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Samsung galaxy tab a 8 inch keyboard

After staying away from the tablet market for almost a year, Samsung introduced a new budget-friendly tablet series back in March. First launched in Russia, the Galaxy Tab A series has now made its way to other markets around the world, including the US. The two tablets that are currently a part of the series offer everything that you may love about the Samsung experience, and at an affordable price point. As is true in the Android world though, the competition in this space is quite intense, with some really good options out there. So are these devices worth it? We find out in this full review of the Samsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0 and Galaxy Tab A 9.7! Design On the design front, both tablets feature an all-plastic build, with a matte-finish back and a silver display frame. The plastic certainly feels cheap when talking about the overall feel, but at least it makes for a back that isn't prone to fingerprints. There are parting lines to be found on the sides and the corners of both tablets as well. While that doesn't necessarily impact the usage negatively, it is a testament to the somewhat disappointing build quality of these devices.Read more: Best cheap Android tablets (June 2015)Signature Samsung design elements make a return this time around as well, with the physical home button up front, flanked by capacitive back and recent apps keys, found below the display. There is no backlighting with these capacitive keys though. Moving around the device, the power button and volume rocker are found on the right side, the microSD card slot is placed on the left, and the microUSB port and headphone jack are both at the bottom. The speakers are also found on the bottom, with the larger Galaxy Tab A 9.7 featuring a dual stereo speaker setup, compared to the single speaker of its smaller sibling. On the back of both are the camera and two smart cover connectors that can be used with the Samsung Smart Cover and a handful of third-party cases.Both the Galaxy Tab A 8.0 and Galaxy Tab A 9.7 are thin and somewhat light, with a thickness and weight of 7.4 mm and 313 grams for the former, and 7.5 mm and 450 grams in the case of the latter. With the exception of an extra speaker, a slightly less protruding camera on the larger device, and of course, the overall size, both tablets share a similar aesthetic. It also worth mentioning that both of these devices come with a display with a 4:3 aspect ratio, and as a result, are slightly wider than what you'd expect to see on any other Android tablet. Display Both the Galaxy Tab A 8.0 and the Galaxy Tab A 9.7 feature TFT touchscreens with the identical resolution of 1024 x 768, resulting in unfortunately low pixel densities of 160 ppi and 132 ppi respectively. This low resolution is certainly disappointing, as it would be something you'd expect with a tablet that is far cheaper than the price for what these tablets are being sold.With that said, despite the noticeable lack of sharpness, both panels do offer vibrant colors and excellent viewing angles. Sunlight readability could be slightly improved, but the displays are definitely bright enough for standard indoor use. Also noticeable is a thin black border around each display that adds to the bezel of the device. This is a lot more evident on the white model, which could be an annoyance to some people. Performance and hardware Under the hood, both tablets pack the quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 410 processor clocked at 1.2 GHz, and backed by the Adreno 306 GPU and 1.5 GB of RAM. This is quite the capable processing package, but things tend to feel a little slower than they should at times. The benchmark scores disappoint as well, and just like with the displays, this isn't what you'd expect nor want with a device priced as high as these. The extra .5GB of RAM is pretty noticeable compared to devices with only 1GB, but unfortunately not by much. On the other hand, these tablets do handle gaming well, and while there is the occasional dropped frame, things remain smooth for the most part. Both tablets come with 16 GB of on-board storage, further expandable via microSD by up to 128 GB. Apart from the standard suite of connectivity options, a 4G LTE-capable version is also coming soon, which will also see the on-board storage and RAM bumped up to 32 GB and 2 GB respectively.The speakers on the Galaxy Tab A devices get reasonably loud, and sound pretty good overall. It is easy to block them when using the device in landscape orientation, though, which is an issue with pretty much all devices with side-firing audio. The larger 9.7-inch model has a slight advantage in this area with its dual