

# Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

## Xiaomi Pocophone F1

Xiaomi storms into the UK with a great-value Android phone that's as powerful as rivals that cost twice as much

**X**iaomi (pronounced “shh-OW-mee”) might not be a household name in the UK, but the popularity of the brand in Asia makes it the fourth most popular smartphone manufacturer in the world. Now it's aiming to make inroads here by launching its powerful but affordable Android phones.

### Specs, build and pricing

The Pocophone F1 is a slightly cheaper alternative to Xiaomi's flashy flagship, the Mi 8 Pro, which is also new to the UK. However, we think the Pocophone is the more interesting of the two, particularly because Xiaomi hasn't scrimped on the specs.

By some feat of technical wizardry, the Pocophone is fitted with Qualcomm's fastest-ever mobile processor, the Snapdragon 845 – the same chip that powers phones costing at least twice the price. Pair that with 6GB of memory, and a choice of either 64GB or 128GB of storage, and you're looking at a mid-range tour de force. At £324, it's incredibly good value – roughly £170 cheaper than the excellent OnePlus 6T (reviewed in Issue 463, [bit.ly/webuser463](http://bit.ly/webuser463)).

However, there's a chink in the Pocophone's armour.

Xiaomi has been forced to cut a few corners in the design: the Pocophone F1's all-plastic chassis is uninspiring when compared to the sleek slabs of metal and glass we've grown used to.

On the bright side, the silver-tinted chamfered edge round the screen adds a dash of class, and the rounded corners and sides ensure that the phone fits comfortably in the palm. The rear-mounted circular fingerprint reader is easy to reach, too.

You even get a 3.5mm headphone jack on the phone's top edge, which is refreshing, and its 4,000mAh battery is topped up via a USB Type-C charging port on the bottom edge. The dual-SIM slot on the left edge also allows for storage expansion up to 256GB, while the volume rocker sits next to a slightly rounded rectangular power button on the right.

### Screen and camera

The Pocophone F1 follows the trend for tall, thin displays with a screen that's 6.18in, with an 18:9 ratio and a resolution of 2,246 x 1,080 pixels. Its pixel density of 403ppi (pixels per inch) makes for ample sharpness, but you have to put up with a wide notch jutting into the top of the screen (unless you



“ By some feat of technical wizardry, the Pocophone is fitted with Qualcomm's fastest-ever mobile processor ”



“ The phone is capable of capturing truly stunning images, and its video capabilities are just as good ”

opt to hide it by reducing the screen space).

The superb IPS display is capable of producing 91.7% of the sRGB standard's colours. The contrast ratio of 1,371:1 also does justice to images captured with the Pocophone's dual rear camera. Its maximum screen brightness of 446cd/m<sup>2</sup> (candles per square metre) is good enough for outdoor use, though it may not be quite bright enough for using in direct sunlight.

Rather than offering a secondary wide-angle lens or a 2x telephoto zoom sensor, the Pocophone's secondary rear-mounted camera senses the depth of a scene to create effects such as background blurring around portraits. The main camera takes photos up to 12 megapixels.

The phone captured some truly stunning images. Shots of London's bustling skyline were bursting with crisp detail and accurate colours, with the HDR mode successfully lighting up shadowy areas. Still images hold up very well under scrutiny, especially in low-light conditions, with minimal graininess.

Video capabilities are just as good, even if the recording modes are limited – for instance, 4K footage can only be captured at 30fps (frames per second) and there's no built-in stabilisation. There are plenty of alternative shooting

modes on offer, including 120fps super-slow-motion and time-lapse capture.

### Performance, battery and interface

The Qualcomm octa-core 2.8GHz Snapdragon 845 is the same chip used in most of 2018's pricey top-end phones and, with its 6GB of memory, you can expect very similar benchmark results. It stormed through Geekbench 4's duo of single- and multi-core processor benchmarks, achieving near-identical scores to the OnePlus 6T and Pixel 3, and blazing past similarly priced competitors such as the Vivo V11 and Nokia 7.1.

Graphics performance is equally potent. The Pocophone reached a perfect score of 59 in the GFXBench GL Manhattan 3.0 on-screen

gaming test, and will effortlessly run any Android game you can think of.

Typically, such power comes at a cost to the phone's overall battery life. Thankfully, the Pocophone has taken no such hit and was capable of playing for 15 hours and 29 minutes in our continuous video-playback test, though that isn't as long-lasting as the OnePlus 6T or Vivo V11.

There are a couple of downsides. Pocophone F1 isn't certified for dust- or water-resistance, so you'll have to be careful to avoid any bathroom or kitchen mishaps, and keep it out of the rain. Then again, the OnePlus 6T isn't protected from the elements, either, and that phone costs considerably more.

The lack of NFC is a bigger problem. You won't be able to use the Pocophone F1 for your contactless payments via Google Pay, for instance, which is a bit of a pain if you're used to tapping your phone to make purchases.

Finally, although the phone runs Android 8.1, Xiaomi has been heavy-handed with additional software. For the most part, it functions as you'd expect but the app icons are childlike and unsophisticated, and the Settings menu behaves differently, making it harder to use. App notifications don't always show up at the top of the screen, either. However, these are minor issues and can be remedied with your preferred launcher.

### OUR VERDICT



Xiaomi has planted its flag firmly in UK soil with the Pocophone F1, entering the field of mid-priced phones with high-end specs previously dominated by the likes of OnePlus.

This particular model focuses on hard-hitting internal components, only cutting corners in the build and presentation.

More expensive phones

FEATURES	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

may use more robust materials with a classier design, but it's a sacrifice we think is worth making to get a phone that performs just as well but for a lot less money.

### PRODUCT INFO

#### Xiaomi Pocophone F1

Price: £324  
Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/xia468](http://bit.ly/xia468)

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Octa-core 2.8GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 845 processor
- 6GB of memory
- 6.18in 2,246 x 1,080 pixels IPS screen
- 20 megapixels front camera
- 12- and 5-megapixels rear camera
- 3.5mm headphone jack
- USB Type-C
- 64GB or 128GB storage
- Memory-card slot (supports up to 256GB)
- 802.11ac Wi-Fi
- 180g
- 156 x 75 x 8.8mm

### FOR

- ✓ Great value for money
- ✓ Colour-accurate screen
- ✓ Long battery life

### AGAINST

- ✗ No certified dust or water protection
- ✗ No NFC

### BETTER BATTERY

OnePlus 6T,  
£499

[bit.ly/onep468](http://bit.ly/onep468)



### EVEN CHEAPER

Motorola Moto G6,  
£199.99

[bit.ly/motog468](http://bit.ly/motog468)

