

March 2021 by Steven Dunwell

Podcasts: a beginner's guide

What is a podcast?

Put simply, a podcast is an audio programme, just like a Radio programme, but you subscribe to it on your smartphone, tablet or computer (devices) and listen to it whenever you like.

A podcast can be a series of spoken word or audio episodes, all focused on one theme or topic. You can subscribe to a show with an app on your device and, once downloaded off the internet, you can listen to episodes whenever you like.

If you're interested in the latest in politics, news, culture, interviews with your favourite celebrities, serial dramas, and comedy then there's plenty to choose from, with all of the content available for free.

- They can be any length, from a 1 minute news snippet, to a 3 hour in-depth interview.
- They can be any frequency, from daily to monthly
- They can be any format, from simple solo shows up to mammoth, multi-person audio dramas
- They can cover ANY topic, many of which would never make it onto radio
- No matter what you're into, you'll find a show that suits the topics you love and the time you have.

How do I listen?

First, you'll need to pick a podcast player. Here are three suggestions that will get you up and running and straight into listening.

Apple Podcasts



If you have an iPhone, iMac or MacBook then the app comes built into your device. The app may not have the biggest functionality, so ideal for beginners, but it offers a quick and easy way to jump into the world of podcasts. You can stream (listen live) and download shows, skip ahead or rewind in 15 second intervals, and set your favourite shows to download automatically as soon as a new episode is released.

Spotify - <https://www.spotify.com/uk>



Spotify's main business is music streaming, however in 2015, the company added support for podcasts. Very similar to Apple, you'll just get the basics, but that's enough to get you started. If you're a regular user of Spotify, then you'll be familiar with their simple interface. One thing to consider is that Spotify hand-picks which podcasts are allowed on its service, so it may not have everything you're looking for. Also, unless you pay for a premium subscription you may have to listen to the odd adverts between episodes, no hardship.

BBC Sounds - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds>

SOUNDS

Following in the footsteps of Spotify, every user's experience of BBC Sounds will be unique as it is designed to learn from user's listening habits, providing one-tap access to the latest episodes of your favourite shows and introducing you to new audio from the 80,000 hours of listening available. The player features a range of podcasts as well as the option to stream live radio from any of the BBC stations.

How do I find the best podcasts?

There are countless topics available as podcasts, and of course it's all down to your personal taste. To help inspire you, here are some website links that suggest the best podcasts to listen to in 2021:

- **GQ Magazine UK best podcasts to listen to in 2021**
<https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/gallery/best-podcasts>
- **Feedspot – top 45 Podcasts to follow in 2021**
https://blog.feedspot.com/uk_podcasts/
- **Radio Times – Best podcasts to listen to in 2021**
<https://www.radiotimes.com/audio/podcasts/best-podcasts-2021/>