stereo speakers, but the audio quality remains about the same when it comes to real world usage. One highlight when it comes to the Galaxy Tab A 8.0 and Galaxy Tab A 9.7 is the battery life, with the devices packing large 4,200 mAh and 6,000 mAh batteries respectively. Using each tablet with Wi-Fi enabled and the screen brightness set at 75% allowed for both devices to last just over 14 hours, with an impressive 7 hours of screen-on time in the case of the 8-inch model, and 8 hours of screen-on time with the 9.7-inch model. The power saving modes Samsung offers with its devices are also available here. Camera Both devices come with 5 MP rear camera and a 2 MP front-facing unit. The rear camera allows for decent looking shots and will do in a pinch, but is certainly not capable enough to replace your primary mobile photography device. As far as the camera application is concerned, it isn't as packed with features as is found with Samsung smartphones, but there are a few different modes, effects, and filters available that might help make up for the poor quality photos. Software As far as the software is concerned, both devices come with Android 5.0.2 Lollipop with Samsung's TouchWiz UI on top. These tablets also bring with them quite a few incentives on the software side, including the availability of six Microsoft applications pre-installed, along with the option to claim 100 GB of free cloud storage for 2 years with the use of Microsoft OneDrive. In addition, you also get a 3-month subscription to Next Issue, one free Kindle e-book every month for a year, three free audio books from Audible, and three months of access to SIRIUSXM radio for new users. When it comes to the user interface, some of the positives include quicker and easier access to the Quick Toggles menu, along with the ability to edit these toggles, a split view of the Settings menu, a "close all apps" button, and multi-window, which proves to be really useful on devices with large displays. What gets confusing is the number of duplicate apps you'll see, such as two web browsers, two note-taking apps, two email apps, three music apps, and even two app stores. The launcher's non-alphabetical organization method can also take some getting used to, and the default keyboard is mediocre at best. Of course, you always have the option of third-party launchers and keyboards to remedy these downfalls.You might like: Best Galaxy Tab A 8.0 cases Specifications Samsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0Samsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7DisplaySamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: 8-inch TFT display1024 x 768 resolution, 160 ppiSamsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: 9.7-inch TFT display1024 x 768 resolution, 132 ppiProcessorSamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: 1.2 GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 410Adreno 306 GPUSamsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: 1.2 GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 410Adreno 306 GPURAMSamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: 1.5 GB Samsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: 1.5 GBStorageSamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: 16 GBExpandable up to 128 GBSamsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: 16 GBExpandable up to 128 GBCameraSamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: 5 MP rear camera2 MP front-facing cameraSamsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: 5 MP rear camera2 MP front-facing cameraConnectivitySamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/nBluetooth 4.0GPS + GLONASSmicroUSB 2.0Samsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/nBluetooth 4.0GPS + GLONASSmicroUSB 2.0SoftwareSamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: Android 5.0.2 LollipopBatterySamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: 4,200 mAhSamsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: 6,000 mAhDimensionsSamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: 208.3 x 137.9 x 7.4 mm313 gramsSamsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: 242.5 x 166.8 x 7.5 mm450 gramsColorsSamsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0: white, smoky titanium, smoky blueSamsung Galaxy Tab A 9.7: white, smoky titanium, smoky blueGallery Pricing and final thoughts The Samsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0 is available for \$229, and the larger Galaxy Tab A 9.7 also features a heftier price tag of \$299, but is currently on Amazon with a price tag of \$266.77. Further, an S-Pen can also be picked up with the 9.7-inch model for an additional \$50, but keep in mind that the device itself doesn't have a slot to house the stylus. Available