



Mac mini Late 2018 Teardown

2018 Mac mini teardown on November 9, 2018.

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INTRODUCTION

The future is now! Apple's once-neglected Mac mini is coming in hot with a brand new, cutting edge, long awaited ... processor upgrade? And a couple more ports? There has to be more, and we know how to find it—time for a teardown!

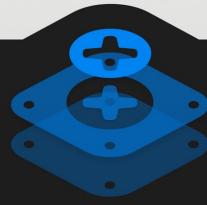
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TOOLS:

- [iFixit Opening Tools](#) (1)
- [TR6 Torx Security Screwdriver](#) (1)
- [T5 Torx Screwdriver](#) (1)
- [T10 Torx Screwdriver](#) (1)
- [Spudger](#) (1)
- [Tweezers](#) (1)

Step 1 — Mac mini Late 2018 Teardown

Mac mini Late 2018



TEARDOWN

- This Mac might be mini, but it's packing some big specs. Let's unpack some here:
 - 3.6 GHz quad-core Intel Core i3 with 6 MB shared L3 cache
 - 8 GB of 2666 MHz DDR4 SO-DIMM memory
 - 128 GB SSD
 - Intel UHD Graphics 630
 - 802.11ac Wi-Fi + Bluetooth 5.0
 - macOS Mojave

Step 2



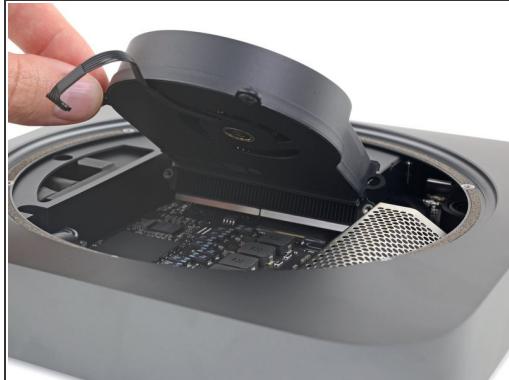
- Our first look at the 2018 mini's exterior gives us the warm and fuzzies—it's the same friendly form factor we remember.
- **(i)** Some folks speculated that if Apple ever updated the mini, it'd look something like an [Apple TV](#). Thankfully, Apple didn't succumb to the urge to go thinner and lighter this time—this is no [Mac micro](#).
- Apart from the new color, we also have some new identifiers: model A1993 and EMC 3213.
- Despite controversial departures from a few [common ports](#), Apple has included plenty of them here! We spot two USB-A ports, four USB-C ports, a headphone jack, an ethernet port, and an HDMI port (which isn't available on *any* other recent Apple product).
- **(i)** We'll see if any of these ports are modular. The latest [MacBook Air](#) certainly got our hopes up!

Step 3



- We'd like to think we [know our way in](#)—but after four years without an update, we're not taking anything about this opening procedure for granted.
- With some trepidation, we point our tools at the [60%-recycled-plastic](#) bottom cover.
- Success! An [opening tool](#) takes care of the base, and six quick stabs with the [TR6 Torx security driver](#) loosens the familiar antenna plate underneath.
- So far so good. Fingers crossed that this keeps up!

Step 4



- Just like the last [couple times](#) we did this, we're greeted first by a single fan standing watch over the mini's insides.
- The fan unscrews with zero fuss, giving us a better view of the mini's depths.
- Theoretically, we just need to unplug these cables from the logic board, and it'll be free to slide right out of the chassis.

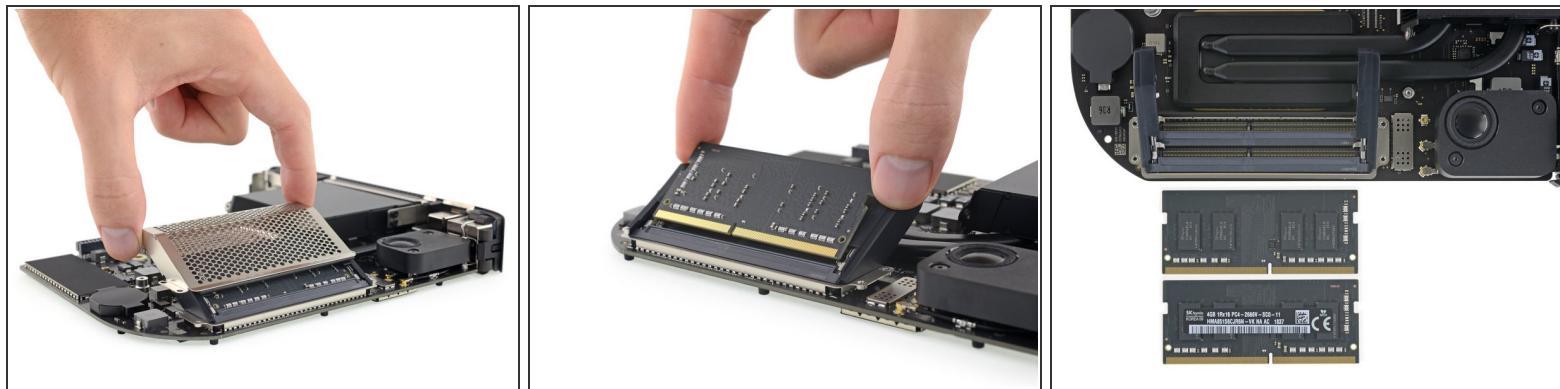
 Theoretically.

