

## Summary

The article describes how to prepare your iPhone or iPad for iOS 26. It suggests checking device compatibility, freeing up storage space, updating apps, and backing up your device. The article also mentions that iOS 26 is set to be released on September 15th.

## Table of Contents

[1a: Will your iPhone run iOS 26?](#)

[1b: Will your iPad run iPadOS 26?](#)

[2: Make Sure You Have Sufficient Free Storage Space for the Update](#)

[3: Update Apps](#)

[4: Backup Your iPhone](#)

[5: Now You're Ready to Install iOS 26 / iPadOS 26](#)



**I**OS 26 is on the way, bringing a pretty significant software update to iPhone and iPad. With a variety of interesting new features and notable visual changes like the Liquid Glass interface appearance style, Messages group chat polling and custom backgrounds, new ringtones, Preview app, and much more, the excitement around the release is understandable.

But before you go jumping into the iOS 26 update on iPhone, or iPadOS 26 update on iPad, you'll probably want to take a little time to prepare your device for the next major system software version. Let's review some of those helpful steps to get you started.

### 1a: Will your iPhone run iOS 26?

iOS 26 has moderately strict system requirements and some iPhone models that supported the prior iOS version will not support iOS 26. Overall any newer model device is supported, but here's the [full compatible iPhone list](#) from Apple:

- All iPhone 17 models (Pro, Pro Max, base model)
- All iPhone Air models

- All iPhone 16 models (Pro, Pro Max, base model)
- All iPhone 15 models (Pro, Pro Max, Plus, base model)
- All iPhone 14 models (Pro, Pro Max, Plus, base model)
- All iPhone 13 models (Pro, Pro Max, Plus, mini, base model)
- All iPhone 12 models (Pro, Pro Max, Plus, mini, base model)
- All iPhone 11 models (Pro, Pro Max, base model)
- iPhone SE 3rd generation, and newer
- iPhone SE 2nd generation, and newer

“All Models” means quite literally all models of that iPhone year, so for example ‘all models of iPhone 16’ would include iPhone 16, iPhone 16 Pro, and iPhone 16 Pro Max, in all variations of colors and storage configurations.

### **1b: Will your iPad run iPadOS 26?**

iPadOS 26 is compatible with all modern iPad devices, but it does remove a few models from support. The [complete list of compatible iPad models](#), according to Apple, includes the following:

- iPad Pro 11” 1st gen and newer
- iPad Pro 12.9” 3rd gen and newer
- iPad Air 3rd generation and newer
- iPad 8th generation and newer, including iPad A16
- iPad Mini 5th gen and newer, including iPad Mini A17 Pro

Many of the iPadOS 26 multitasking features will look and behave best on the larger screen devices, but smaller screen models still support the release and features.

### **2: Make Sure You Have Sufficient Free Storage Space for the Update**

Many major system software updates from Apple require a fair amount of free storage space available to have room to install, and iOS 26 for iPhone and iPadOS 26 for iPad are no different. This represents a good opportunity to do a little housekeeping and get rid of old unused apps, unwanted media files, old downloaded video content, excess caches from apps that download things like podcasts or streaming shows, and more.

Open the “Settings” app on your iPhone or iPad, head to General, then to “Storage” and take a look at how much storage you have available, and if need be where you have opportunities to free up storage on your device.

### **3: Update Apps**

After you've cleaned up and deleted unnecessary apps, another great thing to do is to update all of your apps, or at least most used apps. This is because most app developers are actively optimizing apps for the iOS 26 release, and many of those are available now. This means maximum compatibility, but also there may be new features introduced, and it's good practice to update your apps anyway.

Open the "App Store" app, choose your profile picture in the corner, then scroll down to the Updates section. Choose to "Update All" or at least go through the list and update what apps you use the most.

### **4: Backup Your iPhone**

You will want to backup your iPhone or iPad before you install any system software update. This is debatably the most important step, because it preserves your data in case something goes wrong.

Also, backing up your iPhone or iPad locally to a computer will give you the option to downgrade iOS 26 back to iOS 18 if you decide you do not like the update, or if there's some issue or compatibility problem that you can't work with.

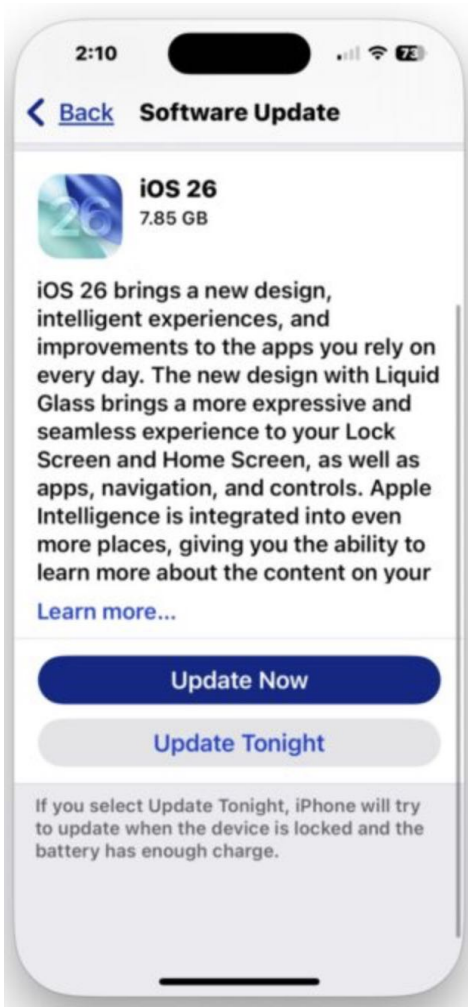
Always [back up iPhone or iPad to iCloud](#) first, and that should be part of your regular routine anyway.

For local backups, [learn how to back up iPhone/iPad to Mac with Finder](#), or [backup iPhone/iPad to Windows PC](#).

### **5: Now You're Ready to Install iOS 26 / iPadOS 26**

If you're confirmed your iPhone or iPad is compatible with iOS 26/iPadOS 26, you've cleared out some storage space, you have updated your apps, and you have backed up your iPhone and/or iPad, you're ready to go. iOS 26 is set for wide release on September 15.

Head over to the Settings app > General > Software Update, and install whenever you're ready!



## What if I've been running the iOS 26 beta?

If you have been running the iOS 26 beta versions, the RC build is already available to you, but otherwise you can update directly to iOS 26 final from the beta version. After installing the final version, you will likely want to disable future beta updates in the Software Update settings on your device.