LEARNING MADE EASY

11th Edition

iMac®

for dummies®
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Get to know your M1 iMac and exciting updates to macOS

Navigate the Control Center, send Messages, and create Guides

Be productive with Pages, Numbers, and Keynote

Mark L. Chambers
Author of *MacBook For Dummies, 9th Edition*

iMac®

11th Edition

by Mark L. Chambers

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

iMac® For Dummies®, 11th Edition

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Introduction

Skeptical about your new anodized aluminum iMac, with that supercharged Apple M1 processor? Perhaps you're thinking it's too doggone thin, or you're wondering where all the buttons are. Shouldn't there be places to plug in cables?

Ladies and gentlemen, I have great news for you: Not only did you make The Right Decision about which computer to buy, but you also shot a hole in one! Today's iMacs have everything a computer power user could want: speed, the latest in hardware and standards, a top-of-the-line LED screen, and the expandability you need to add just about any device meant for today's computers.

I wrote this book especially for the proud iMac owner who wants to make the most of this stunning new aluminum computer, so this book is a guide to the iMac, *Monterey* (the latest version of Apple's superb macOS operating system), and the digital lifestyle and productivity applications that Apple provides. I start by describing the basics that every iMac owner should know. Then I move on to chapters devoted to the software that comes with your iMac. Along the way, you come across a generous sprinkling of power-user tips and tricks that save you time, effort, and money.

Foolish Assumptions

So who is the target audience for this book? As in past editions, I make no assumptions about your previous knowledge of computers and software. I figure you've either just bought a brand-new iMac, or you're considering buying one. Perhaps you've found a great bargain on a gently used older iMac model, and you'd like guidance as you learn the ropes. Those are the *only* assumptions I make . . . and unlike other books that require all sorts of technical experience and know-how, the only requirement between these covers is your desire to become an iMac *power user* (someone who produces the best work in the least amount of time and has the most fun doing it)!

By the way, if your friends and family told you that you're going to spend half your life savings on software — or that no "decent" software is available for Mac computers — just smile quietly to yourself. Today's iMac models come complete with about a ton more software than any Windows box, and those applications are better than anything available on a PC.

This book was written using the latest iMac computer, so owners of older iMac computers might not be able to follow along with everything I cover. However, if you've upgraded an older Intel iMac with macOS Monterey (and the latest Apple applications), you should be able to use most of the book with no problem.

About This Book

In writing about the iMac, I've kept one precept firmly in mind: macOS Monterey, the operating system you'll run, is just as important as the actual iMac computer itself. Therefore, you'll find that *iMac For Dummies,* 11th Edition, is just as much about familiarizing you with all the software you get as it is about introducing you to hardware features like your keyboard and mouse. After all, it's relatively easy to connect an entire forest of cables and turn on any new computer. What comes *next* is the challenging part!

As in my other *For Dummies* titles, I respect and use the same English language you do, avoiding jargon, ridiculous computer acronyms, and confusing techno-babble whenever possible.

If you're upgrading from a PC running the Windows operating system, I've got tips, tricks, and entire sections devoted to those hardy pioneers called *Switchers!* You'll discover both the similarities and differences between the iMac running Monterey and the PC running Windows. I also show you how to make the switch as easy and quick as possible.

A word about the conventions I use: Even with an absolute minimum of techno-speak, this book needs to cover the special keys that you have to press or menu commands that you have to choose to make things work. Therefore, please keep this short list of conventions in mind as you read:

- **Stuff you type:** If I ask you to type (or enter) something, such as in a text box or field, that text appears in bold, like this:

  Type me.

If I ask you to type a command within an application, that text appears like this (and note that you usually have to press the Return key before anything happens):

```
Type me.
```

- **Menu commands:** I list menu paths and commands using another format. For example, this instruction indicates that you should click the Edit menu and then choose the Copy menu item:

  Edit ➪ Copy

- **Web addresses:** No up-to-date book on a computer would be complete without a bag full of web addresses for you to check out. When you see these in the text, they look like this: `www.mlcbooks.com`.

Icons Used in This Book

Like other technology authors, I firmly believe that important nuggets of wisdom should *stand out on the page!* With that in mind, this *For Dummies* book includes margin icons for certain situations:

TIP

This is the most popular icon in the book, and you find it parked next to suggestions that I make to save you time and effort (and sometimes even cash!).

