# Apple targets 2026 launch to redefine smart glasses amid intense competition



Wearable technology has yet to achieve its full potential, with many products being met with tepid consumer interest, particularly in the realm of smart glasses. Historically, devices in this category have often floundered; Google’s initial foray ended swiftly as consumer demand and practical utility failed to align with the high costs. Meta has attempted to revive the concept through its collaboration with Ray-Ban, but despite some level of acceptance, these glasses remain a niche product, marked by bulkiness and discomfort in everyday use.

Now, Apple is poised to make another attempt at bringing smart glasses into the mainstream, a move that some industry insiders view with cautious optimism. As a company synonymous with innovation and user-friendly design, Apple’s track record gives some reason to believe that its forthcoming entry could alter the landscape. However, skepticism still abounds regarding whether this new offering can change public perception and usage of smart glasses, particularly given the historical context.

According to a report by Bloomberg analyst Mark Gurman, Apple is targeting the end of 2026 for the release of its new smart glasses. These devices are expected to support basic functions such as audio playback, call management, and interaction through Siri. Notably, while these glasses might share some stylistic similarities with Meta’s Ray-Ban models, they are anticipated to feature a more streamlined design and advanced functionalities. However, Gurman highlights that augmented reality capabilities may not be included at launch, implying that Apple may still be testing the waters before committing fully to this technology.

Moreover, this move is part of Apple’s more extensive strategy to bolster its position in artificial intelligence. The glasses will reportedly include integrated audio and visual components such as a camera and microphone, aligning with mounting consumer expectations for smart wearables that offer real utility rather than just novelty.

While Apple seems dedicated to making smart glasses a successful product, they have had their share of setbacks in recent years. The company abandoned plans for an Apple Watch equipped with a camera that aimed to gather contextual environmental data, illustrating the challenges faced in balancing innovation with practicality. The implications of this failed project echo a broader scrutiny of how effectively Apple can navigate the competitive wearable tech landscape, especially as mass production of their new wearable is expected to commence only by late 2025, as reported by industry insiders.

The competitive dynamics in the smart glasses market are intensified by Meta's already established presence and ongoing developments. With plans for its own enhancements, including potentially augmented reality capabilities, Meta continues to position itself as a frontrunner. Apple's delay in launching its tailored smart glasses raises questions about its competitiveness in terms of technological advancements and market experience when the devices finally reach consumers.

One potential advantage Apple holds over other competitors is its reputation for prioritising user privacy, especially in light of ongoing concerns surrounding data management practices at companies like Meta. As awareness regarding data privacy issues grows, Apple’s stringently controlled ecosystem could become a selling point for consumers wary of sharing personal information.

The competition brewing among tech giants such as Apple, Meta, and Google is expected to reshape the smart glasses market, demanding innovative designs, enhanced functionality, and seamless user experiences. Given the challenges of integrating advanced AI and maintaining appeal to consumers, the next few years will be critical for this developing technology. With a foldable iPhone on the horizon as well, Apple’s approach to innovation could determine if it succeeds in establishing a foothold in the wearables market or risks being overshadowed by its competitors.

