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how to get emoji on iphone

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How to Get Emoji on iPhone: A Complete Guide

Emoji have become an essential part of digital communication. Whether you're texting a friend, posting on social media, or simply adding a touch of personality to your notes, emojis help convey tone and emotion in ways that words alone sometimes can't. On iPhone, emojis are built right into the system, but many users still wonder how to access them, customize them, or troubleshoot issues. This guide will walk you through every step— from enabling the emoji keyboard to using emoji shortcuts, updating your iOS, and even exploring third party options. By the end, you'll have all the knowledge you need to make your iPhone conversations sparkle.

1. Understanding Emoji on iPhone

Before diving into the "how," it's useful to know what emoji are on an iPhone and how they're delivered. Apple's emoji set is part of the **Unicode Standard**, which means that every emoji you see on an iPhone is part of a global, cross platform library. Apple adds its own **design style** and occasionally introduces new emojis ahead of the Unicode release, giving iOS users a first look at the latest faces, gestures, and symbols.

Key points to remember:

- Built in Keyboard – iOS includes an emoji keyboard by default, accessible from the standard keyboard.
- Unicode Updates – Each new iOS version may bring new emojis, so keeping your phone updated is essential for the latest icons.
- Emoji Variations – Skin tone, gender, and hair color variations allow for more inclusive representation.
- Emoji Shortcuts – iOS automatically suggests emojis based on typed words, and you can create custom shortcuts.

2. Enabling the Emoji Keyboard

Most iPhone users already have the emoji keyboard enabled, but if you can't find it, here's how to activate it.

Step by Step Instructions

1. Open the Settings app on your iPhone.
2. Scroll down and tap General.
3. Select Keyboard from the list of options.
4. In the Keyboard settings, tap Keyboards at the top of the screen.
5. Choose Add New Keyboard… from the list of available keyboards.
6. Scroll to the bottom of the keyboard list and tap Emoji. (You'll see it under the "Symbols" section.)
7. The emoji keyboard will now appear in the list of active keyboards. You can reorder it by dragging the handle next to the keyboard name.

Once added, you can switch to the emoji keyboard by tapping the globe icon (Ø<ß) on your standard keyboard or by tapping the smiley face icon (Ø=Þ) that appears when you press and hold the globe key. The emoji keyboard is now ready for use in any app that supports text input.

3. Using Emoji in Messages, Notes, and Apps

With the keyboard enabled, you can start using emojis right away. Below are common use cases and tips for each.

3.1. Text Messages (iMessage)

iMessage automatically shows a dedicated emoji panel at the bottom of the conversation when you tap the smiley face icon. You can scroll through categories (Smileys & People, Animals & Nature, Food & Drink, etc.) and tap to insert an emoji. The iMessage panel also offers stickers, GIFs, and the new “Memoji” feature if you have an iPhone X or later.

3.2. Notes and Reminders

Open the **Notes**app, tap to create or edit a note, and switch to the emoji keyboard. Emoji can be inserted just like any other text, making your notes more colorful and easy to scan.

3.3. Social Media Apps

Apps such as **Twitter**, **Instagram**, and **Facebook**use the system keyboard, so the emoji keyboard works seamlessly. If you’re using an app that has its own custom keyboard, you may need to tap the emoji icon within that keyboard.

3.4. Email and Calendar

When composing an email in **Mail** or adding an event in **Calendar**, you can insert emojis to add personality to subject lines or event titles. Just tap the emoji icon on the keyboard.

4. Customizing Emoji Appearance

iOS offers a few ways to personalize how emojis appear on your device. These options can help you match your style or improve readability.

4.1. Emoji Font Size

While iOS does not provide a direct “emoji size” setting, you can influence the perceived size by adjusting the system font size. Go to **Settings > Display & Brightness > Text Size** and slide the bar to make text larger or smaller. This change affects all text, including emojis.

4.2. Accessibility Settings

- Bold Text – Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size > Bold Text can make emojis stand out against surrounding text.
- Color Filters – If you have color vision deficiencies, you can enable color filters to help distinguish emojis from text.

