



Xiaomi Pocophone F1

Xiaomi storms into the UK with a knockout blow to the OnePlus 6T, even if it lacks a couple of features

SCORE ★★★★★

PRICE £291 (£349 inc VAT)
from pcpro.link/293poco

We review Xiamo's flashy flagship, the Mi 8 Pro, on p68, but the Pocophone F1 is an even cheaper alternative. Xiaomi hasn't scrimped on specs, though: the Pocophone is a mid-range phone in price alone. It's still fitted with Qualcomm's fastest current mobile processor, the Snapdragon 845, and even pairs it with 6GB of RAM and 128GB of storage for £349.

That's incredible value for money. Indeed, it's £150 cheaper than the 128GB OnePlus 6T, which is equipped with similar components. There are chinks in the Pocophone's armour, with the most obvious being its design: the F1's all-plastic chassis feels old hat compared to the gorgeous sandwiches of metal and glass that are commonplace elsewhere. Thankfully, the F1's silver-tinted chamfered edges add a dash of class, while the rounded corners and sides ensure that it 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, while the phone's 4,000mAh battery is topped up via a USB-C port on the bottom edge. The dual-SIM slot on the left edge also allows for storage expansion up to 256GB.

There are a couple of downsides. The Pocophone F1 isn't certified for dust or water-resistance, just like the OnePlus 6T, but note that Xiaomi also



jettisons NFC. This means you can't use the Pocophone F1 for contactless card payments via Google Pay, for instance, which could prove a pain as this becomes more commonplace.

The Pocophone F1 follows the trend for tall, thin displays with a 6.18in, 1,080 x 2,246 resolution screen with an 18:9 ratio. The pixel density of 403ppi makes for ample sharpness, but you do have to put up with a long notch jutting its way into the top of the screen. If it really bothers you, this can be hidden with black borders.

The IPS panel is superb, displaying 91.7% of the sRGB colour space with an average Delta E of 1.27, according to our display calibrator. A maximum screen brightness of 446cd/m² is also good enough for use in bright sunlight, while the contrast ratio of 1,371:1 does justice to the images captured with the Pocophone's dual rear camera arrangement.

And the Pocophone F1 is capable of capturing truly stunning images. Shots of London's bustling skyline were bursting with crisp details, accurate colours and a very neutral palette, with the HDR mode successfully lighting up shadowy areas. Still images hold up very well under scrutiny, especially in low light conditions, with minimal noise grain and unnatural processing.

ABOVE The F1's tall display is sharp and bright, but you'll have to put up with that large notch



"Graphics performance is equally potent – the F1 will effortlessly run any Android game you can think to throw at it"

LEFT The dual rear camera arrangement captures photos that burst with detail

It achieves this thanks to a 12-megapixel sensor with an aperture of f/1.9, while the secondary sensor is a 5-megapixel unit with a narrower aperture of f/2.0. Neither sensor is optically stabilised, but the main camera benefits from effective dual-pixel phase detection autofocus for speedy shots. What you don't get is a wide-angle lens or any kind of zoom effect, with the secondary lens used for depth-sensing and thus bokeh-effect photos.

Video capabilities are just as good as its stills, even if the recording modes are limited. You can only capture 4K footage at a maximum frame rate of 30fps for instance, and the lack of sensor stabilisation hampers its impact, but video quality remains strong. There are other shooting modes on offer, such as super-slow motion footage at 120fps and time-lapse capture.

Then we come to speed. The octa-core 2.8GHz Snapdragon 845 and 6GB of RAM produce similar benchmark results to flagships, with the Pocophone storming through Geekbench 4's duo of single-core and multicore CPU benchmarks (see the graphs on p69).

Graphics performance is equally potent. The Pocophone reached a perfect score of 59fps in the GFXBench Manhattan 3 on-screen gaming test, and will effortlessly run any Android game you can think to throw at it.

All this power typically comes at a cost to the phone's overall battery life. Thankfully, the Pocophone has taken no such hit, reaching 15hrs 29mins in our continuous video playback test with Flight mode engaged. Not quite as long-lasting as the OnePlus 6T, but you won't be running out of stamina while you're out-gunning opponents in *PUBG:Mobile*.

Xiaomi has firmly planted its flag on UK soil: the Pocophone F1 delivers astonishing value for money. Yes, its software interface suffers from the same faults as the M8 Pro, and its design won't draw admiring glances on the morning commute, but who cares? If you

crave flagship performance at a mid-range price, then it simply doesn't get any better than this.

NATHAN SPENDELOW

SPECIFICATIONS

Octa-core 2.5GHz/1.8GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 845 • 6GB RAM • Adreno 630 graphics • 6.2in IPS screen, 1,080 x 2,246 resolution • 128GB storage • dual 12MP/5MP rear camera • 20MP front camera • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 5 • USB-C connector • 4,000mAh battery • Android 8.1 • 75 x 8.8 x 156mm (WDH) • 182g • 1yr warranty