color options for both tablets include White, Smoky Titanium, and Smoky Blue.So there you have it, a close look at the Samsung Galaxy Tab A 8.0 and Galaxy Tab A 9.7! Both of these tablets bring a lot of positives to the table, including good quality audio, fantastic battery life, and a few useful Samsung-exclusive software features. With that said, the low resolution display and slower performance make it hard to justify the price tag, especially with regards to the larger 9.7-inch version. There are some really good tablets that offer similar specs and features to these tablets, but are also cheaper. That turns out to be the biggest issue with the latest Samsung tablets, unless you're absolutely sold on the Samsung experience. If you think there isn't much more to say about Samsung's Galaxy line of tablets, you're probably right. Since the Galaxy Tab 10.1 launched this past summer, it has been dissected and discussed a million times over. We love the screen, we love the thinness, and we almost love TouchWiz. And these feelings translate to the younger brother in the Galaxy Tab line, the 8.9. So instead of bending your ear about things we've already said, let me take a different perspective. We know what the Galaxy line has to offer, but what does the 8.9-inch form factor do to push the line even further? And most important, what can consumers get from the more compact size that they simply cannot with the 10.1? The screen is tremendous, the performance is outstanding, and the 8.9-inch footprint is the standard all tablets should live up to. I wish Samsung could have squeezed a microSD slot in there. Also, the \$469 base pricing is a bit high. This is the Galaxy Tab we have all been waiting for. If you can stomach the price, and don't mind limited storage space, you cannot find a more refined, powerful, and beautiful Android tablet on the market today. Just as the 10.1 impressed me with its sturdy-as-nails build, the 8.9 is a beautifully made device. It's a hair thinner than the 10.1; at 8.6 millimeters thick, it's technically the thinnest tablet on the market today. That'll change over time, drastically we're sure, but if you're into extremes, the 8.9 is as extreme as you'll get today. It's also noticeably thinner than the 10.1. I don't have a scale around to weigh the two devices, but the 8.9's smaller footprint does indeed include its weight. And about that smaller footprint: I'm in love. As someone who forked over \$500 for my Galaxy Tab 10.1, I'm kicking myself right about now. The 1.4-inch difference, while miniscule on paper, makes a world of difference. If you've handled a 10.1 and thought it was just a bit too big, you'll feel right at home with the 8.9. You'll be able to hold it in one hand without fatigue, and in both hands, you'll be able to type with your thumbs. Samsung clearly put a lot of thought into these different size points, and I for one am grateful. Take note, heavy readers: the 8.9-inch display is ideal for e-reading. You will not be disappointed. Though the 10.1 and 8.9 share the same screen resolution (1200 x 800), the smaller screen reigns supreme, as its size lends itself to a sizeable bump in pixel density. And don't think you won't notice it. Compared side by side, the 8.9 looks noticeably brighter, sharper, and more colorful than its bigger brother. This isn't to say that the 10.1 doesn't have a gorgeous display, but the 8.9 is certainly more beautiful. And that's really saying something. Size differences aside, the only other discrepancy you'll notice hardware-wise is the speaker placement. On the 8.9, the speakers are located on the bottom of the tablet, beside the charging port. Compared with the 10.1's speaker placement on the left and right side, I didn't notice any difference in sound quality. Both produce loud, clear volume, though remember, they are tablet speakers, and sounds as such. You won't be replacing your stereo speakers anytime soon. Software The Galaxy Tab 8.9 ships with Android 3.1 out of the box, running beneath Samsung's TouchWiz optimized for the Galaxy line of tablets. I've really grown to love TouchWiz on the Galaxy Tabs, as I think it's a huge improvement over stock Honeycomb. Aside from the aesthetic improvements, things seem much more user friendly. The row of "quick apps" at the bottom of the screen work flawlessly, though I wish they were customizable. TouchWiz does a number on Honeycomb widgets, and that's a good thing: they are resizable, prettier, and easier to customize. All of Samsung's custom applications are here, too, including Media Hub, Social Hub, and Samsung's own app store. I really love Media Hub: its competitively priced, and the content is nothing to sniff at. I also really love the ability to purchase movies or TV shows and have