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Best upcoming folding phones 2021: Top flexible phones to look forward to

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7-9 minutes

(Pocket-lint) - Folding phones burst on to the scene in 2019, making the phone industry much more interesting, having faced years of stagnation and same-y looking glass rectangles. It was a chance to show off designs, be more adventurous and do something different. And the best part about it: not one company launched a product exactly like any other.

From an early start with Samsung and Huawei, many more manufacturers are now joining the fray, bringing a lot more diversity to this segment of the market.

While the cost may still be prohibitive for a lot of people, these are the devices to look forward to in the near future.

What future folding phones are coming?

- Folding Google Pixel
- Xiaomi flip phone
- Samsung Galaxy Fold E
- Oppo folding phone
- Honor foldable
- Oppo X concept
- LG Rollable concept
- TCL Folding phone
- TCL rollable phone
- Apple

Google first expressed an interest in a folding Pixel device in 2019. In 2020 there was a leak revealing a Passport codename, identified as a folding phone and targeted at a Q4 2021 reveal. In the run up to the Pixel 6 launch event, more rumours surfaced suggesting Google was about to launch its own bendy phone.

Android has been increasing support for larger and folding devices, while Google is reported to have ordered a 7.6-inch flexible AMOLED panel from Samsung Display. It's far from certain, but it at least shows the foundations of what might be a [folding Pixel](#) in the future.

Xiaomi has been a part of the flexible phone conversation practically since the beginning and showed off more than one prototype. From tri-fold devices to phones with screens that wrap around the entire body. But when it came to launching a phone, it went down the tried and tested route paved by Samsung.

Its first phone - the Mi Mix Fold - has a tablet-sized screen internally that folds shut like a book, with a smaller screen on the outside. But it has also been linked with various other folding phone options.

One of those rumours mentions a [clamshell device](#) suggesting we could see a flip phone from the popular Chinese manufacturer.

Samsung Display is rumoured to be supplying the panel for it, but other details are thin on the ground, but sources in Korea continue to suggest a 2021 launch for a folding device from Xiaomi.

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Samsung Galaxy Fold E

Rumours of a cheaper folding phone have been circulating for some time, right back into early 2020. At the time, a folding phone with a smaller external display and lower grade hardware was suggested, the

idea being to get folding devices at a more affordable price to help adoption. The trail on this device has grown a little cold now, but having launched the Z Flip 3 at a much more accessible price point than previous efforts, maybe we don't need it anymore?

- [Samsung Galaxy Z Fold E/Lite: What's the story so far?](#)

Oppo



Oppo folding phone

Oppo has shown off a number of folding phones, including an [out-folding device in 2019](#), but it's now thought that Oppo will be bringing a clamshell device to market in 2021. Not a lot has been said about this phone, except that it will use a Samsung Display panel that measures 7.7-inches - which is large for this type of device. Not a lot to go on here, but the company is obviously keen to enter this segment of the market.

Honor



Honor

Now that Honor has separated from Huawei, it potentially has more freedom to do whatever it likes. That might include a folding phone.

Over the past couple of years there has been evidence to suggest Honor is working on something. But exactly what that is, isn't certain. Rumours state that it's got an 8-inch internal display and a secondary 6.5-inch screen. That would suggest something like Huawei's Mate X2 is in the works. Little else has been said, however, so it remains to be seen if the plan to launch remains.

Oppo



Oppo X concept

While not strictly a folding phone, Oppo has shown off the Oppo X, a phone with a rollable display, so that it can expand. This was first showcased at Inno Day in November 2020, before being highlighted again at MWC Shanghai in 2021. It allows a 6.7-inch device to expand to 7.4 inches.

LG



LG Rollable displays

While LG has shut down its mobile division, we can still expect the company to be involved in the foldables game through making displays.

One device that showed its technology was the concept LG Rollable [revealed at CES 2021](#). It takes advantage of flexible display technology, something that LG has been showing off in its TVs for some time. Here a 6.8-inch display becomes a 7.14-inch display.

It also plans to launch a display tech called the 'Folding Window', which is harder and more durable than existing foldable screens and won't show the same obvious crease. We probably won't see it on an LG-branded phone, but it could well be used on other manufacturers' devices.

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TCL flip phone

TCL has shown a number of concepts, with the [Dragonhinge](#) getting plenty of attention in 2019 when it was first revealed. It was supposed to be a statement of intent and many expected TCL to follow up with some sort of folding phone, but 2 years later, we're still waiting.

It did come close to launching a flip phone code-named "Chicago" in 2021, but it announced that it wasn't to be. Samsung's competitive approach to the Z Flip 3's pricing likely forced the move. The project was suspended indefinitely, but the manufacturer still claims it plans to launch a phone in the foldables space.



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TCL rollable phone

A year on from showing off the Dragonhinge, TCL demoed the a [rollable phone concept](#). Showcased in 2020, it proposed the same sort of thing we're seeing from LG and Oppo. Again, little has come from the concept and while it looks pretty, there doesn't seem to be much movement pushing these devices forward.

www.foldable.news / concept by Roy Gilsing Design



Apple concept

Apple, of course, wouldn't let anything slip about a folding phone and it wouldn't bring it to market until the hardware was tried and tested, so we'd expect it to be a good few years before anything happens. However, in 2019, during the height of folding phone prototypes, [Bloomberg reported](#) that Apple was interested in what folding devices could offer. In 2020 we heard [supply chain reports](#) that hinted at a 2022 folding iPhone, although we still feels that's a little too soon for Apple to make such a big move.

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