TECHNICAL STUFF

You don't have to know this stuff, but the technologically curious love high-tech details. (Of course, we're great fun at parties, too.)

WARNING

***Always* read the information before you take action!** I'm discussing something that could actually harm your hardware or throw a plumber's helper into your software.

REMEMBER

Consider these nuggets to be highlighter stuff — not quite as universally accepted (or as important to the author) as a Mark's Maxim (described next), but good reminders nonetheless. I use these icons to reinforce what you should remember.

MARK'S MAXIM

Mark's Maxims: These are *MFR*s (short for My Favorite Recommendations). In fact, I'll bet just about any iMac power user would tell you the same. Follow my Maxims to avoid the quicksand and pitfalls that I've encountered with all sorts of Macs for more than three decades!

Beyond the Book

Thanks to my good friends at Wiley, there's some extra content to accompany this book that you won't find between the covers! Fire up your Safari browser and go online to find the following:

- **Cheat Sheet:** I've created several Cheat Sheet pages that cover things like common keystrokes and maintenance procedures that every iMac owner should follow on a regular basis. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to `www.dummies.com` and enter **iMac For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.
- **Bonus Chapter:** If you're dying to find out how to share data among wireless devices via Bluetooth technology, check out the handy Bluetooth bonus chapter at the Wiley website (`www.dummies.com`) as well as at my website (`www.mlcbooks.com`).

Where to Go from Here

Each chapter in this book is written as a reference on a specific hardware or software topic. You can begin reading anywhere you like because each chapter is self-contained. However, I recommend that you read the book from front to back because the order of this book makes a great deal of sense. (I hope!)

1 Getting Started with Your iMac

IN THIS PART . . .

Tour the features of your iMac.

Unpack and set up your iMac.

Familiarize yourself with the basics of macOS Monterey.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Identifying the important parts of your iMac
- Locating the right home for your computer
- Plugging stuff in and getting hooked up
- Playing with your bundled software
- Buying additional stuff that you might need

Chapter 1

Okay, This Machine Looks Really, Really Weird

You bought a brand-new iMac, and there it sits, in the box. Waiting. Waiting for you.

If you're a little nervous about unpacking that shiny aluminum and glass rectangle, I completely understand. Face it: The latest iMacs follow in the footsteps of many revolutionary iMac designs that have come before. In other words, it doesn't *look* like a computer at all, and that can be a bit disconcerting. And if you're switching from a Windows PC to the Apple universe, you might find yourself floating weightlessly in your office or your living room without a familiar bulky black PC case to anchor yourself — hence, the reluctance you might be feeling.

However, dear reader, let me assure you that you've indeed made the right choice. I commend you! Today's line of Intel iMacs are the fastest, leanest, and easiest-to-use self-contained all-in-one computer ever built. Practically everything's in

one shining panel (except for your keyboard and mouse). You have one of the best backlit LED screens on the planet, a super-fast processor, plenty of RAM (memory), and a regular laundry list of the latest technology. Best of all, you don't have to be a techno-nerd to use all that power — it even comes in your choice of colors!

In this chapter, I introduce you to your new dream machine — whether you choose an Intel iMac or its powerful big brother, the iMac with an Apple M1 processor — and give you an overview of the most important locations within iMac City. I show you how to unpack your new computer, what wires go where, and where your iMac should set up housekeeping. I preview the awesome software that's waiting within that powerful panel. Finally, I list the accessories that help keep both you *and* your new iMac computing smoothly.

Intel iMac or M1 iMac — That Is the Question

Until recently, the iMac was offered with an Intel processor, identified by the year it was produced and the size of the screen. With the arrival of the M1 processor (often called *Apple Silicon*), our venerable computer is now available in two models:

- The Intel iMac is the standard home and small-office version, offering enough power for all the Apple applications I cover in this book — as well as gaming, entry-level photography, music production, and video editing work. This is "the iMac for Most Of Us," as I call it, with the right mix of performance and affordability. The Intel iMac currently offers two display sizes: 21.5" and 27".
- The M1 iMac is the equivalent of a sports car, suitable for high-end, expensive applications that demand the best performance possible: professional-level video editing, 3D modeling, image editing, and other processor-intensive programs. The downside? You're going to pay more for an M1 iMac, of course, and I would recommend that you opt for the 16GB of RAM for the best performance.

