









iPhone cases

- / Material trends
- / comparison table of 23
 suppliers
- 22 top products
- / Product gallery



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Table of Contents

Buyer's Guide to sourcing iPhone cases

An exclusive and in-depth report on sourcing iPhone cases in China, including a deep dive into the latest product and material trends, pricing guide, supplier profiles, hot products, and industry overview.

►	Suppliers emphasize protective, functional iPhone cases	3
•	Product guide	4
•	Cost breakdown	5
•	Pricing guide	6
•	Comparison table: Profiles of 23 iPhone cases suppliers	7
►	Gallery view: 22 trendy iPhone cases	9

iPhone cases: China supply market analysis, price guide, comparison table of 23 suppliers, 22 trendy products

Suppliers emphasize protective, functional iPhone cases

Innovative material combinations, value-added features, and a range of surface treatment options characterize this vibrant product line.



With the launch of the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus, phone case suppliers are busy releasing their latest products and hope that the largest iPhone launch ever earns them the chance to take a piece of the market.

Generally speaking, as the most common iPhone accessory, a great phone case has to satisfy consumers with three key features: Good protection, aesthetic appearance, and practical additional functions.

So what have case manufacturers come up with for the new iPhones?

Bend, drop and scratch protection

The primary focus is protection. Since the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus are perceived to be easily bendable, hard cases will become the most common type of case. Cases using materials such as composite PC/ABS, aluminum, and even stainless steel for the high-end are expected to be more common. Considering that buyers demand protection from bending and shock (dropping), more manufacturers are offering iPhone cases in a combination of two or more materials. Some examples include:

- A two-layered case with a silicone inner protector and colorful exterior PC/ABS housing
- A PC/ABS or aluminum back panel matching with a TPU, rubber, or silicone frame
- A soft TPU back panel surrounded with a PC/ABS or aluminum frame
- Even hard bumper cases (without a back panel) also often get a soft silicone or TPU-wrapped edge

With these kinds of combinations, the phones not only get very good bending and drop protection (or even waterproofing), but by also allowing for different colors on the different materials, it gives a very sharp visual impact as well.

Besides the use of different materials to provide protection, designers have also given consideration

to the structure of the case itself. For instance, many hard cases or hard-frame cases were always not easy to put on or take off, which sometimes resulted in scratches. To solve this problem, some makers adopted hybrid designs with detachable back panels and frames, or set up a lock system on the sides or top of the cases.

Trendy and stylish appearance

The second critical attribute of a phone case is a stylish appearance; with the thin iPhone 6 and 6 Plus, slim and light cases are preferred. Findings from the Global Sources Mobile Electronics Fair in October indicated that the average thickness for cases made of PC generally range from 1.2mm to 0.7mm, with the thinnest being 0.5mm, while slimmer PP cases go to about 0.3mm.

Meanwhile, catering to the preference of many Apple fans, cases that show the Apple logo on the phone are likely to be more popular. Glossy, colorful, transparent cases, half-transparent see-through cases with laser engraving or printing, and matte/brushed aluminum cases with a logo window were in demand at the show.

In order to stand out from the thousands of other iPhone cases, suppliers also had to get creative to make their cases more personalized. In addition to adopting trendy colors and unique patterns, designers of iPhone cases mixed different decorative features in their products. For example, varied panel veneers made of wood, natural pearl, metal (bronze or tin), and textured fabric or leather.

Other design features included 2D or 3D artificial crystal inlays, DIY case kits with detachable ornaments, and even genuine diamond inlay.

Finally, iPhone cases with authorized licensed images from brands like "Hello Kitty", "Mickey Mouse", "Ferrari" and "Lamborghini" were also popular.

Practical value-added functions

Value-added features are being added to iPhone 6 cases. For instance, some women's clutch cases

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not only have the standard iPhone housing, but also include features like credit card slots, lipstick holsters, a mirrored surface, and/or sparkling "bling" decorations like a fashion evening clutch.

And for outdoor activity, a Taiwan supplier released an iPhone 6 case with a protective case and fixed mounts which allow people to attach the iPhone 6 on their arms or waist, on bicycle bars, and on smooth surfaces. For businesspeople, cases with integrated Bluetooth keyboards, hidden SIM card adapters, credit card slots or a hidden stand may be quite useful. Finally, some cases featured bright LEDs that light up on incoming calls or messaging alerts.

The camera LED flash light of the iPhone 6 is able to light up during an incoming call. To leverage this feature, some suppliers added a changeable patterned reflective clear film at the back of the case. When the flash lights up, the film also sparkles in different patterns.

