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Samsung Galaxy S III 4G Android Phone, Blue 16GB (Sprint)

★★★★☆ (63 customer reviews)

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Product Description

Optimized for peak performance, the Android-powered Samsung Galaxy S III from Sprint offers one of the most sophisticated interactive mobile experiences to date. You'll be able to send photos, videos, and information easier and faster than ever while staying in close connection to friends and family members from wherever you are.



Delivering impressive processing power to allow more applications to be accessible simultaneously, the Galaxy S III also features a brilliant 4.8-inch display that extends to an ultra-thin bezel to maximize the viewing area. The expansive display is also protected by Gorilla Glass 2.0 to guard against cracks and scratches and provide enhanced touchscreen responsiveness.

The Galaxy S III runs the Android 4.0 operating system (a.k.a., Ice Cream Sandwich), bringing a redesigned user interface with enhanced multitasking, notifications, full Web browsing experience, and more. You'll also enjoy innovative, next-gen features such as Face Unlock, which uses facial recognition to unlock the Galaxy S III, and Near Field Communications (NFC) capabilities.

Going beyond simple point-and-shoot photography, the 8-megapixel rear camera offers a Burst Shot mode that captures still pictures at a rapid-fire pace at three images per second with zero shutter lag, and its Best Shot feature recommends the best picture to keep based on colors, lighting, and clarity. It also records Full HD 1080p video with a backside illuminated sensor that improves performance in low light environments--and you can even capture a photo while shooting video.

Other features include Wireless-N Wi-Fi connectivity with mobile hotspot capabilities (enabling you to connect up to 10 devices to your Sprint 3G/4G mobile broadband), Bluetooth 4.0 with stereo audio streaming, 16 GB internal storage, memory expansion via optional microSD cards, and up to 9.2 hours of talk time.

Note: The Galaxy S III is able to access the Sprint 4G LTE network, available in limited markets. This phone is also compatible with Sprint's nationwide 3G network.

Pay with Google Wallet

With Google Wallet, you can transform the Galaxy S III smartphone into a smart wallet using Near Field Communication (NFC) to make safe purchases at more than 100,000 participating retailers—including Bloomingdales, Toys "R" Us, CVS, Gap and Macy's.

Simple, Instant Sharing

The Galaxy S III has enhanced features that both you and your contacts will enjoy. It's designed to make sharing easy



Samsung Galaxy S III 4G At a Glance:

- 3G/4G LTE connectivity
- Android 4.0 (ICS)
- 1.5 GHz dual-core Snapdragon processor
- 4.8-inch Super AMOLED touchscreen
- 16 GB memory + microSD
- 8-MP camera, HD 1080p video capture
- GPS navigation
- Wireless-N Wi-Fi + Bluetooth 4.0
- Near Field Communications (NFC)
- Personal/corporate e-mail

Sprint 4G LTE network is available in limited markets

Intuitive, stylish, and simple to use (see larger image).



8-megapixel camera with burst mode and Full HD 1080p video capture (see larger image).

What's in the Box

Samsung Galaxy S III handset, rechargeable battery, charger, USB cable, quick start guide

and more direct so your friends and family can experience every moment with you, regardless of your location.

Connect Through Touch: With S Beam, just place two Galaxy S III phones back-to-back and you can transfer photos, videos, documents, and more. In just three minutes you can successfully share a 1 GB video file--it's fast, easy, and you don't even need a Wi-Fi or cellular signal.

Send Pictures in a Flash: Thanks to Buddy Photo Share, the Galaxy S III recognizes the faces of your friends, so it can share photos with them right away. And with Share Shot, you can send photos to all your party guests so everyone leaves with snapshots of the event.

Access Content on Multiple Devices: Through AllShare Play, you can share files with other devices and access those files on various devices, such as documents or multimedia files between your Galaxy S III phone and a tablet, PC, or television. With AllShare Group Cast on the Galaxy S III and a Wi-Fi network, you can share and collaborate on documents, presentations or images in real-time with multiple friends or co-workers without loading the file separately.

Intelligent and Intuitive Interaction

Smart enough to detect your face, voice and motions, the Galaxy S III provides a more convenient and natural way for you to interact so it fits seamlessly into your daily routine.

