazon.

Aside from its great design, Bose's SoundLink Micro stood out because it was able to deliver more bass than every Bluetooth speaker in its size class, and it also managed to have limited distortion at higher volumes. And it's the Tribit's bass and overall volume level for its tiny size that allows it to stand out.

It's IP67 dust-proof and water-resistant (it can be fully submerged in shallow water for a short time) and has up to eight hours of battery life at moderate volume levels with USB-C charging. Like the Bose, this portable Bluetooth speaker has an integrated strap so you can clip it to your backpack or bike's handlebars.

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

Sarah Tew/CNET

Although a little pricey, Bose SoundLink Micro sounds remarkably decent for its tiny size, delivering more bass than other pocketable speakers. It's a fully waterproof Bluetooth speaker and available in three color options, although the blue version appears to be hard to find. It's also worth noting that the price of the speaker has gone up over time. It dipped from \$109 to \$99 but now lists for \$119.

While this model is truly pocket-sized — and that’s certainly an appealing feature — the bigger but still compact SoundLink Flex sounds significantly better and is also the better value at \$149.

[Read our Bose SoundLink Micro review.](#)

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

David Carnoy/CNET

Available in white or black for \$179, the Roam is currently Sonos’ smallest and most affordable speaker (if you don’t count those \$99 Sonos-compatible Symfonisk Ikea Wi-Fi bookshelf speakers), though it’s fairly expensive for a mini wireless speaker. This model, like [Sonos’ earlier Move](#) portable speaker (\$400), is



shame because it's arguably one of the best-sounding speakers under \$110, if not the best (it sometimes costs slightly more but the black model usually is around \$105). A little larger than many mini Bluetooth speakers, it's still compact and manages to sound quite a bit fuller than much of the competition in this price range, with bigger bass, more volume and better clarity. It's also fully waterproof (IPX7 rated) and has support for the aptX streaming codec for devices like Samsung's Galaxy phones that support it.

[Read our Anker Soundcore Motion Plus review.](#)

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

David Carnoy/CNET

With its new canister-like design, perfectly sized to fit in a chair cup holder, Sony has created a portable Bluetooth speaker that has a design you’re probably familiar with from popular speakers like the UE Boom and JBL Flip, which have been upgraded over the years with improved bass and battery life.

An Extra Bass model, the SRS-XB23 definitely has a warmer sound. It delivers better sound with more bass and volume than many of the cheaper generic Bluetooth speakers you can find on Amazon in the

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\$40-\$100 range on Amazon. It's also a sleeker looking Bluetooth speaker that's available in five different color options: black, taupe, coral red, light blue and olive green. Some colors are available for less.

Equipped with two new full-range drivers and passive bass radiator, it delivers 12 hours of battery life at moderate volume levels and is waterproof, dust-proof, rust-proof and shock-proof with an IP67 rating. It has USB-C charging and can connect with up to 100 other Sony speakers using Sony's Party Connect feature.

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Sarah Tew/CNET

For its first three generations, JBL's Clip micro Bluetooth speaker had a circular design. But for the fourth-gen Clip 4, JBL has moved to a more oval shape, bulked up the speaker slightly and added USB-C charging. It does seem more durable, with a sturdier integrated carabiner "clip." Also, it sounds a little better, with more volume, clearer sound and more bass. With an IP67 water-resistance rating, it's not quite fully waterproof (the Clip 3 is), but it's now dust-proof.

One of the best wireless Bluetooth speakers for its tiny speaker size, the Clip speaker sells for \$70 but should come down in price a bit later in the year. The older Clip 3 is frequently discounted.

[Read our review of JBL Clip 4.](#)

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

Sarah Tew/CNET

The Tribit MaxSound Plus is about 30% bigger than its sibling XSound Go and costs about \$25 more, but it performs substantially better and is one of the best sounding speakers in its size and price class. It has a long-lasting rechargeable battery and superior audio quality for a Bluetooth speaker.

[Read our Tribit MaxSound Plus review.](#)

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

David Carnoy/CNET

JBL's Flip 5 (\$130) is slightly bigger than the older Flip 4, which now costs around \$100, with improved sound that features a little more bass. It has an IPX7 waterproof certification, which means this small speaker can be submerged in a meter of water for up to 30 minutes and survive. Tribit's StormBox is about \$30 less and plays louder, but I like the tonal balance of the Flip 5 better. It also offers USB-C charging.

The step-up [JBL Charge 5](#) plays louder and delivers more bass for \$180.