Product guide

iPhone cases can be classified by material into four categories:

- Plastic cases
- Silicone cases
- Leather cases (including PVC, PU, genuine split leather and top grain genuine leather)
- Metal cases (aluminum or stainless steel).

The table below compares some of the features of each material:

	PC	ABS	TPU	Silicone
Good clarity	\checkmark		\checkmark	
Anti-impact	\checkmark		\checkmark	\checkmark
Anti-abrasion		\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Anti-UV	\checkmark			
High-strength	\checkmark	\checkmark		
Leakage proof				\checkmark
More surface treatments		\checkmark		
Easy heat-transforming		\checkmark	\checkmark	

continued on page 44 »



continued from page 29 »

PC has the best transparency among all materials, and performs quite well for higher-strength, anti-impact and anti-UV applications. But since it is less abrasion proof, it is commonly combined with ABS (abrasionresistant and more easily formed).

Finished products made from a PC/ABS compound not only have very good clarity and strength, they also perform better in all three protection aspects. This is the most popular hard plastic for iPhone cases.

TPU is a softer plastic with good transparency. As a common choice for iPhone cases, it provides good drop and abrasion protection, and looks good as well. TPU's disadvantage is that it ages relatively quickly, and colors tend to lose their vibrancy after several months, especially for lighter colors.

As for silicone rubber, it is an excellent material for shaping and forming, making it the material of choice for models with novelty shapes. It is also leak-proof, making it suitable for waterproof iPhone cases. But on the other hand, it does not perform well for heat dissipation, and tends to collect dust.

Aside from the material, surface treatment and finishing is another important element for iPhone cases.

Common finishing methods offered by China suppliers include UV-coating, silk printing, heattransforming, electroplating (ABS only), laserengraved printing, and brushing (metal only). Recently-introduced surface treatment methods are IML and UV 3D printing (or embossed printing).

In-mold labeling (IML) is usually used in production for mobile phone housings. As a pre-decoration technique for phone cases, a pre-printed label (usually PET) is embedded into the case molds.

This process is followed by a thermoforming process, and the finished product comes out with the printed image with a protective PET layer on the top. This



iPhone 6X-guard case designed for outdoor activities

laminated sandwich structure provides iPhone cases good protection with high wear-resistance and better stain resistance. In addition, images on case surface will be more vivid and can be more varied in design. Finally, UV 3D printing (or embossed printing) also started appearing in the market in 2013. With preset images on a computer, a UV 3D printer can spray ink on any material and the images will have 3D embossed effect.

Cost breakdown

Export prices of China-made iPhone cases range anywhere from US\$0.50 to US\$10. Heavily customized cases with elaborate decoration -- such as gold electroplated cases -- can be priced at US\$15 per piece, and cases with real diamond inlays are sold for more than US\$50 per piece.

Generally, the cost of materials usually takes up about 60 to 70 percent of the overall production cost in plastic and PU leather iPhone cases, and with common finishing and treatments, the price range is usually between US\$0.50 to US\$2.

Some specially designed iPhone cases that feature additional functions and multiple fine finishing methods will be priced higher, generally from US\$2 to US\$5.

iPhone cases with in-house molds made with genuine leather, metal or multiple materials are priced from US\$5. These also typically feature with high-end finishing, treatment, more elaborate surface designs, and additional practical functions.

Cases that use public molds, which are processed by mold factories and sold to any downstream manufacturer, are generally cheaper. In-house molds, on the other hand, are exclusive to a manufacturer, and cases using these are generally more expensive. The table below gives a cost breakdown of iPhone cases in different materials.

Industry overview

There are more than 40,000 smartphone case factories in China. Most of them are very small,

with staff of less than 100, a few forming machines, injection machines and printing facilities. They only can process products using public molds with basic surface treatments.

Professional iPhone case makers, on the other hand, typically having in-house CNC molding facilities, design teams, and process molds as per buyers' requests.

In addition, these are usually larger companies with higher revenue, have in-house R&D capability, and sometimes cooperate with foreign design companies. They are often able to release products with their own brands. Many of these companies are Hong Kong- and Taiwan-based, or companies with foreign invested background.