Let Your Eyes Control the Display: Thanks to the Smart Stay feature, the screen display will remain bright as long as you're looking at the phone. Set it down, and it dims instantly. Because the front-facing camera can identify your eyes--while reading an e-book or browsing the web, for instance--it recognizes how you are using your phone and provides a bright display accordingly.

Tell Your Phone What to Do: The S Voice feature enables the Galaxy S III to actually listen and respond to your words: tell it to wake up, snooze, take a photo, answer a call, send a text message, or play a favorite song.

Don't Miss a Message: If you've been away from your phone, the Smart Alert feature will give you a vibrating nudge to let you know about missed calls and messages.

Vital Statistics

The Samsung Galaxy S III weighs 4.7 ounces and measures 5.4 x 2.8 x 0.3 inches. Its 2100 mAh lithium-ion battery is rated at up to 9.2 hours of talk time. It runs on Sprint's 3G (800/1900 CDMA/EV-DO Rev. A frequencies). Sprint's 4G LTE network is available in limited markets.



Android Ice Cream Sandwich Operating System

The Galaxy S III runs the Android 4.0 operating system (dubbed Ice Cream Sandwich), which adds powerful new ways of communicating and sharing while improving on the best Android features: easy multitasking, rich notifications, customizable home screens, resizable widgets, and more.



Compatible with Google Wallet (view larger).

The new Ice Cream Sandwich interface features an onscreen navigation bar that replaces the hardware buttons for Back, Home, and Menu found with older Android-powered phones. And with Google+ integration, you can video chat with groups of up to 9 friends as well as easily upload and share photos and videos. Other features include:

Face Unlock

You can now unlock your phone with just your face using the Face Unlock option. It takes advantage of the front-facing camera and state-of-the-art facial recognition technology to register a face during setup and then to recognize it again when unlocking the device. Just hold your phone in front of your face to unlock (or use a backup PIN).

And the lock screen now lets you do more without unlocking. From the slide lock screen, you can jump directly to the camera for a picture or pull down the notifications window to check for messages. When listening to music, you can even manage music tracks and see album art.

Home Screen Folders

Quickly access related apps right from the home screen by organizing apps and shortcuts into folders--just drag one app onto another to create a folder.

Multitasking

Multitasking is even easier and more visual in Android 4.0. The Recent Apps button lets you jump instantly from one task to another using the list in the System Bar. The list pops up to show thumbnail images of apps used recently--tapping a thumbnail switches to the app.

Voice Input

The new voice engine in Android 4.0 lets you dictate the text you want, for as long as you want, using the language you want. You can speak continuously for a prolonged time, even pausing for intervals if needed, and dictate punctuation to create correct sentences. As the voice input engine enters text, it underlines possible dictation errors in gray. After dictating, you can tap the underlined words to quickly replace them from a list of suggestions.

Near Field Communications

A short-range wireless technology similar to Bluetooth, Near Field Communication (or NFC) allows enabled devices to share information in close proximity. For example, you can "touch" or "swipe" an NFC tag that might be embedded in a poster, sticker, or advertisement, then act on the data read from the tag.

You can also utilize NFC for contactless payment via Google Wallet. Instead of using cash or swiping a credit card, just touch your phone to an NFC payment reader and have your purchase deducted automatically. Store virtual versions of credit, loyalty and gift cards securely in Google Wallet, as well as coupons and offers that can be redeemed when you make a payment. You can make payments at hundreds thousands of locations nationwide where MasterCard PayPass is accepted.

Connectivity

- **Wireless-N Wi-Fi networking (802.11b/g)** for accessing home and corporate networks as well as hotspots while on the go.
- **Built-in mobile hotspot functionality** allows up to 10 Wi-Fi enabled devices to share the 3G or 4G experience on the go with a laptop, camera, music player, game unit, video player, or any other Wi-Fi enabled device.
- **Next-generation Bluetooth 4.0** backward compatible with older Bluetooth-enabled peripherals and includes stereo audio streaming.

Hardware

- **Dual-core 1.5 GHz processor** capable of opening web pages twice as fast as most other smartphones.
- **4.8-inch HD Super AMOLED multi-touch screen** (1280 x 720 pixels)
- **MicroUSB port**
- **3.5mm headphone jack**



- **Near Field Communication (NFC)** for sharing contacts, web pages, directions, and more to compatible phones as well as payments via Google Wallet.
- **GPS for navigation and location services**
- **Integrated Google Maps** with turn-by-turn navigation, street and satellite views.