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

David Carnoy/CNET

Bang & Olufsen has upgraded its dome-shaped aluminum-clad A1 speaker with improved battery life, better speakerphone performance (it now has a three-microphone array) and slightly improved sound. It's not only the smallest wireless speaker from the Danish company, but also the most affordable at \$241 (you can get it in gray for \$219).

While the speaker drivers remain the same, the Qualcomm chipset that powers the speaker has been upgraded (the speaker uses Bluetooth 5.1), bumping the sound quality up a tad, particularly at higher volumes, with better digital signal processing. It remains one of the best-sounding mini Bluetooth speaker models, with richer more tonally balanced sound than other Bluetooth speakers its size — and it should sound good, considering its elevated price point.

It's also worth noting that the A1 has multipoint Bluetooth pairing so you can connect this to your PC and smartphone at the same time and easily switch back and forth between the two if a call comes in on your phone. Additionally, the speaker is Alexa-enabled, meaning you can activate Amazon's voice assistant by just saying "Alexa."

Battery life is rated at up to 18 hours at 50% volume (the earlier A1 didn't live up to its battery life claims, but this number is more accurate) and if you can afford it, you can link two A1 speakers to create a stereo pair. The speaker is waterproof with an IP67 rating that allows it to be submerged briefly in shallow water.

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David Carnoy/CNET

I've long been a fan of Sony's smallest Bluetooth speaker, which has been modestly upgraded for 2021 with some design refinements and slightly improved sound. This model is both dust- and waterproof with an IP67 certification and is rated for 16 hours of battery life at moderate volume levels (it has USB-C charging, while the older XB12 didn't). The speaker plays bigger than you'd think for its small size, with some punch to its bass, but it can only output so much sound — yes, it has its limitations. If you add a second XB13, you can get stereo sound.

The XB13 is available in multiple color options and includes a strap so you can attach it to various objects. It also has speakerphone capabilities with an integrated microphone. It lists for \$60, but should be sporadically discounted later in 2021.

[Read our Sony SRS-XB01 review.](#)

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David Carnoy/CNET

We liked Ultimate Ears' original [Wonderboom Bluetooth speaker](#), which sounded good for its compact size and was also waterproof. Now the company has released the [Wonderboom 2](#), which is a touch bigger than the original and sounds slightly better, with more bass and a special Outdoor Boost mode that boosts treble.

Like its predecessor, the fully waterproof Wonderboom 2 is a compact speaker that carries a list price of \$100 but sometimes sells for a little less. What's different is the IP67 rating that means it's dust-proof, more shock-resistant and also able to float. It also has 30% better battery life — up to 13 hours at moderate volume levels, according to Ultimate Ears — and you can link two together to create a stereo sound pairing by simply pressing a button on each speaker.

[Read our UE Wonderboom review.](#)

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Sarah Tew/CNET

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Sarah Tew/CNET

Tribit's StormBox speaker looks like a cross between a UE and a JBL speaker. We suspect that's not an accident. Fully waterproof, it costs about \$50 less than the JBL Flip 5 and produces bigger sound and has up to 20 hours of battery life. Tribit's XSound speakers are probably a better value, but the Stormbox is more stylish. It also has a rechargeable li-ion battery able to power up to 20 hours of continuous playtime.

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<http://www.cnet.com/>

Sarah Tew/CNET

1More is known for its well-priced in-ear headphones. But its first Bluetooth speaker is also quite decent. Its strength is its bass performance for a speaker this size. While this mini speaker doesn't have the clarity of the Flip 5 or UE Wonderboom, its bass has a bigger sound. It can be laid flat or hung vertically using a built-in lanyard. I preferred its sound when the speaker was facing me (not up).

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The speaker lists for \$100, but Amazon is currently selling it for \$69.

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Full disclosure: This is the only product on this list we didn't test in person. But we found much to admire in its predecessor, the [Oontz Angle Plus](#), back in 2017. This one has marginally better battery life, slightly bigger sound and is more water-resistant than the Plus, and it offers stereo pairing, too. We'll have a hands-on evaluation soon, but we're including it here based on our positive experience with the Plus and the enthusiastic 4,800-plus user reviews on Amazon, where it sells for \$35 to \$40.

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- [Best cheap true wireless earbuds: Top AirPods alternatives for \\$100 or less](#)
- [Best Sonos speakers from \\$100 and up](#)
- [Best cheap earbuds and headphones](#)
- [Best speakers for 2021: Bose, Sonos, Yamaha, Vizio and Elac](#)
- [Best soundbar for 2021](#)
- [Best wireless Bluetooth boombox for 2021](#)

Source: [Best portable mini Bluetooth speaker for 2021: JBL, Bose, Sony and more – CNET](#)