	Mold type	Material	Treatment	Value-added features	
US\$0.50 to US\$2	Public mold	PC/ABS, ABS, TPU, silicone, PU/PVC leather + PC	UV coating, silk printing, heat- transforming, electroplating, IML	Inner card slot for leather cases or no additional features	
US\$2 to US\$5	Public mold and in-house mold	PC/ABS, ABS, TPU, silicone, (some imported raw materials) PU leather with PC, aluminum OR multiple materials	Multiple treatments and fine finishing such as UV coating, silk printing, heat- transforming, electroplating, IML, brushed, laser engraved printing, UV 3D printing, inlays		
US\$5 to US\$10 or above	In-house mold	Multiple (sometimes imported) materials for hybrid cases, genuine leather with PC, aluminum, stainless steel	Multiple treatments and fine finishing with unique decoration materials and more design options Printed pattern with authorized licenses	Bluetooth keyboard, travel kits, DIY kits, incoming call / message alerts	

Pricing guide

continued from page 45 »

Comparison table: Profiles of 23 export-ready iPhone cases suppliers

Company	Annual exports iPhone cases (US\$)	Main export markets	R&D spending (US\$)	
<u>4G-Kitty</u>	4,000,000	Asia (42.8%), US (42.4%), Western Europe (8.2%)	250,000	
ATC Technology	1,000,000	US (40%), Western Europe (30%), Australia (20%)	800,000	
Base Stone	2,000,000	US (30%), Asia (10%), Western Europe (50%)	30,000	
<u>Benma</u>	1.500,000	Western Europe (60%), North America (40%)	50,000	
Celcase	800,000	US (30%), Western Europe (40%), Australia (25%)	-	
Dazec Electronic	5,000,000	US (20%), Europe (60%), Australia (20%)	1,000,000	
Intuitive Cube	2,000,000	Asia (90%), Other (10%)	400,000	
Jinhu Electronic	30,000,000	US (40%), Western Europe (30%), Australia (20%)	-	
<u>Kangchengtai</u>	15,000,000	Japan (40%), US (30%), Western Europe (20%)	800,000	
Kedac Electronic	3,000,000	US (30%), Asia (25%), Europe (20%)	-	
Lider	1.800,000	US (55%), Europe (25%), South America (20%)	300,000	
Pcase Electronic	25,000,000	Japan (34%), US (45%), Europe (21%)	1,000,000	
Quanzhou Hoosam Gifts	1.500,000	US (35%), Western Europe (35%), Middle-East (20%)	-	
Shenzhen Bobotel	60,000,000	North America, Asia, Australia	-	
Shenzhen Greatpine	2,000,000	US (50%), Asia (10%), Europe (40%)	-	
Shenzhen Jewelives Technology	8,000,000	US (30%), Japan (30%), Europe (30%)	500,000	
ShenZhen QiCaiTong	3,000,000	South America (40%), India (30%), Middle-East (20%)	-	
Shenzhen Quanli	7,000,000	US (60%), Europe (30%), Other (10%)	1,000,000	
Shenzhen Xin Feng Kang	3,000,000	US (40%), Europe (40%), Middle-East (20%)	-	
Steily Group	1,000,000	US (40%), Western Europe (20%), Australia (20%)	-	
Telephone Est	0.800,000	US (45%), Europe (30%), Middle-East (25%)	-	
Tonghua Weiye	0.300,000	US (20%), Western Europe (40%), Middle-East (15%)	10,000	
Xhongli Mold Plastic	8,000,000	US (40%), Europe (30%), Middle-East (20%)	300,000	

3

Main iPhone case categories produced	OEM	ODM	ОВМ	Accepts small orders (US\$)	
TPU (20%), silicone (20%), TPU+PC (20%)	80%	10%	10%	5,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Silicone (30%), aluminum (10%), leather (30%)	60%	40%	0	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Aluminum (5%), leather (70%), PC (20%)	60%	20%	20%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (50%), fabric (50%)	65%	35%	0	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (30%), TPU (20%), PC (20%)	40%	40%	20%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
PU (60%), leather (10%), TPU (10%)	50%	50%		1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
PC (50%), TPU (30%), leather (20%)	0	0	100%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
TPU+PC (70%), silicone (30%)	80%	10%	10%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (50%), TPU (25%), PC (25%)	90%	10%	0	No small orders	CONTACT SUPPLIER
TPU (40%), PC (40%), silicone (20%)	80%	10%	10%	No small orders	CONTACT SUPPLIER
PU+PC (45%), leather (30%), plastic (10%)	70%	30%	0	5,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
TPU (20%), PC (20%), TPU+PC (20%)	100%	0	0	10,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Silicone (35%), PC (35%), TPU (25%)					CONTACT SUPPLIER
TPU, PC, silicone	60%	40%	0	5,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
TPU (35%), PC (60%), silicone (5%)	80%	10%	10%	5,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (40%), PC (30%), silicone (20%)	60%	40%	0	5,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (30%), TPU (30%), PC (10%)	98%	2	-	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (40%), TPU (15%), PU+PC (40%)	50%	40%	10%	5,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (30%), TPU (30%), silicone+PC (30%)	50%	50%	0	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (30%), aluminum (10%), TPU (10%), PC (10%), silicone (10%), ABS (10%), TPU+PC (10%)	30%	50%	20%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (30%), TPU (45%), PC (25%)	60%	20%	20%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
Leather (65%), aluminum (5%), PC (10%)	60%	30%	10%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER
PC (30%), TPU (30%), PP (20%)	70%	20%	10%	1,000	CONTACT SUPPLIER

continued on page 76 »



continued from page 61 »