Communications & Internet

- **Full messaging capabilities** including SMS text, MMS picture/video and IM instant messaging
- **Full HTML browser** with Adobe Flash Support
- **Personal and corporate e-mail access** with support for Exchange ActiveSync as well as mobile e-mail accounts (Google push, Yahoo!, POP3, IMAP).

Memory

- **16 GB internal memory** (non-expandable)
- **microSD card slot** with support for optional cards up to 64 GB.
- **2 GB RAM** for improved multitasking.

Camera

- **8-megapixel camera** with continuous auto focus, zero shutter lag, face detection, high dynamic range mode, burst mode, and more.
- **Full HD 1080p video capture** (30 fps)
- **Front-facing 1.9-megapixel camera** for HD video chats and self portraits.

Multimedia

- **Music player** compatible with MP3, WMA, and AAC/AAC+
- **Video player** compatible with MPEG4, H.264, H.263, WMV

Also Available for This Android Device

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Customer Reviews

Average Customer Review: ★★★★★ (63 customer reviews)

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309 out of 326 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Great Phone, but Not Perfect!** July 13, 2012

Reviewer: LoveMyToys (Long Island, NY) -

The GS3's sexy specs and glossy good looks (particularly in pebble blue) won me over. On launch day, I swapped my beloved Droid Razr Maxx, for the Samsung Galaxy S3. Prior to the Maxx, I briefly owned the Verizon version of the GNexus (which I can't recommend at all). Before I get into the nitty gritty details, with pro's, con's and comparisons, at the time of this review, this is the phone you have been waiting for--the phone that will make you use that upgrade or cause you to sign a ridiculous contract with Verizon. After spending ten minutes with the phone, it's an obvious step up from the Razr Maxx and Galaxy Nexus--the former top tier Android phones on Big Red's network.

Performance

As much as I loved my Razr Maxx (and its marathon 2-3 solid days of battery life), after spending a few minutes with the GS3, the performance leap is very noticeable. The GS3 is silky smooth, with no laginess at all. Apps (particularly heavy duty games like GTA III) launch quickly and are game play is flawless. I know many of you aren't going to play anything requiring more than the occasional fling of a few angry birds, but the GS3's ability to handle hardcore mobile games with ease is a sure fire indicator that it will be able to run 99.9% of the apps out there in two years. In other words, this phone has the chops to allow you to make it through your contract without starting a countdown for your next upgrade.

How about some real world examples of the GS3's muscle? The Qualcomm S4 chipset with an industry leading 2gb of Ram can cut through 1080p video files like butter. Surprisingly, it was able to play back a 23.5 mbps AVCHD file using hardware decoding decoding!!! I was even able to take play back the file with the video in screen, while I did a couple of google searches. The average \$400 laptop would have a tough time handling that!

The GS3 doesn't disappoint on the audio side either. While HTC touts its Beats Audio Technology, that's nothing more than a brand name equalizer setting with limited value--unless you're spend \$100 or more on a beats headphones (which I personally don't care for). Sammy, on the other hand, dropped in two Wolfson digital to analog converters, which allows the GS3 to pump out lossless high bit rate music with ease. Using a pair of Etymotic HF3 IEM earphones, sound quality was crisp and clean for music playback. Even lossy tracks streaming from Amazon Cloud sounded surprisingly full. Much more so than on some other phones that I own. In terms of music playback, the GS3 is every bit the equal of the iPhone and possibly a little better.

The Screen

The GS3's 4.8", 720p HD screen is a stunner! The Super AMOLED panel provides rich color saturation and outstanding contrast. The panel used to make the screen is beautifully fabricated, the slight curve in the design makes it a pleasure to touch. Text is crisp and I see no issue with this most recent implementation of pentile technology. The fuzziness from Galaxy S, GNexus and Fascinate is a thing of the past. Watching videos on the GS3 is a treat.

All is, however, not perfect with the GSIII's screen. While the contrast and color saturation are strong points for the phone, if you like natural color tones, the pumped up saturation levels may bother you. Personally, I would dial back the saturation level if I could. The GS2 had a settings menu that allowed users to tweak brightness, contrast, tint and saturation. For reasons I don't understand, that great feature was some how left behind on this next gen phone, which is a real pity.

