Know Your Good Deals This Year. Let's Tag Them Together. Which one is the best, authentic, with a reliable review, and the best price? Which one is the most trusted? Which one is the most sustainable? Which one is the most ethical? Which one is the most inclusive? Which one is the most accessible? Which one is the most affordable

BESTBUY

Beats by Dr. Dre - Solo Pro Matte Red

$179 ~~$299~~ SAVE $120 (40%)

BUY FROM BESTBUY

For headphones that both stand out and conform to gorgeous aesthetic trappings, the Beats by Dre Solo Pro headphones are an excellent option. Clean lines and attractive styling make these some of the best looking AirPods Max alternatives. They offer a more affordable on-ear option and take advantage of being under the Apple umbrella to great effect.

If you like the Beats sound, then the Beats Solo Pro are a must-listen, as they're some of the best sounding Beats headphones ever, also adding intuitive button controls for switching between different audio modes at a touch. Support for Apple's Siri voice assistant lets you go hands-free if you prefer too. With the supported AAC Bluetooth codec working best on iPads and iPhones, Apple users have even more reason to opt for this particular pair of Beats headphones.

Taking the bass-heavy Beats sound and adding solid noise cancellation to the mix, the Solo Pro headphones might not be as capable as the absolute best AirPods Max alternatives, but for comparably affordable headphones that can also benefit from the H1 chip found in those high-end Apple headphones, the Beats Pro are an exciting option.

Should you just buy the AirPods Max?

Although the best AirPods Max alternatives are all excellent noise cancelling headphones, should you just buy the *real thing* if you can afford it? At $550, the AirPods Max are exceedingly expensive, often twice as much as the nearest competition. While anyone with a budget would probably do best to look elsewhere, if you're an Apple user who wants the best headphones you can buy to use on your iPhone, iPad or Apple TV, then the AirPods Max are something quite special.

They not only offer the best noise canceling of Apple's AirPods range, but the audio is excellent, and they automatically pair with all devices connected to your iCloud account. Movie watchers can also take advantage of the AirPods Max's Spatial Audio feature, which uses dynamic head tracking to improve 5.1, 7.1, and Dolby Atmos surround sound for a more immersive audio experience.

While there are a number of reasons you might not want to be too loyal to any one brand, those who enjoy Apple's wide range of gadgets and electronics will get the absolute best experience with an AirPods Max purchase.

Just how good is active noise cancellation?

Active noise canceling goes way beyond just packing extra thick foam into the earcups. It works by using an array of microphones to pick up low-frequency noise and neutralizes it by playing a sound tuned to counter the environment, effectively making it hard for external sound to leak in. That means that you can be sat in a crowded coffee shop, next to a plane engine or right by a busy road, and a good pair of noise cancelling headphones will all but eliminate that external noise.

This can be great for listening to podcasts, audiobooks, or music that you don't want interrupted by unwanted environmental noise. It's also especially useful for finding peace and quiet when stuck at home, which is something everyone can appreciate now more than ever.

What other features should you look for in noise cancelling headphones?

Beyond their noise canceling abilities, a good pair of headphones should offer good sound quality no matter what you're listening to. While some headphones are better tuned to certain types of music or audio—and it's hard to tell just how good some are before listening yourself—you can usually tell higher quality headphones from weaker ones by the size of their drivers. Bigger is almost always better.

Comfort is also supremely important. High quality foam padding in the earcups and a thick headband or ski-goggle style elastic can go a long way to making headphones comfortable to wear over long periods.

If you're buying wireless headphones, battery life and charging speed are worth considering. Some headphones use swappable batteries to minimize the time you need to spend married to a wall outlet, though they don't tend to have the best battery life. The best AirPods Max alternatives offer between 20 and 30 hours on a single charge, with Apple headphones coming in right around the beginning of that range.

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Jon Martindale

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