

MICROPHONE BUYERS GUIDE

Brand	Model	Type	Sonic Quality	Best Use Case									Price (USD)	Description
				Kick In	Kick Out	Snare	Rack Tom	Floor Tom	Over-head	Room	Spot Cymbals	Misc Percussion		
AKG	D12	Dynamic	Tailored for Kicks		X								\$499	A bit less scooped than the D112 and with slower transient response. Be aware that the D12 is a very old microphone, and some may not withstand SPL levels of loud kick drums anymore. The D12 VR is the reissue version of this microphone.
AKG	D112	Dynamic	Tailored for Kicks	X	X								\$199	The D112 is much looser and thumpy sounding than the other kick drum microphones suggested in the article. They're best for kick drums with a loose, low end feel rather than precise, modern attack and thump.
AKG	C414	Condenser	Bright						X	X			\$1099	The XLII variant is slightly brighter than the XLS. Good generalist condenser microphone that is widely used for a variety of other instruments (guitar, vocals, etc.)
AKG	C451	Condenser	Bright			X			X		X	X	\$549	A widely used small diaphragm condenser for overheads and spot mics, and even as a snare microphone. It's quite bright so can be a bit harsh if your kit and room are already top-heavy.
Aston	Origin	Condenser	Flat						X				\$299	Really good large diaphragm condenser for the price, sensitive enough to picture a lot of details from a variety of sources. Neutral and clear, so don't expect this to be a warm and colored microphone or one with a bright response.
Audio Technica	ATM25 (ATM250)	Dynamic	Tailored for Kicks	X	X			X					\$199	Precise low end and plenty of transient response. Great kick or floor tom mic for modern (more aggressive) music genres.
Audix	ADX51	Condenser	Flat						X		X	X	\$249	A decent small diaphragm overhead microphone, but in my opinion, maybe a better fit for spot cymbals and other miscellaneous applications and worth an upgrade if it's being used in an overhead pair.
Audix	D6	Dynamic	Tailored for Kicks	X	X			X					\$200	Distinctive sound that fits modern (rock/metal) kick sounds.
Audix	D4	Dynamic	Tailored for Floor Toms					X					\$179	Fantastic microphone for toms, with an interesting frequency response curve that minimizes the need for aggressive EQ during the mixing stage. It's very similar to the D2 below, but the slightly extended low end frequency response makes this a really good choice for floor toms and gong drums.
Audix	D2	Dynamic	Tailored for Rack Toms				X	X				X	\$139	Fantastic microphone for toms, with an interesting frequency response curve that minimizes the need for aggressive EQ during the mixing stage.
Audix	i5	Dynamic	Tailored for Snares			X						X	\$99	The i5 has a distinctive sound that fits a modern rock/metal snare sound.
Audix	SCX25	Condenser	Flat						X				\$799	A microphone with excellent transient response and a touch of an EQ bump to provide a bit of "air". It doesn't suffer from the proximity effect much, so it doesn't become overly boomy as you bring it closer to a sound source or lose too much of the low end when you move it further away.
BeyerDynamic	M160	Ribbon	Dark						X		X		\$699	A ribbon microphone that doesn't break the bank, and is actually directional. This means you get the benefit of the darker sound ribbon microphones give, capturing a lot of the room sound. This microphone has a bump in the midrange before starting to slope down, which helps give snares a natural "crack".
Coles	4038	Ribbon	Dark						X	X			\$1365	These mics sound punchy but dark. They help balance out the kit and almost sound as if the cymbals and shells gel better together.
DPA	4011	Condenser	Neutral								X	X	\$1799	These are reference-grade microphones that are suited for close mic situations and can handle very high SPL. Their very accurate phase and frequency response, as well as a cardioid pattern, makes them a good choice when you need to spot mic something on your kit but minimize spill from other sources.
Earthworks	DM20	Condenser	Neutral			X	X	X				X	\$349	Incredibly clear and excellent transient response. Exceptional rejection of sounds from other sources. One of the highest fidelity options for tom and snare recordings. (Be aware that it might not be a good choice for snare drums played by heavy hitters, as vibrations from the clip can cause the microphone to distort)
Earthworks	SR25	Condenser	Neutral			X	X	X				X	\$619	Incredibly clear and excellent transient response. Exceptional rejection of sounds from other sources. If you can, purchase the matched pair as it helps with stereo image accuracy.
Electrovoice	RE20	Dynamic	Flat		X	X		X				X	\$449	A classic microphone in its own right for vocals, guitars, kick drums, floor toms, and even snare drums. I've even used one on a very harsh and bright hi-hat as it helped tame the high frequencies.
Fostex	MC10ST	Condenser	Flat						X				\$150	Price for the pair. Very smooth small diaphragm (electret) condenser microphone on a budget that sounds surprisingly smooth.