While saturation is a matter of taste, the real issue with the screen though is brightness. Even cranked to 100%, the screen still seems to be a few nits behind the curve. I would love to be able to dial up to 120%. The maximum brightness is noticeably less bright than the screen on the Maxx (which Motorola sourced from Sammy). So, what gives? I am not sure, but my best guess is that in the interest of improving battery life and to compensate for the size of the screen (and the power that size screen will suck), Sammy choose to put a software restriction that limits the ability of users to pump of the brightness. Hopefully, this can be cured by a future firmware update.

While the brightness could use a boost, this deficiency is further amplified by awful auto-brightness implementation. When auto-brightness is turned on, the phone makes sudden and drastic adjustments in brightness even in a consistently well lit setting. It seems as if the software has only 3 settings for brightness when it is set to auto--low, medium and high (which isn't that high to begin with). The phone will drop from high to low suddenly, leaving the screen unreadably dark. Until Sammy sends out a software update to fix the problem, I have disabled the auto-brightness feature.

Software Implementation

The user interface for this latest version of touchwiz is really very nice. This phone provides IOS levels of comfort and ease of use to a smartphone beginner, but allows the flexibility for the nerds among us to customize the phone to suit our needs and tastes. CNET and Phonedog have done excellent video reviews on the GS3's user interface and software features and highly recommend that you check them out (Amazon won't allow links to outside sites--so you'll have to google them).

I do have a few software gripes, one of which could effect some peoples' buying decision.

One of the purported advantages of the GS3 over its top competitors from the HTC One line of phones is the fact that the GS3's has a micro SD card slot and accepts up to 64gb cards. Android allows must apps to be saved and launched from the micro SD cards. This feature allows low and mid-range phones to be made with limited internal storage because users can add their own cards.

Sammy, however, wants power users to buy the bigger capacity 32gig phones for an extra \$50. To force us to buy the step up model, Samsung disable the ability to move apps from internal storage to the micro SD card. I am not sure of the size of the app partition in the phone, but I hope Sammy didn't put too big of a restriction on internal storage or that could be a problem for some people down the road. I understand why Sammy made the decision to disable the feature, but it seems like a low rent Apple type move to me and, in fairness, the HTC One series doesn't accept SD cards at all (nor does the iPhone nor any of the current Windows 7 phones).

Another small grip I have is with Sammy's decision not to incorporate ICS's native ability to generate folders for apps simply by stacking one app icon on top of another. Motorola incorporated this feature on its ICS update to the Razr and its native to ICS, so why force us to have to press the menu screen, select create folder and then drag and drop files? Sammy, that's very Gingerbread of you. A good UI should use the strengths of the underlying Software and improve on the weakness--not just make changes for change sake. This is one of the few areas that the Sammy's "Nature" UI seems to fall short.

Battery Life

Gripes are over for now. :) The batter life on the GS3 seems pretty decent. I have had it off the charge since 8:30 this morning (its 4:47 in the afternoon), and have been using the phone heavily. Screen on time is about 2:53 minutes. I have done some light web surfing--shopped on ebay and amazon for a new case for the sammy. Send about 7 or 8 emails, 10-12 texts, and made about 80 minutes worth of phone calls. Brightness is set to around 90% (auto-brightness is disabled). I even played about 15 to 20 minutes of GTA III, and watch about 20 minutes of an episode of Lost on Netflix. It's now 6:33 in the evening and the battery says it has 62% remaining. I would still be in the mid-80's with the Razr Maxx and the GNexus would have been dead or on the charger a few hours ago.

I would say the battery is good--but it's not close to being in the same league as the Maxx. The fact that it is removable, however, does give it a major step up on phones like the HTC One (X-S), Razr (original), Sony ION, iPhone 4S and Atrix HD. In short, if you are on Verizon and don't need the Maxx's 2 full days worth of battery life, I would take the GS3 over the Razr Maxx (which is exactly what I did).

Camera

The camera on the GS3 gets top marks. It uses an updated version of the same 8MP Sony sensor used in the iPhone 4S. Unlike the iPhone 4S, there are options galore for tweaking your photos. I am really impressed with the sharpness of the phones, even in low light. Depending on the shot, the camera on the GS3 (and photo quality in general) is very comparable to photo quality on the Nokia 808 and iPhone 4S.