Because both iMac models can run the applications I present later in the book, I won't be differentiating much between the two processor families (except when I'm describing hardware features in this chapter). If you haven't purchased your iMac yet, remember that the standard iMac model offers plenty of performance for the average Mac owner.

Here's a good yardstick for comparing the Intel iMac to the M1 iMac, presented as a Mark's Maxim:

MARK'S MAXIM

If you need the power of an M1 iMac, you're likely to know that already.

An Introduction to the Beast

The iMac might look like a sculpture straight out of a museum of modern art, but it still sports everything that it needs to function as a computer. In this section, I identify the important stuff that you need to live your life — you know, write a term paper in Pages, hear the music you downloaded in Music, or manage the affairs of those lazy Sims.

Major parts of your major appliance

Every computer requires some of the same gizmos. Figure 1-1 helps you track them down. Of course, as you'd expect, a computer has a "body" of sorts in which all the innards and brains are stored (the body, in the case of your iMac), a display screen, a keyboard, a mouse or trackpad, and ports for powering and exchanging data with peripherals.

That magnificent screen

What a view you have! The standard Intel iMac is graced with either a 21.5″ LED or a 27″ 5K Retina display; the M1 iMac uses a 24″ 4.5K Retina display. All models feature display backlighting for outstanding color and brightness.

TECHNICAL STUFF

LED and Retina screens use far less electricity than their antique CRT ancestors, and they emit practically no radiation (less, in fact, than even the LCD screens that Apple once used).

All these displays offer a *widescreen* aspect ratio (the screen is considerably wider than it is tall), which augurs well for those who enjoy watching movies. (A favorite editor of mine loves it when I use the antique word *augur,* meaning *to predict or foretell.*) For example, the 27″ iMac boasts a whopping 5120 × 2880 resolution.

TIP

That reminds me: Throw away your printed dictionary! You won't need it because macOS Monterey includes a fantastic Dictionary application, which uses the Internet to retrieve definitions. More on launching applications in Chapter 3 . . . and yes, the Dictionary app does contain the word *augur.*

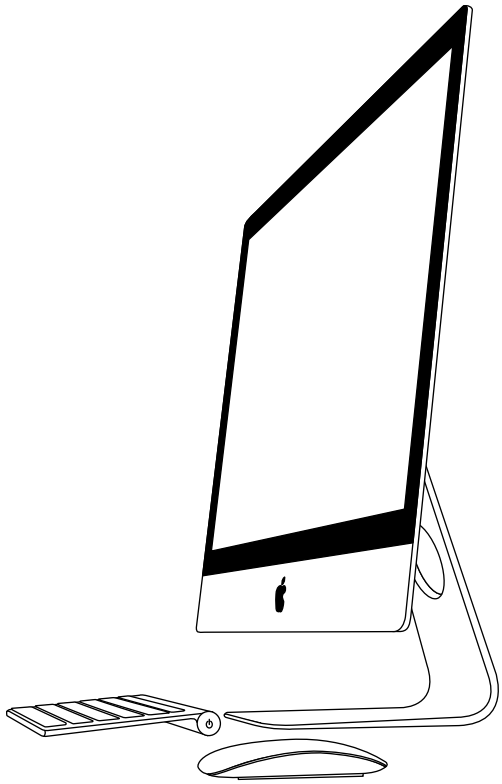

FIGURE 1-1: The charismatic form of your aluminum iMac.

The keyboard and mouse

Hey, here's something novel for our favorite all-in-one computer — something *external* (outside the computer's case). Gotta have a keyboard and mouse (or trackpad), right? And you gotta love the options with iMac: You'll go nomadic . . . um, that is, wireless and free.

The iMac comes standard with a truly 21st-century combo of an Apple wireless Magic keyboard and a Magic Mouse 2. The M1 iMac can also be ordered with a Touch ID keyboard, which can read your fingerprint for security. You can also configure your new iMac with an expanded keyboard that includes a numeric keypad. (If you eschew the mouse as a pointing device, the Magic Trackpad 2 is also available when ordering a new iMac for $50 more.)

The Magic input duo lets you sit back and relax with your keyboard in your lap and without being tied down by a cord. (Say it with me: "Death to cords, death to cords.") Just stay within about 30 feet of your iMac screen, and sweet freedom is yours. You can also feel safe using these wireless peripherals because they offer secure, 128-bit, over-the-air encryption, which helps keep sensitive information

safe while you type and click away. One downside of the wireless keyboard, though: Unlike older wired keyboards, the wireless model doesn't include any USB ports, and you will need a supply of batteries. (Go rechargeable!)