4.3. Emoji Themes (Third Party Apps)

Some third party keyboard apps (e.g., **Gboard**, **SwiftKey**) provide alternative emoji themes. Installing these keyboards gives you a new set of emoji designs, though they are separate from the native iOS set.

5. Using Emoji in iMessage and FaceTime

iMessage and FaceTime have integrated emoji features that go beyond the standard keyboard.

5.1. iMessage Stickers and GIFs

Tap the **App Store** icon on the iMessage keyboard, then tap the **Sticker** icon. You’ll find a library of stickers that can be used in place of or alongside emojis. You can also search for GIFs, which can be inserted as animated emojis.

5.2. Memoji

For iPhone X and newer, you can create a personalized **Memoji**—a 3D avatar that can be used in messages and FaceTime. To create one:

1. Open a conversation in iMessage.
2. Tap the Memoji icon (the face with a plus sign).
3. Follow the on screen prompts to customize your Memoji's appearance.
4. Once created, you can send your Memoji as a sticker or use it as a FaceTime avatar.

5.3. FaceTime Emoji Filters

During a FaceTime call, swipe up on the screen to bring up the emoji panel. Here you can apply emoji overlays or use animated stickers to add fun to your video call.

6. Emoji Shortcuts and Text Replacement

iOS allows you to create shortcuts that automatically replace typed words with emojis. This can save time if you frequently use certain emojis.

6.1. Creating a Shortcut

1. Open Settings and tap General.
2. Select Keyboard and tap Text Replacement.
3. Tap the + icon to add a new shortcut.
4. In the Phrase field, paste the emoji you want to use.
5. In the Shortcut field, type the word or abbreviation that will trigger the emoji (e.g., ":smile:").
6. Tap Save.

Now, whenever you type your chosen shortcut, iOS will automatically replace it with the corresponding emoji.

6.2. Managing Shortcuts

To edit or delete a shortcut, return to **Settings > General > Keyboard > Text Replacement** and tap the pencil icon next to the entry. You can also toggle the "Auto Correct" setting to prevent accidental replacements.

7. Updating iOS for New Emoji

Apple releases new emojis with each major iOS update. If you want the latest icons, keep your device up to date.

7.1. Checking for Updates

1. Open Settings and tap General.
2. Select Software Update.
3. If an update is available, tap Download & Install.

Once installed, the new emoji set will be available on your keyboard. Note that older iOS versions may not support newer emojis, so you may see a fallback to a generic symbol or an older version.

8. Troubleshooting Emoji Issues

Sometimes emojis won't appear correctly or won't show up at all. Here are common problems and solutions.

8.1. Emoji Not Displaying

- Check that the emoji keyboard is enabled (see Section 2).
- Restart the app you're using. Some apps cache old emoji data.

- Restart your iPhone. A quick reboot can clear temporary glitches.
- Ensure you’re running the latest iOS version.

8.2. Emoji Looks Out of Place

If emojis appear in a different style than expected, it might be due to a third party keyboard being active. Switch back to the default iOS keyboard by selecting the globe icon and choosing “iOS Keyboard.”

8.3. Emoji Shortcuts Not Working

- Make sure Auto Correct is enabled in Settings > General > Keyboard.
- Check that the shortcut text matches exactly what you typed.
- Test the shortcut in a different app to rule out app specific issues.

9. Third Party Emoji Apps and Keyboards

While the native iOS keyboard covers most needs, some users prefer alternative keyboards or emoji packs for additional variety.

9.1. Gboard (Google Keyboard)

Gboard offers a wide range of emoji, GIFs, and even emoji search features. Install it from the App Store, then add it via **Settings > General > Keyboard > Keyboards > Add New Keyboard.**

9.2. SwiftKey Keyboard

SwiftKey provides predictive typing and a large emoji library. It also allows you to import custom emoji sets from other apps.

9.3. Emoji Apps (e.g., Emoji Keyboard by Emoji.com)

These apps give you a dedicated emoji keyboard that can be used across all apps. They often include animated stickers and custom themes.

10. Tips & Tricks to Maximize Emoji Use

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