Video quality is on par with the photo quality. It shoots very smooth 1080p video. Color is good and the video quality is genuine HD quality for most shots. If you shooting a sporting events or other fast paced action, or are pan quickly, there is a lag in time while the camera gets in focus. In fairness, I see the same issue with the iPhone 4S and I have yet to see a smart phone camera do better. Audio quality on the camera is also quite good.

Call Quality and Reception

I have had no problems with reception at all. Unlike its GNexus stable mate, the qualcomm radio and baseband in the GS3 are top notch. I have excellent signal strength on Verizon's network. Call quality is excellent. The people I called say that I sound like I am on a landline--and they sound just as clear to me. Data on Verizon's 4G LTE Network is also strong. I located in the metro NY area. I am consistently pulling 18-24mbps download and 9-16mbps upload speeds on the 4G Network. I get strong reception for Wifi and great broadcasting for Bluetooth as well.

Comparison with Competitors

I have no regrets about trading up from the GNexus to the Razr Maxx and even less regret about trading from the Maxx to the GS3. Despite its plastic build, I think the phone does have a premium feel. It's not as solid as the Maxx, but no one is going to look at the pebble blue version of the GS3 and thinks--that thing looks cheap. It's comfortable to hold. The HTC One X has a sharper, brighter screen and a camera that is on par with the GSC's. The lack of a user removable battery is a big knock against the HTC One series however. The iPhone is, well, an iPhone. As nice as the iPhone 4S may be (and it's great phone), the lack of LTE capability and low data rates on Verizon's CDMA network make it a no go for me. On ATT, however, it can take advantage of higher HSPA+ speeds, but ATT's network has been having some issues lately. For that reason alone, if I am married to ATT or am on Sprint or Verizon for that matter, I am taking the GS3 over the iPhone 4S.

Conclusion

This is a solid phone and a no brainer if you are on the market for a phone right now and have \$200.00 in your pocket!

Was this review helpful to you? Yes No

130 out of 141 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Good phone for older people** July 7, 2012

Reviewer: Mel Doner

Got my phone the first day it came out. I upgraded to a smartphone so I was not too sure if I would be able to figure it out but this phone was not too hard. First thing is that it is so light and thin I was afraid of dropping it and was not comfortable holding it until I put a case and screen protector on it, but after I did so it was great. The case added just enough grip to make it easy to hold on to. The on/off button is placed in such a way that if you squeeze it, you end up also squeezing the volume button on the other side, so I ended up pushing it while holding in one hand with the other hand, not always convenient. The big screen is wonderful (I upgraded just for this, as I am older with bad eyesight) and everything is large enough that it can be seen without reading glasses for those of us with poor eyesite. All the most frequently used items are right there when you start and you can customize all your screens if that need be. Making and answering calls is extremely easy and the dialing screen has large buttons and easy to access controls. Also the buttons are labeled with what they are, such as end call for those of of who get confused by icons so we don't end up hanging up when trying to push speakerphone. Same for texting. The speaker is clear and loud enough so that if your hearing is starting to go you can still understand people. If you are in the car you can easily bring up the voice assist with just a quick tap and instruct the phone what to do, either make a call or to send a text (in this case you would dictate the message). Appointments and reminders can be made the same way. I love that on the very front it has voice assist search for google, something I use all the time (locating a type of store, reviews of products, etc). Apps are easy to download and very quick. This phone with 4G service is as quick and responsive when accessing the internet as my home computer. I am a news junkie and I am able to see all the websites I would normally visit and easily read them without feeling like I cannot see what I would normally be able to see. The large screen means limited scrolling and easy viewing. I did not try the navigation apps included but downloaded one called Waze which works better than my onstar navigation included in my car. This phone has easy access to WiFi so if you want to conserve your data usage it is easy enough to use that instead. The notification bar is informative but the phone also has a small light that flashes so that when your screen is not on you can see that there is something that needs your attention. Battery usage is okay, I would make sure that you charge it every evening if you are a heavy internet access person. It takes a couple of hours or so to fully charge directly from an outlet, longer if charging from usb port. Taking pictures and video is a snap and the quality is wonderful. There are a lot of other features that I have not had a need for (such as sharing files). Overall I am very pleased with this phone.