Gallery view: 22 trendy iPhone cases

Here is a selection of 22 new and stylish iPhone cases, hand-picked by our Market Analysts.

Generally, there are three key features that an iPhone case needs to have to appeal to consumers: Good protection, aesthetic appearance, and practical valueadded functions. New products launched by China suppliers also take these three features into account.

For enhanced protection, suppliers are combining two or three different materials in a case. For example, cases with silicone frames and PC back panels or aluminum frames with TPU or leather back panels can provide shock-resistance to phones. In terms of appearance, ultra thin cases are "in", as are innovative finishes and printing techniques such as 3D embossing and in-mold labeling.

An example of value-added functions is the X-guard case with fixed mounts that allows users to attach a phone on their arms or waist, on bicycle bars, and on smooth surfaces.

The gallery below showcases 22 new iPhone cases representing these trends.



X-guard for outdoor activities

X-guard, presented by Intuitive Cube Inc, is a multiple protective product specially designed for outdoor activities. Made of PC and TPU, the X-guard case is compatible with X-guard series accessories, including suction mount, sport armband, tripod adapter, belt clip, handlebar mount and stem mount. With its dual locking system, the case enables iPhones to be easily and securely fixed on cars, bicycles and even arms or belts.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



Stylish case has 3D embossed patented patterns

Presented by Shenzhen Greatpine Technology Co. Ltd, the PC6 series of smartphone cases are specially designed for iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus. The bumped structure cases are made of matted PC material, and have 3D embossed printed patterns on the surface. The supplier offers dozens of patented Italian patterns for buyers to choose from.



PC, silicone, PU cover for iPhone 6

Model xfk-ip-6-13 from Shenzhen Xin Feng Kang Technology Co. Ltd is a 3-in-1 case for iPhone 6. Made from nontoxic PC, silicone and PU, it provides dust, scratch and shock protection in a waterproof case. MOQ for these cases is 500 units. The company accepts orders in mixed colors and the lead time is about 7 days.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



Flip leather cases with dot matrix surface

Model TST-SU-PU002 from Telephone Est Co. Ltd is a flip protective case for the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus. Made from PC hard case and Korean PU leather, it is available in 12 stylish colors. The embossed dot matrix surface gives the phone good drop protection.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



Wallet leather case for iPhone 6

Model STY-PHO-SL03 from Steily Group Co. Ltd is a leather case for the iPhone 6. Made from PU leather cover and PP protective housing, the case features contrasting colors on the surface. Design features include an inner wallet, card slot and multiangled stand for added convenience.

CONTACT SUPPLIER

Clip-on hard case

Model IPH6-MIX-B096 from Shenzhen Bobotel Technology Dev. Co. Ltd is an injected PC case for the iPhone 6. With a TPU-wrapped edge, the hard case provides iPhones with full protection against bending and shock damage. The case also can be attached to belts, notebooks or books by a detachable clip.







continued from page 77 »



PU case with clear window

Designed for the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus, Model KOK-1286 presented by Shenzhen Quanli Leather Co. Ltd is a PC hard case with PU leather cover and a wide clear window. With hot-press treatment on the leather cover, there are more than 12 colors available. The lead time is about three to four weeks with a minimum order of 1,000 pieces.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



Universal leather case

ShenZhen QiCaiTong Silicon & Plastic Technology Co. Ltd presents a "Universal leather case" for phones. With magnetic closure, the case is made from TPU and wrapped with PU leather. With a sticky anti-slip panel inside, any phone can be positioned in the case. The case can also be folded into a stand. The lead time is about 10 days with an MOQ of 500 pieces.

CONTACT SUPPLIER

iPhone 6 case with invisible closure

Model LIDER-IF601-BK from Lider Industrial Ltd is an iPhone 6 case with an invisible magnetic closure. Made with oil-edged PE board with a stitched leather wrapped cover, it offers strong drop protection. The Lychee pattern on the surface also provides better grip. Custom colors and patterns are available. With an MOQ of 300 pieces, the lead time is about two weeks.

