

Remembering the 10 Most Iconic Phones of All Time



In this day and age when new smartphone leaks and announcements are the order of the day, it's hard to truly appreciate any one phone model. We mostly see each new release as just a placeholder for the next big thing. This is why today we're taking time to commemorate some of the most iconic devices to ever grace our palms. Warning: you might feel a little misty-eyed by the time we're done so have some Kleenex nearby.

Nokia 3310: Twenty years ago, one of the best-selling phones ever to be manufactured made its entrance. The Nokia 3310 had a distinctive egg-like shape and was commonly available in a business-like deep gray or navy blue color. The line of speaker holes running down its face may have further served to endear this beauty to its owners. Or it could have been the twelve silver miniature eggs that served as buttons. Light and hardy in design, there was nowhere you couldn't take the 3310. And it would last as long as you could get a replacement battery (these were readily available then).

Motorola RAZR V3: Four years after the 3310, Motorola unveiled a phone that would become the phone maker's cult hero. To date, the RAZR V3 is remembered as the final frontier before buttons became tappable images on the phone screen. The flat, silver button plate was one part of a two-piece clamshell design that was popped open by a button on the side. It was slim and super-sleek for its time, and it was these features that saw it sell over 130 million units worldwide.

Few would have cared about its 5.5MB internal memory capacity, which was non-expandable. It didn't even have an inbuilt radio.

Apple iPhone 3G: This phone was the successor of the original Apple smartphone. The 3G set the pace for what would become a global craze for iPhones, with first-week sales of one million units. Late as they had arrived into the smartphone game, Apple came fully equipped. The iPhone 3G came with a memory capacity of 8GB or 16GB, GPS and TFT capacitive touchscreen technology. Used to being able to switch out their batteries, some users were, however, miffed at not being able to remove the 3G's inbuilt battery. A year later this phone's successor, the iPhone 3Gs was released and it upgraded most of the original 3G's features, including a camera that could record video.

Nokia N95: Released 13 years ago, this phone was one of the first to offer GPS on the fly and satellite navigation. In fact, you could even share your location using MMS (three years before WhatsApp was invented). It had a host of other eye-catching features for its time, including a 5MP camera complete with a Carl Zeiss zoom lens at the back. It had a 2.6" screen, which you could slide up to reveal a nicely compact keypad. You may laugh now, but back then the 2.6 inches, especially when tilted to landscape mode, were a lot. It was the place many of us started awakening to the possibility of watching a movie on the go.

T-Mobile G1: Also known as the HTC G3, this phone represents a significant landmark on the mobile telephony landscape. It was the world's first Android device, and was also at the time seen as the one true rival to the iPhone. Like the N95, the G1 came with a slide-up screen, but instead of sliding up vertically, the G1's screen slid up horizontally to reveal a QWERTY keyboard. Though it came with, what now seems like a paltry 256 MB of memory, the T-Mobile G1 featured a Micro SD slot that could house up to 16 GB of data (not too shabby by 2008 standards). The size of its screen and its resolution were cutting edge, protected by the same Gorilla glass as the iPhone.

Nokia 1100: This was yet another of Nokia's string of hit phones from the early 2000s. Ugly as it may now appear, this phone sold more than 250 million units globally. It had nothing to write home about besides the ability to make calls and send SMSes (which you would work up a good sweat banging out on the spongy keyboard). There was a built-in flashlight, a screensaver and the then ubiquitous Snake game. Its popularity was a factor of its practicality; it had very good battery life, was very rugged and very handy. It was the type of phone you wouldn't worry about walking into a construction site with.

Samsung Galaxy Note: Nine years ago at the IFA in Berlin, Samsung launched the first of what would become a popular series of smartphones, known for their stylus, otherwise known as the S Pen. You could use the S Pen to write notes on the phone's impressive 5.3-inch HD Super AMOLED display. But even then there were complaints about the Note's confused identity as a cross between a phone and a tablet (phablet). Its size and shape meant it was awkward in the hand, and tricky to fit in your jeans pocket. Media geeks who wished to play games or watch movies on the go were, however, grateful for the bigger screen.

BlackBerry Pearl 8100: This iconic creation from Canada's RIM checked quite a few boxes as the smartphone of choice in 2006, the year it was released. It was slim, light and easy to lug around, yet compromised nothing on the business functionalities BlackBerry was renowned for. The secure email and fabled QWERTY keyboard remained intact. It was one of the first BlackBerry phones to feature a camera, albeit a basic 1.3MP snapper. This may not seem a big deal now, but back then it

was a huge deviation from a brand that was all business and no play. Its display was just 2.2" but it had a clever sensor that allowed you to see images clearly even in bright light.

Sony Ericsson K750: If there was a phone that let the smartphone market know that Sony Ericsson was serious about cameras, it was the K750. This was the first phone in the market to introduce ultra focus and the fact that the lens was hidden behind a sleek cover earned it extra brownie points. Considering it first saw the light of day in 2005, it shouldn't shock you that the K700's successor had just 38MB of internal memory and a call log of just 30 entries. Neither should the fact you had to strain to read these entries from a 1.8" screen. On the other hand, it was an audiophile's dream with its capacity to play MP3 audio and MP4 video files alongside a stereo FM radio.