# Apple accelerates smart glasses launch with AI features targeted for 2026



Apple is reportedly intensifying its efforts to develop AI-powered smart glasses, aiming to launch them by late 2026. This information, emerging from a Bloomberg report, signifies a strategic pivot for the tech giant as it seeks to increase its footprint in the burgeoning market for AI-enabled devices, an area where it has thus far trailed competitors like Meta and Google.

The glasses, internally codenamed N401, are designed to integrate with Apple's existing ecosystem, offering capabilities such as call handling, live translation, and navigation via onboard cameras, microphones, and speakers. Unlike Apple's ambitious Vision Pro headset, these smart glasses will focus on audio and voice feedback rather than augmented reality (AR) displays, a deliberate choice aimed at simplifying user experience while enhancing portability and battery efficiency.

Previous reports had speculated that Apple would introduce these devices alongside new custom chips, derived from the architecture of the Apple Watch. However, the latest insights indicate that mass production of the glasses is expected to commence in late 2025, which represents a more aggressive timeline than initially anticipated. This acceleration reflects Apple's response to competition, particularly from Meta's Ray-Ban smart glasses, which have successfully captured consumer interest.

The current landscape features not just Meta's offerings but also Google’s advancements, and with OpenAI recently entering the hardware arena, Apple is under pressure to deliver a product that meets modern consumer expectations. The smart glasses are poised to be part of a broader effort to revive interest in Apple’s AI capabilities, amid criticisms that the company has lagged behind in this pivotal technology sector.

In terms of hardware, Apple’s engineering teams are focusing on developing a chip that would enhance performance while maintaining low energy consumption. This chip is expected to support functionality like multi-camera control crucial for features such as photography and environmental sensing. The aim is to ensure that the glasses can be both lightweight and efficient without sacrificing capabilities.

Notably, Apple's ambitions in wearable technology are not without setbacks. The company has reportedly shelved plans for a smartwatch that would integrate a camera with environmental analysis features, citing technical difficulties and privacy issues as significant barriers. This cancellation exemplifies the broader challenges Apple faces in blending cutting-edge technology with user-friendly design, especially concerning privacy and data security.

Internally, Apple is also contending with limitations in AI integration. Competitors like Meta benefit from substantial AI capabilities, whereas Apple has historically relied on third-party solutions such as OpenAI and Google Lens for visual processing on its devices. Analysts suggest that the forthcoming smart glasses will mark Apple's first significant foray into AI-first wearables, a pivot that could redefine user interaction with technology.

As the market for AI wearables continues to expand, Apple's future direction remains critical. While the competition hopes to shape consumer expectations and preferences, Apple’s determined efforts to innovate could offer a fresh perspective on wearable technology. Only time will tell whether these smart glasses will succeed in establishing a new standard or simply act as a response to the advancements of rivals like Meta.