Was this review helpful to you? Yes No

204 out of 237 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **excellent phone fastest** July 7, 2012

Reviewer: wilson

well guys dont listen to the hater applefanboy below i mean seriously why are you comparing to and iphone crap all you did was talk about siri plz next time talk about the phone not one feature

Pros

State-of-the-art everything. Advanced call-quality features.

Cons

Plasticky body. Really, this lack of clarity on Sprint's LTE rollout is getting ridiculous.

Bottom Line

The Samsung Galaxy S III is a top-of-the-line Android smartphone just waiting for Sprint to turn on its new LTE network.

The new flagship smartphone from the world's number-one mobile phone company, Samsung's Galaxy S III (\$199.99 with contract) is literally a huge achievement. If you love big phones with lots of options, the GS3 will deliver state-of-the-art performance with bonus sharing and media features that you're likely to continue discovering a year from now. Sprint subscribers now have two solid choices: The Galaxy S III ties with the HTC EVO 4G LTE (\$199, 4 stars) as our Editors' Choice for touch-screen smartphones on Sprint.

Editors' Note: The Samsung Galaxy S III models on all four major carriers are extremely similar, so we're sharing a lot of material between our various reviews. That said, we're testing each device separately, so read the review for your carrier of choice.

Physical Design

All of the new Galaxy S III models look the same, except for the carrier logo on the back panel. Each is available in dark blue or white (AT&T also has a red option coming this summer), and they're some of the biggest phones we've ever handled. At 5.4 by 2.8 by 0.34 inches (HWD) and 4.7 ounces, the GS3 is slightly bigger than the already-large HTC One X (\$199, 4.5 stars), although it's still noticeably smaller and lighter than the Samsung Galaxy Note phone/tablet hybrid (\$299, 3 stars). That said, this is not a phone for folks with small hands.

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More

I'm not a fan of the huge phone. But I've given up on panning them because every time I suggest these handsets are too big, I get pummeled by comments from people who adore them. Huge phones are the thing. I accept it.

The all-plastic body feels a little less high-end than the exotic materials of the HTC One series, but the phone is solidly built, and light despite its size. The front of the phone is dominated by the 4.8-inch, 1280-by-720-pixel Super AMOLED HD screen. Yes, it's PenTile, which can sometimes look slightly pixelated. But, no, you probably won't notice. Below the screen, there's a physical Home button, as well as light-up Back and Multitasking buttons that start out invisible, so you have to memorize where they are or change a setting to keep them illuminated. The 8-megapixel camera is on the back panel, which, thanks to its reflective finish, doubles as a pocket mirror.

The default Automatic Brightness setting makes the screen too dim. Kill it and pump up the brightness and it's fine, even outdoors. It's not as bright as the One X's Super LCD 2 display, but it's fine.

Unlike the competing HTC One X, the S III has a removable 2100mAh battery. Taking off the back cover also reveals the microSD card slot, which supports cards up to 64GB.

loading...

Call Quality and Internet

Are you willing for Sprint to pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today? The EVO 4G LTE promises spectacular call quality with HD Voice...sometime in 2013, once Sprint gets the network running. But the GS3 lets you tweak your call quality now.

Default call quality is good. Volume is on the high end of average, with no distortion from loud inputs. The speakerphone isn't quite loud enough to use outdoors, but it's fine for the car or a boardroom. The microphone does a good job of cancelling background noise. Bluetooth headsets work fine with Samsung's S-Voice voice dialing system.

But as with so many things here, call quality gets richer if you burrow down into the GS3's menus. A Volume Boost button throws the phone into a super-loud, quasi-speakerphone mode for noisy areas, but that's just the start. Deep within the settings, there's an option to set custom call EQ. The phone plays you a sequence of quiet high and low tones and you tell it which ones you can hear, and then it EQ's calls accordingly. This is pretty radical stuff. I prefer my calls sharp, with more high-end, and the GS3 delivers.

On data though, the Sprint GS3 is crippled. All new Sprint phones are. Although the phones support speedy LTE, Sprint has steadfastly refused to give us a rollout timetable for its new LTE network, leaving its high-end smartphones on the slowest 3G network in America. We tested Sprint LTE, and it's competitive with AT&T and Verizon, but none of this matters a whit if Sprint won't tell us when anyone is getting it.

This is why Sprint's Galaxy S III is getting a slightly lower rating than the other major carrier models. Sprint needs to get its act together. We will not give a Sprint phone a 4.5-star rating until the carrier gives its subscribers more information about LTE coverage.