TIP

If you prefer using a wired keyboard and mouse, they'll work fine with your iMac (and you can forget batteries altogether). Don't forget, however, that your keyboard needs to be Mac-compatible.

The keyboard layout is a particular favorite of mine because from here:

- You can either control the sound volume (using the volume control buttons F11 and F12) or mute all that noise (using the Mute button F10).
- Mission Control and Launchpad — two outstanding features of Monterey that you find out about later in the book — are each available with a single keystroke.
- A handy-dandy Media Eject key lets you eject a CD or DVD (if you have an external optical drive).

REMEMBER

Today's iMac models don't have a built-in optical drive. If you have one of these machines, don't drive yourself batty looking for a disc slot!

Both the wireless Magic Mouse 2 and Magic Trackpad 2 need a flat surface to rest upon, but that's what TV trays are for, right?

TECHNICAL STUFF

Yes, your computer has a foot . . . just one

You and I — normal human beings — would say that the iMac is supported by a sturdy aluminum *stand,* but Apple calls it a *foot.* The foot lets you tilt the iMac panel up and down for the best viewing angle. Most important, though, the foot minimizes the computer's desk space requirements (or its *footprint*). (Engineers . . . sheesh.) And yes, that foot is perfectly balanced and quite stable, so there's no danger of your treasured aluminum supercomputer taking a dive.

If you decide to get really snazzy and mount your older iMac Pro to the wall, you can remove the foot and install the VESA mounting adapter (available separately for about $80). You can use any VESA standard mounting bracket on your wall, too. You can be positioned within 30 feet or so of your wall-mounted iMac Pro with a wireless Apple keyboard and mouse (or trackpad). Of the previous iMac generation, only the iMac Pro can use a VESA mount — however, the new 24″ M1 iMac can be ordered from Apple with a built-in VESA adapter instead of a foot.

Hey, Hewlett-Packard or Dell, can you mount one of those monolithic desktop PCs to the wall? *I think not.*

Food for your ears

A machine this nice had better have great sound, and the iMac doesn't disappoint. You have a couple of options for iMac audio:

- The 21.5" Intel iMac sports built-in stereo speakers (and a microphone to boot). The 27" Intel iMac raises the bar with stereo speakers and three microphones. And not to be outdone, the 24" M1 iMac delivers a whopping six speakers and three microphones!
- Built-in ports connect your iMac audio to either:
  - More powerful (and more expensive) external speaker systems
  - A set of headphones
  - A home stereo system

You can also use wireless Bluetooth speakers with your iMac.

The power cable

Sorry, but you can't get a wireless power system . . . yet. (Apple's working hard on that one.) With the wireless keyboard and mouse/trackpad setup, though, the power cable is actually the only required cable that you need to run your computer! Now, that's *sassy*.

The power button

Yep, you have one of these, too. It's on the back of the case. (If you're looking at the screen, it's at the lower-left corner.)

Those holes are called ports

Our next stop on your tour of Planet iMac is Port Central — that row of holes on the back of your computer (see Figure 1-2). Each port connects a different type of cable or device, allowing you to easily add all sorts of extra functionality to your computer.

One of the holes is an exception to the Rule of Ports: The iMac's SDXC card slot accepts the same type of SD memory cards as most of today's digital cameras and video cameras. (In other words, that hole is not for connecting a cable; you insert the card instead.) The SDXC slot appears as a tiny horizontal slot on the Intel iMacs.

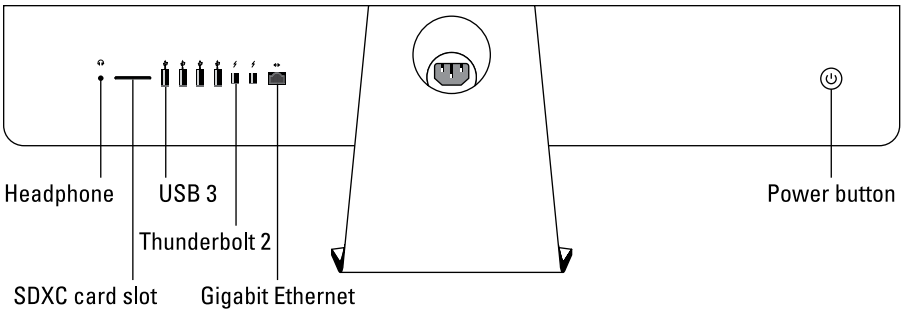

FIGURE 1-2: Only slightly less sexy — it's the back end of a standard Intel iMac.