Josephson	e22s	Condenser	Neutral			X	X	X				X	\$1515	Designed to have very low self-noise, yet able to capture high SPL levels without distorting. This combination makes it a great microphone for close up applications where detail and headroom are important. The FET and the Lundahl transformer help this microphone have a subtle bit of color that suits drums well.
Neumann	KM184	Condenser	Flat			X			X	X	X	X	\$799	The KM184 is the reissue of the legendary KM84. Known for being an accurate small diaphragm condenser, yet warm and able to smooth some sounds ever so slightly.
Neumann	TLM 103	Condenser	Flat		X								\$1100	This is a microphone with a strong low end proximity effect, as well as a presence boost in the higher end. You can think of it as the little brother of the U87 stuck in cardioid mode.
Neumann	TLM170	Condenser	Flat		X								\$3100	One of the most neutral mics in the Neumann range, which makes them sound somewhat dark when compared to other condenser microphones. Great for kicks as they won't be bumping the mids and highs on the spill that they'll inevitably capture.
Neumann	u47	Condenser	Flat		X				X				\$4000	Warm, accurate, and will bring up a lot of the detail from the room. These are great mics (with an eye-watering price tag).
Neumann	u67	Condenser	Flat						X	X			\$6000	As above. It brings so much detail to the front, without being too forward on the mid-range and the top end.
Royer	R121	Ribbon	Dark							X			\$1295	A colorful ribbon mic that's darker, but with a bump on the mid-range that helps give drums a bit of a bite. Great as room mics especially if you are going to "crush" them in the mix.
Scope Labs	Periscope	Condenser	Non-linear distortion, frequency and dynamic response							X			€369 (~\$450)	Non-linear frequency response and dynamic processing, pre-compressed and saturated sound - great for room tones. This mic is unlike any other on this list.
Sennheiser	e602	Dynamic	Tailored for Kicks	X	X								\$149	This mic is slightly softer and looser than the Beta52A, but more precise than the AKG D112. It's also quite scooped in the mids, which might help you minimize the amount of EQ needed with a really resonant kick drum.
Sennheiser	e604	Dynamic	Tailored for Toms				X	X					\$149	This microphone uses the proximity effect to provide a low-end boost. There's a boost in the high frequencies, but the mids are scooped for more clarity.
Sennheiser	MD421	Dynamic	Multiple EQs				X	X					\$349	Use the switch to get a different degree of low-end response from the microphone.
Shure	SM7	Dynamic	Flat			X					X		\$399	This is a good choice for a hi-hat spot cymbal if the hi-hat is too harsh but not recommended as a cymbal spot mic anywhere else. It gives snare drums an interesting, thick sound with more than average low-end response and a feeling of compression.
Shure	SM57	Dynamic	Slight increase in high frequencies	X		X	X	X				X	\$99	A venerable jack of all trades live and in the studio, with a flat frequency response except for the top end (where it has a significant presence boost). It can take high-pressure levels and represent transients reasonably well.
Shure	Beta 57A	Condenser	Slight increase in high frequencies	X		X	X	X				X	\$139	A version of the SM57 - A bit smoother on the top end, but also has a tighter capture pattern that helps minimize spill.
Shure	Beta 52A	Dynamic	Tailored for Kicks	X	X								\$189	My go-to modern rock kick sound. Full, punchy, balanced.
Shure	Beta 91A	Condenser	Tailored for Kicks	X									\$239	<i>The</i> Kick In microphone.
Shure	KSM32	Condenser	Flat					X	X				\$439	A great condenser microphone that has a very flattering low-end response, while retaining clarity on the mid-range. Might not be as smooth as the Neumanns above, but handles high SPL situations well, making it well suited for close microphone applications.
Shure	KSM137	Condenser	Flat						X		X	X	\$299	See the KSM141.
Shure	KSM141	Condenser	Flat						X		X	X	\$399	Has an extended low-end response for a small diaphragm condenser, while being very smooth in the higher portions of the frequency spectrum. The KSM141 variant has an extra polar pattern to choose from.
Solomon	LoFREQ	Speaker	Low End Only		X								\$199	Kick sub microphone.
Sontronics	STC1	Condenser	Bright						X		X	X	\$199	A very good budget small diaphragm condenser microphone. It's clear and precise, although it has a moderate presence boost. You can buy different polar pattern capsules if you need to use them in different applications, but the cardioid capsule will fit well for most overhead applications, as well as spot mics, miscellaneous percussion, and even as a second snare mic.
Sontronics	Aria	Condenser	Flat						X	X			\$1499	A microphone with plenty of character - dark, but still accurate across the frequency spectrum. Despite the high-end rolloff, this microphone has incredible crisp detail, mostly because of the edge terminated capsule it sports.