You'll have better luck getting your Internet via Wi-Fi on both the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands. Bluetooth 4.0 and NFC are also onboard, and Google Wallet is preloaded.

Our battery test didn't complete because we ran out of time. But that's good; we just about ran down the battery with an 8 hour, 35 minute call. This phone has solid battery life, and considering the battery is removable, you can carry a spare. That's something you can't do with the EVO 4G LTE.

Software and Performance

The Galaxy S III runs Android 4.0 "Ice Cream Sandwich" with a whole lot of exclusive Samsung extensions. Performance was excellent in my tests. The Qualcomm S4 chip running at 1.5GHz is the fastest one we've seen in smartphones so far, and it's able to take on any app challenge you throw at it, including games on the HD screen. Our benchmark tests proved this, although they were within the margin of error when compared with the One X. Both phones are very fast.

Exclusive new features include S-Beam, the ability to transfer files by tapping two phones together and using a combination of NFC and Wi-Fi Direct; S-Voice, Samsung's answer to Apple's Siri; TecTiles, NFC-enabled accessory tags that can change the settings on your phone, and lots of sharing and tagging options in the camera, such as the ability to automatically tag your friends' faces, and the ability for multiple GS3s within a few feet of each other to automatically share all of their photos.

Many of these features work well, but they're almost all buried. The interface is something of a scavenger hunt. Take Smart Stay, a neat new feature which detects your face and keeps the screen from going black while you're looking at it. I love it! But it's not on by default, and the only way to turn it on is by going to the Display area under Settings. S-Beam is similarly buried, under the Wireless menu.

Samsung helpfully pops up various screens telling you about various cool gestures you can use, like raising the phone to your face to automatically call someone you're texting. But it's a lot of information to absorb, and a lot of gestures that you've never used before. There's a sharp learning curve here.

Compare this with HTC, which has been working to reduce unique UI elements. HTC's recent Sense 4 interface focuses on a few new features and makes them integral: enhanced sound, a faster camera, and solid social networking integration. Samsung offers a lot more, but it costs you a lot more mental energy to figure it all out.

I'll also call out two minor disappointments. The screen rotated unexpectedly more often than I'd like. Also, S-Voice isn't as seamless or as complete as Siri. It's a fine voice-dialing system, including over Bluetooth, but I kept vocally stepping on its prompts when trying to ask it more complicated queries.

Beyond that, there's the usual raft of bloatware from both Samsung and Sprint: I count 17 pre-installed apps, some of which (Samsung's Music Hub store) didn't actually launch, and some of which (Samsung Apps and the S-Suggest app) are frustratingly redundant. Beyond that, there's the 400,000-plus apps in the Google Play Store.

Multimedia

The 16GB Galaxy S III we tested had 12GB of available memory plus support for microSD cards up to 64GB, which fit under the plastic back panel. There's also a 32GB model for \$249.99 with contract, but given the phone's microSD support, I don't see the point of buying the more-expensive model. It plays all the usual music and video formats, including MP3, AAC, WMA, OGG, MPEG-4, H.264, DivX, Xvid, and WMV at resolutions up to 1080p.

Samsung has customized both the music and video players. They aren't as good-looking as HTC's, but they're functional. Along with the typical music navigation, there's a frill called Music Square, which grades all of your music on a 2D scale from "calm" to "exciting" and "passionate" to "joyful," creating custom playlists by mood. There's also an epic number of EQ presets, which change the sound in effective, if gimmicky ways.

The picture/video gallery integrates Google and Facebook albums, and lets you sort your videos as a list or with thumbnails. The flagship feature here is Pop-Up Play, which can float a video playback window over other apps; I found it to be fairly useless. Netflix and YouTube both look good and run on LTE without any visible buffering. The phone also comes with Samsung's Media Hub music and video store, which has a solid lineup of recent movies and TV shows at industry-standard prices of \$4 to rent and \$15-\$20 to buy.

If you want to play your video on a big HDTV, you need to use Samsung's AllShare system, which like most other wireless video systems rarely works because your home network doesn't have the bandwidth, or a new-style 11-pin MHL adapter. Our old MHL adapters didn't work.