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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMilwFBVV95cUxPRDA0WlRxQjQ2WDk2enVVbVZLVVlfUmE2SURDNUFrbzhWcklyOXFVaFdNWDdHMHpEWWpkeEpramwya2laVjNkdDZHNnQ4TW9aeGFtbTN4Znd1UzdhaEVrb2t1Mk5adFRZMnhfTUZoczZFNEIwZGZDM2oxN2U0aThjV1VEbE1rb3FpbkY5bi00LXZEZWRhUlRR?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - 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. Meta is also developing enhanced versions of its glasses, including models with small displays and a high-end prototype known as Orion. As the market for AI wearables grows, Apple’s upcoming product could mark a significant shift in its approach to AI-driven consumer technology.
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. Apple declined to comment on the reports.
4. <https://www.macrumors.com/2025/05/08/apple-chips-smart-glasses/> - Apple is working on new chips that are destined for smart glasses that would compete with Meta's Ray-Bans, reports Bloomberg. The chip is in development now, with Apple targeting mass production in 2026 or 2027 for a launch in the next two years or so. The Meta Ray-Ban smart glasses do not have augmented reality capabilities, but are equipped with a camera and AI functionality. Apple has been considering a competitor for at least a year, and has apparently decided to move forward with development. Apple's smart glasses will include cameras, microphones, and integrated AI, much like the Ray-Bans from Meta, and they would presumably have similar functions like snapping photos, recording video, and offering translation options. Apple could also integrate a Visual Intelligence-like feature for scanning the environment and describing objects, looking up information about products, and providing directions. The glasses will have multiple cameras included, so they could also potentially record spatial video. The chip that Apple is designing for the smart glasses is based on chips that are used in the Apple Watch. These SoCs use less energy than the chips in devices like the iPhone, and Apple has already optimized it to improve power efficiency. While Apple is designing the Ray-Ban like glasses to compete with Meta, it is still working on augmented reality glasses, but that product will not be ready for some time.
5. <https://www.gurufocus.com/news/2845363/apple-aapl-expands-chip-development-for-ai-and-smart-glasses> - Apple (AAPL) is significantly enhancing its chip development capabilities, focusing on areas such as smart glasses, AI servers, next-gen Macs, and wearable devices to gain an edge over competitors like Meta Platforms (META). According to insiders, Apple is currently working on a specialized chip for smart glasses, leveraging the low-power architecture of the Apple Watch. This chip is tailored for multi-camera control and battery efficiency, aiming for mass production by 2026 or 2027. If successful, Apple's smart glasses might launch within two years, competing directly with Meta's Ray-Ban smart glasses. The internal code name for this project is "N401," evolving from the previous "N50" plan. While Apple initially focused on augmented reality (AR), they are now exploring non-AR versions with features like photography, voice assistance, and environmental scanning, similar to Meta's non-AR glasses. Additionally, Apple is working on several AI-enabled wearable devices, including AirPods and Apple Watch, equipped with chips codenamed "Glennie" and "Nevis," expected by 2027. Apple is also developing its first AI server chip, codenamed "Baltra," aiming for completion in 2027 to support its "Apple Intelligence" platform, in collaboration with Broadcom (AVGO). This chip will address user requests remotely, replacing current reliance on high-end Mac chips like the M2 Ultra. Apple is also working on new Mac chips, including the M6 (Komodo) and M7 (Borneo) processors. Furthermore, Apple is developing modem chips (C2 and C3) for future iPhone models and exploring sensors for blood sugar monitoring in the Apple Watch. CEO Tim Cook is prioritizing the smart glasses market, aiming to outpace Meta, which plans to release advanced glasses this year and true AR glasses by 2027.
6. <https://www.macrumors.com/2024/02/25/apple-has-explored-smart-ring-and-glasses/> - Apple has considered developing several new wearable devices over the years, including a smart ring for health and fitness, smart glasses, and upgraded AirPods with built-in cameras and more sensors, according to Bloomberg's Mark Gurman. Samsung's upcoming Galaxy Ring. Below, we recap what Gurman shared about these devices in his Power On newsletter today. Smart Ring A few years ago, Apple's industrial design team presented the idea of a "smart ring" focused on health and fitness features to executives on the company's health team, according to Gurman. However, he said Apple is not actively developing the finger-worn device at this time, so it is unclear if it will ever be released. Gurman said the ring could be a lower-cost alternative to the Apple Watch that could sync health and fitness data with a paired iPhone. It would compete with products like the Oura Ring and Samsung's upcoming Galaxy Ring. Smart Glasses It has long been rumored that Apple eventually hopes to release advanced AR glasses based on its Vision Pro headset. In the meantime, Gurman said the company has considered developing a "less ambitious" pair of smart glasses that would compete with the likes of Meta's Ray-Ban Smart Glasses and Amazon's Echo Frames. Apple has discussed creating glasses that would serve as an "AirPods replacement," with built-in speakers, cameras, health sensors, and AI capabilities, according to Gurman. The glasses are in a "technology investigation" stage within Apple's hardware engineering division, he said, so it sounds like a release is still far off. AirPods With Cameras Apple engineers last year started exploring how to fit low-resolution camera sensors into AirPods, according to Gurman. If ever released, he believes these AirPods could offer AI features that "assist people in their daily routines."
7. <https://www.theverge.com/2024/2/25/24082760/apple-smart-glasses-airpods-cameras-smart-ring> - Apple’s future roadmap for wearables may include AI-powered smart glasses, as well as AirPods with cameras, according to Mark Gurman in today’s Power On newsletter for Bloomberg. Both concepts are in the exploratory phase inside Apple, representing more of a look at the company’s future plans than discreet products. The smart glasses would be angled as AirPods stand-ins, he says, just with more sensors, AI features, and longer-lasting batteries. But even though they’d serve as a cheaper head-worn gadget than the Vision Pro, they wouldn’t be the AR face computer with high-quality transparent displays that Apple is trying to get to. Gurman writes that these glasses would instead be a step in that direction that’s more comparable to Meta Ray-Bans, which feature a camera and an AI assistant you can talk to, but no display. Apple also reportedly started looking into camera-equipped AirPods last year, under the codename B798. If the company can pull it off, they would reportedly be roughly the same size as modern AirPods, just with embedded, low-resolution cameras that would be paired with AI to help users with their routines. Apple is looking for ways to bolster its wearables division as its existing products have matured. Putting cameras on AirPods is a decidedly wacky idea that vaguely points at Apple’s plans for generative AI, and who knows — if people are open to face computers, why not ear cameras, too? Gurman mentions that the long-rumored Apple smart ring idea still has its champions in Cupertino, but Apple isn’t actively developing anything in what’s still an interesting, but unproven wearable category. The company has put much more work into AR glasses, though. And with Meta having established that compelling, screen-less smart glasses are possible, it makes sense that Apple might be starting down that avenue.