CONTACT SUPPLIER

Ultra thin PU leather case

The BM2-142 from Benma Manufactory Co. Ltd is an ultra thin case for iPhone 6. It is made of hard PC and hot-pressed with PU leather on the surface. It has a pleasing texture along with full protection from scratches, bumps and dust. Available in multiple colors, the lead time is 25 days for 300 pieces.

CONTACT SUPPLIER





TPU case with IML treatment

Model SMI6-2010-1 released by Quanzhou Hoosam Gifts Co. Ltd is a TPU case with IML treatment. The special decorations provide very smooth touch and scratch protection suitable for any customized pattern and logo. MOQ is 500 pieces with a lead time between 10 and 15 days.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



iPhone 6 case in wallet design

Model DZ-CA1746 from Dazec Electronic Co. Ltd is a wallet iPhone 6 case. Consisting of a hard PC case and PU leather cover, it protects iPhones from drops and scratches. The elegant appearance is suitable for businesspeople. The MOQ for this product is 500 pieces.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



iPhone 6 cases with real diamonds

Base Stone Technology Industrial Ltd has created new iPhone 6 cases for couples. Both are made of PC and are treated with silk printing, electroplating and UV coating; but the surface for the feminine case also includes inlays with genuine diamonds from South Africa. Cases with Mozambique Ruby or China Sapphire are also available.

CONTACT SUPPLIER

Wood grain PC case

Shenzhen Tonghua Weiye Technology Co. Ltd presents the TH-IP6-M026 with natural wood grain on the back. This series of cases is made of PC, PU and microfiber. The pattern on its back is made by plating technology and machine sewing. It costs US\$2.70 per unit with an MOQ of 500.





continued from page 93 »



Fluorescent-colored TPU cases

XHL-IP6035 from Shenzhen Xhongli Mold Plastic Co. Ltd is a series of stylish TPU cases made for the iPhone 6 Plus. These glossy cases include various fluorescent colors. Slip treads are included on the top of the case. The data port and power port are covered with foldable covers to protect them from dust and water. The price of this case is US\$0.75.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



Detachable 2-piece case with UV finish

Shenzhen Kangchengtai Industrial Co. Ltd offers a 2-piece iPhone 6 back case, model KCT-IMD-2014-012. The case is made of PC and TPU, and the outer case is covered with a protective UV layer to prevent it from scratches and to provide a pleasing grip. There are varieties of color options provided by the manufacturer to cater to buyers' needs. The price of it is US\$2.70 per unit with an MOQ of 1,000 pieces.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



Shenzhen Celcase Electronic Co. Ltd offers a thin back case for the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus. This series of cases is made of PU and PC, and produced with injection molding technology. The cases also provide drop protection. They cost US\$1.80 to \$2 per piece with an MOQ of 1,000 units.

CONTACT SUPPLIER

Two-piece back case with tire pattern

Shenzhen Jinhu Electronic Co. Ltd presents a two-piece iPhone 5 back case made of TPU and PC. The back includes a grooved tire pattern and grip, and the side features cut-outs for buttons. The supplier provides various colors for buyers to choose from. The price is US\$0.82 with an MOQ of 200 pieces.

CONTACT SUPPLIER







Aluminum bumper for iPhone 6, 6 Plus

This bumper case, model ATC-1022 presented by Shenzhen ATC Technology Co. Ltd, is an aluminum case designed for the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus. It has metal buttons and screws on the side and is 0.7mm thick. Further, with an order of at least 1,000 units, buyers can have their logo engraved on the case. It costs US\$4 to US\$5 with an MOQ of 200 units.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



Ultra thin PP case for iPhone 6

Pcase Electronic (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd presents an ultra-thin case only 0.35mm thick. These cases are made of transparent PP material. The cover of the case is processed with a matte texture finish for better grip. The price per unit is between US\$1 and \$1.40, and the MOQ is 3,000 pieces.

CONTACT SUPPLIER



TPU case with IMD printing

Model KDA-330 from Kedac Electronic Co. Ltd is a TPU back case designed for the iPhone 6, using IMD technology to print its pattern. The printed layer resides between two transparent hard plastic layers, effectively avoiding scratches or staining.

CONTACT SUPPLIER

Anti-slip TPU case

K21 presented by 4G-Kitty Technology Ltd is a TPU case for the iPhone. With a slim design, it is laminated with PU leather on the surface, providing effective anti-slip. Multiple colors are available, and the case has an MOQ of 1,000 pieces with a lead time of 15 days.

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