The 8-megapixel camera takes good-looking, saturated photos that are sharp with little noise, at least in decent light. In our low-light test, the shutter speed dropped to 1/40 second, which will cause some softness if you don't have a steady hand. That's still better than many cameraphones. The 1-megapixel front camera also showed solid low-light performance. The video mode captures 1080p videos at 30 frames per second indoors and out with the main camera, which is more than we could say for the HTC One X.

You get tons of gimmicky camera modes. HDR is considerably slower than on either the iPhone 4S (\$199, 4.5 stars) or the HTC One X, and showed a tendency to create "ghost" images when I tried it. Smile detection worked well, and Share Shot lets you automatically stream photos to other GS3s in the area. Buddy Photo-Share tags faces with names based on the images in their social-networking profiles. Those last two are buried in the camera settings and while cool, you're not likely to stumble upon them easily.

Conclusions

The Samsung Galaxy S III and HTC EVO 4G LTE are both state-of-the-art phones. In our scoring system, they tie, each with unique features. The Galaxy has a removable battery, better video recording quality, and no hiss in quiet audio output. The EVO 4G LTE is made from higher-quality materials, has a brighter screen, a kickstand, a physical Camera button, better home-screen widgets, and HD Voice in the future. You can't go wrong with either.

If these phones are just too big for you, go for the LG Viper 4G LTE (\$99, 4 stars) packs dual-core power and the LTE future into a much smaller body. And if your upgrade isn't urgent, you may want to consider hanging on to that old WiMAX phone for a while, at least until you can find out when Sprint LTE is coming to your city.

Was this review helpful to you?

45 out of 49 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Great Phone with Some Drawbacks** July 16, 2012

Reviewer: C. Rose

The look and feel of the phone is like none other. It is thin, light, and really really powerful.

Software:

It has some really advanced features such as automatic face tagging, turn over to pause, and more but I find that I really don't use those features as much as I thought I would especially since they are they aren't fully mature (ex: I have tagged my wife's face at least 3 different time and it still doesn't work). As a result, I don't use the "cutting edge" features as much as I thought I would. However, the phone excels with the day to day features that even gives my tablet trouble (my tablet Asus Transformer reboots almost 2 times/day. My cellphone, none :-)).

Reception:

My wife has an Evo 3D, we have also owned an LG Optimus, and Blackberry's have all have had 5 bars reception whereas my Galaxy S3 only gets 1-3 bars, mostly 2.

Conclusion:

Overall, I really like the phone despite the reception issues. I have never owned an Android phone in which I got to truly experience a seamless Android experience before I had the Galaxy S3. Might I also mention that this is the best looking phone in the market and it feels great to hold.

Was this review helpful to you?

103 out of 120 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Nice Size Screen, Snappy ICS 4.0, Great Phone - US Version** July 15, 2012

Reviewer: electronicnut

The US version of the phone differs as it has a Qualcomm Snapdragon S4 Processor with 1.5 GHz Dual-Core CPUs, while the the rest of the hardware specs are the same as the international version.

I switched from an HTC EVO 4G to get this phone and so far it's been great! Here are the things I like about the phone:

- * The phone is a nice size, it's lighter than my HTC EVO 4G.
- * The processor is one of the fastest US released Android phone, and it comes with 2 GB of RAM.
- * I played around with the camera and video camera and the quality is great in my opinion. (I'll post some pics or a video later.)
- * The ICS 4.0 is really snappy and it opens up applications quickly.
- * It comes with Google Wallet. I signed up and got a free \$10 to use. (I'm going to McDonald's to test it out!)
- * I've only use the S Voice application a few times, but it seems to be just like Siri on my wife's iPhone 4S.
- * It comes with a micro SD slot in case more space is needed to save pictures, videos, etc.
- * You can change out the battery if needed.
- * Battery life last twice as long compared to my HTC EVO 4G.

Now for some cons:

- * This is carrier related and not the phone itself, but there is no 4G LTE on the Sprint Network. Other networks such as AT&T and Verizon should be better, but I'm stuck with 3G speeds for now.
- * The phone is so nice, that I baby it all the time!

I was on the fence about getting this phone or the HTC EVO 4G LTE aka HTC One X. The main things that I like over the the Samsung Galaxy 3 over the HTC EVO 4G LTE is that it comes with the Micro SD slot and also the battery can be changed if it ever goes bad.

I love this phone! :)

Was this review helpful to you?

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