As the landscape continues to evolve, one thing remains clear: consumer readiness and acceptance will ultimately dictate the fate of smart glasses, along with the willingness of companies to push the boundaries of wearable technology beyond current paradigms.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.blanquivioletas.com/en/apple-new-glasses-integrated-cameras/), [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/22/apple-ai-glasses-2026)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/22/apple-ai-glasses-2026), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/apple-plans-smart-glasses-launch-2026-bloomberg-news-reports-2025-05-22/), [[4]](https://www.laptopmag.com/ai/apple-smart-glasses-chips-meta-ray-ban)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://appleinsider.com/articles/23/04/12/apple-glasses-reportedly-launching-in-2026-or-2027-at-the-earliest), [[6]](https://www.androidcentral.com/gaming/virtual-reality/smart-glasses-war-between-apple-meta-and-google-should-be-fun)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/22/apple-ai-glasses-2026), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/apple-plans-smart-glasses-launch-2026-bloomberg-news-reports-2025-05-22/), [[7]](https://www.macrumors.com/2024/10/14/apple-smart-glasses-airpods-cameras-2027/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.androidcentral.com/gaming/virtual-reality/smart-glasses-war-between-apple-meta-and-google-should-be-fun), [[7]](https://www.macrumors.com/2024/10/14/apple-smart-glasses-airpods-cameras-2027/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.blanquivioletas.com/en/apple-new-glasses-integrated-cameras/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/22/apple-ai-glasses-2026> - Apple plans to launch AI-enabled smart glasses by the end of 2026, according to a report by Bloomberg. This development is part of Apple's efforts to enhance its artificial intelligence strategy, which has thus far lagged behind competitors. The planned glasses are expected to include a camera, microphone, and speakers, and will feature integration with Apple's Siri voice assistant. This move comes as Apple seeks to compete with Meta, whose Ray-Ban smart glasses have seen strong consumer adoption. As the market for AI wearables grows, Apple’s upcoming product could mark a significant shift in its approach to AI-driven consumer technology. ([axios.com](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/22/apple-ai-glasses-2026?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/apple-plans-smart-glasses-launch-2026-bloomberg-news-reports-2025-05-22/> - Apple is set to launch smart glasses by the end of 2026, according to a Bloomberg News report. The move represents Apple's latest effort to diversify its product portfolio and drive interest in its artificial intelligence (AI) devices. Mass production of prototypes is expected to begin late in 2025 in collaboration with overseas suppliers. This development follows a lukewarm response to Apple's Vision Pro headset, which was hampered by its high cost and limited AI integration. The upcoming smart glasses are anticipated to compete with Meta's popular Ray-Ban smart glasses. Additionally, Apple has reportedly canceled plans to develop a smartwatch equipped with a built-in camera capable of environmental analysis, which was initially targeted for release by 2027. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/business/apple-plans-smart-glasses-launch-2026-bloomberg-news-reports-2025-05-22/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.laptopmag.com/ai/apple-smart-glasses-chips-meta-ray-ban> - Apple is making a renewed push into the smart glasses market after reports emerged that it has progressed in developing a specialized chip for its smart glasses lineup, which may include AR and non-AR versions. Despite previous speculation that Apple had halted AR glasses development, Bloomberg's Mark Gurman reports the company is building a chip based on Apple Watch processors—optimized for power efficiency and multi-camera control—suggesting inclusion of camera features similar to Meta's Ray-Ban AI smart glasses. The chip could enter production as soon as 2026, potentially positioning Apple to release its first smart glasses by 2028. However, Apple faces stiff competition from Meta, which has already established a strong foothold with its Ray-Ban smart glasses and plans further advancements, including AR capabilities and built-in displays. By 2028, Meta may be far ahead technologically and in market experience. Still, Apple could leverage its reputation for robust data privacy, especially in light of Meta's controversial AI-related data policies, to attract privacy-conscious consumers. Whether Apple can catch up in a rapidly evolving market remains uncertain, though it appears determined not to abandon the fight for wearable tech dominance. ([laptopmag.com](https://www.laptopmag.com/ai/apple-smart-glasses-chips-meta-ray-ban?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://appleinsider.com/articles/23/04/12/apple-glasses-reportedly-launching-in-2026-or-2027-at-the-earliest> - Supply chain analyst and leaker Ming-Chi Kuo shared a report about Apple's adoption of metalens technology, citing their eventual use in "Apple Glasses" around 2026 or 2027. Apple is reportedly developing metalens technology to replace plastic lens covers in future devices. It would start as replacement covers for Face ID, then eventually camera lenses and AR glasses. According to a report from supply chain analyst Ming-Chi Kuo, the first appearance of metalens will enter mass production in 2024 for use as the Face ID cover in iPad Pro. If successful, the iPhone will adopt metalens for Face ID in 2025 or 2026, though Kuo says the latter is more likely. Ultimately, the technology would be used for Apple Glasses, the augmented reality glasses expected to display content over the real world. Kuo says Apple's glasses would go into production in 2026 or 2027 at the earliest. ([appleinsider.com](https://appleinsider.com/articles/23/04/12/apple-glasses-reportedly-launching-in-2026-or-2027-at-the-earliest?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.androidcentral.com/gaming/virtual-reality/smart-glasses-war-between-apple-meta-and-google-should-be-fun> - As Apple, Meta, and Google dive headfirst into developing smart and augmented reality (AR) glasses, a multi-faceted and potentially exciting tech battle is brewing. Apple has reportedly made AR glasses a top priority, aiming to surpass Meta's advancements. Meta’s Ray-Ban and future Orion and Hypernova glasses showcase its commitment, despite Orion’s high costs and developmental hurdles. Google's collaboration with Samsung to create Android XR glasses adds another key player to the race. Unlike smartphones, where design convergence has led to static innovation, smart glasses will demand fresh aesthetics, innovative interfaces, and advanced AI integration due to their pervasive and personal usage. Challenges remain, including weight, battery life, design appeal, and high pricing. Notably, Apple’s ecosystem restrictions could hinder competition unless regulation, such as the EU's DMA, mandates openness. If that occurs, the smart glasses market may evolve into a dynamic competition based on style, user experience, and innovation, offering a refreshing alternative to the current smartphone wars. ([androidcentral.com](https://www.androidcentral.com/gaming/virtual-reality/smart-glasses-war-between-apple-meta-and-google-should-be-fun?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.macrumors.com/2024/10/14/apple-smart-glasses-airpods-cameras-2027/> - Apple plans to release its first foldable iPhone next year, according to several reporters and analysts who cover the company. In his Power On newsletter today, Bloomberg's Mark Gurman said the foldable iPhone will offer two key advantages over other foldable smartphones. First, he said the foldable iPhone will have a "nearly invisible" crease when unfolded. This means the device's... ([macrumors.com](https://www.macrumors.com/2024/10/14/apple-smart-glasses-airpods-cameras-2027/?utm_source=openai))