them accessible across all of my Samsung devices. My interest in Social Hub is less enthusiastic, though that can be chalked up to my general disdain for anything that aggregates my social networks. Nothing can be said about TouchWiz that hasn't already been covered ad nauseam: if you're still curious and haven't had a chance to try it out in person, check out our detailed guide to TouchWiz here. Performance OK, here's where things get interesting. Remember when I said that this review would be more about how the Galaxy Tab 8.9 advances the Galaxy line where the 10.1 left off? Well, this is what I'm talking about. The 8.9 has the same dual-core Tegra 2 processor, and the same 1 GB RAM, as its bigger brother, so you'd think that performance is created equal. You'd be wrong. Performance on the 8.9 is leaps and bounds better than the 10.1, and I have no idea why. I know, I know. Specs are the same, software is the same, Android is the same. Heck, even Quadrant produces the same score. What gives? I don't have an answer for you, other than that side-by-side performance between the two devices does not lie. The 8.9 is noticeably more agile than the 10.1: the stutters, hiccups, and delays that make the 10.1 at times challenging to use are nowhere to be found on the 8.9. apps open instantly, widgets load without hesitation, and multitasking is truly blazing. Things are fast, and I mean really fast. And don't think you'll have for forsake speed for battery life. The 6,100 mAh battery last a long time, so long in fact that during my time with the 8.9, I only charged it a few times. When left in standby, on WiFi, you'll easily get a day to a day-and-a-half out of the 8.9. If you turn WiFi off when in standby, or turn the device off between use (it boots fast, so that's not too inconvenient), you'll get upwards of four to five days on a single charge. This thing never dies. Let me make this clear: I find no joy in bragging about how fast the 8.9 is. In fact, it pains me that I forked over \$500 before I got to see what Samsung is truly capable of. Hopefully the software and hardware optimizations that make the 8.9 fly can be added to the 10.1 in an update. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. We know you can make a bug-free tablet, Samsung. Now make sure all of your devices reach the bar you've set. Cameras Same old, same old. The front and rear cameras are identical to the ones on the 10.1, and have similar results. The 2-megapixel front-facer is more than adequate for video calling; in fact, testing out video chat over Google Talk produced really nice results. The rear camera has 3 megapixels and can shoot video in 720p. It's just fine in a pinch, but you'll find better on most smartphones on the market today. And to avoid the risk of looking really weird, we advise you to refrain from taking video with any tablet in public. The wrap-up The Galaxy Tab 8.9 is a really, really nice device, and I think it's safe to say that it is the best Android tablet on the market today. Take everything you loved about the Galaxy Tab 10.1, like the screen, the thinness, and the weight, and improve them just enough to push the Galaxy line of tablets to a level to be reckoned with. The 8.9 is super light, it's super thin, and it's finally the device I have been waiting for: big enough to enjoy content, and small enough to hold comfortably in one hand. This is a truly portable tablet. And the 8.9's beauty isn't only skin deep. The Tegra 2 processor has been tweaked to really push the 8.9 along at breakneck speeds. I love how fluid the UI is, and how powerful the performance feels. This is how the 10.1 should perform, and hopefully, will perform after a few updates. I didn't love everything. I wish Samsung could squeeze a microSD card slot in there somewhere, and HDMI-out would also be amazing. But if these are necessary sacrifices for the amazingly thin and light body, they are sacrifices I am willing to make. I also think Honeycomb has room for improvement. There are certain tasks that shouldn't take nearly as many steps as they should, and bugs, while few and far between, are still present. For example, the market needs some tweaking. Fast. Bugs abound. But these are issues with Android 3.1, not with the Galaxy Tab 8.9. If you're in the market for a Honeycomb tablet, you've met your match. The size cannot be beat, the screen is mind-blowingly gorgeous, and performance is top notch. The Galaxy Tab 8.9 advances the Galaxy line of tablets where the 10.1 somewhat disappointingly left off. This is the tablet that Samsung should be proud of. The Samsung Galaxy Tab is available now in two sizes: the 16 GB model is priced at \$469, and the 32 GB model is priced at \$569.

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