Each of these stellar holes is identified by an icon. Here's a list of what you'll find as well as a quick rundown on what these ports do:

- **USB:** Short for *Universal Serial Bus,* the familiar USB port is the jack-of-all-trades in today's world of computer add-ons. Most external devices (such as portable drives, scanners, and digital cameras) that you want to connect to your iMac use a USB port. Both current Intel iMac models sport four USB 3.0 ports on the back, and the M1 iMac can be ordered with two USB 3.0 ports if you desire. USB 3.0 connections are much faster than the old USB 2.0 standard, but you can still use your USB 2.0 devices with the faster ports (at the slower speed, of course).

  For the specs on connecting your keyboard and mouse, see the upcoming section "Absolutely essential connections."

  For more on USB ports, get the lowdown in Chapter 21.

TIP

- **Ethernet:** The standard iMac includes a standard 10/100/1000 (1Gb) Ethernet port, so it's ready to join your existing wired Ethernet network. (Alternatively, you can go wireless for your network connection; find more on that in the next section and in Chapter 11.) On the iMac Pro side, hold onto your hat: The Pro also supports 2.5GB, 5GB and even an amazing 10GB Ethernet connection! (Apple knows that professionals are more likely to use a superfast network between computers.)

- **Thunderbolt 3:** Yes, I know, it's a dumb name, but it really *is* that fast. Thunderbolt 3 (also called USB-C) ports offer the absolute speediest connection between external devices and your iMac, including the fastest (and most expensive) external drives and storage systems. Thunderbolt 3's appeal doesn't end there, though: In case that splendid screen isn't quite big enough, you can add an adapter or cable to this port and send the video signal from your iMac to an Apple Thunderbolt monitor, a standard LCD/LED monitor, or a flat-screen TV. (Apple also offers different adapters that can connect your iMac to standard VGA monitors and projectors.) All current iMac models sport two Thunderbolt 3 ports.

Connections for external audio

As I mention earlier, your iMac comes equipped with powerful stereo speakers on the bottom of the case, but you're certainly not limited to them. Apple provides a Headphone/Audio Line Out jack, allowing you to send the high-quality audio from your rectangular beast to a set of standard headphones or to an optical digital audio device, such as a high-end home theater system.

You can also connect USB or Bluetooth speakers to your iMac.

Important hidden stuff

When you bought your new digital pride and joy, you probably noticed a number of subtle differences between the standard 21.5″ iMac, the 27″ iMac, and the faster top-end 24″ M1 iMac. I call these differences the *Important Hidden Stuff* (or IHS, in case you prefer acronyms), and they're just as important as the parts and ports that you can see:

- **Internal drive:** The current iMac can be equipped with flash storage (also called a *solid-state drive,* or SSD). Apple also offers a *Fusion Drive,* which is essentially a combination of a traditional magnetic drive and flash storage (offering the larger capacity of a magnetic drive and the improved performance of flash storage).

  As I type these words, the iMac product line offers several different storage capacities, depending on the processor speed and screen size you choose: anywhere from a standard 256GB solid-state drive to an immense 8TB SSD. (Yes, friends and neighbors, *TB* means *terabyte,* or 1,000GB.) The bigger, the better. (Remember, though, that the iMac has room for only one internal drive.)

- **Wireless Ethernet:** "Look, Ma, no wires!" As I mention earlier, your iMac can join an existing wireless Ethernet network with its built-in wireless hardware. With wireless connectivity, you can share documents with another computer in another room, share a single high-speed Internet connection among several computers, or enjoy wireless printing. Truly *sassy!*

  You can use your iMac with any standard 802.11g, 802.11n, or 802.11ac wireless network. (The M1 iMac adds support for 802.11ax as well.) And yes, PCs and Macs can intermingle on the same wireless network without a hitch. (Scandalous, ain't it?) Apple's AirPort wireless devices have been discontinued, however, so you'll have to do some searching online to locate an Apple wireless network device.