Step 5



- It's time to improvise—our handy [Mac mini logic board removal tool](#) technically fits in the logic board's [screw holes](#), but it doesn't feel right. We're going to need more leverage.
- Could it be that some good old-fashioned thumb pressing does the trick? It does! A firm push on either side of the blower exhaust is all it takes, and the whole board unclips and slides out.
- *i* As much as we love making great tools, nothing makes us happier than seeing something you can service with [no tools at all](#).
- Who knows, maybe Apple *does* have a tool to push without endangering those thin exhaust fins, but carefully aimed thumbs works for us!

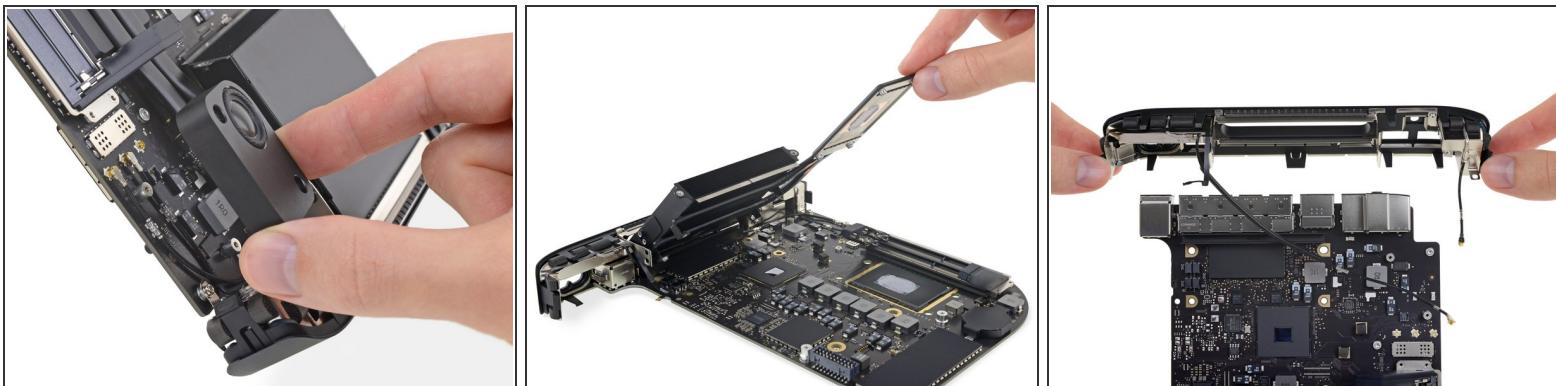
Step 6



- With the board out, we're going straight for the RAM. Apple has trapped it in a heavy metal cage—almost as if they don't fully trust modular RAM to behave itself.
 - Actually though, we've seen this in [iMacs of yore](#). The shield allows the RAM to operate at high frequency (2666 MHz) with no chance of accidentally interfering with other functions.
- Twirl away four Torx screws, and the cage slides right off. Has RAM replacement ever been easier?
- Sure it has—but, the return to standard SO-DIMM RAM after the bitter disappointment of the [2014 mini's soldered-down chips](#) is a huge win. Upgrade now, or upgrade later—you have a choice again.

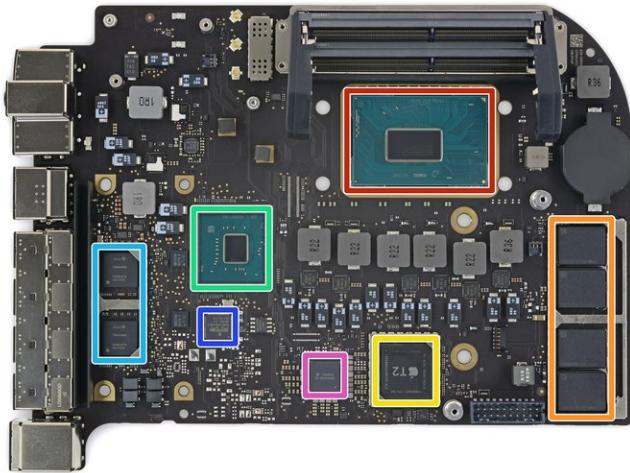
i We pop out two SKhynix [HMA851S6CJR6N](#) 4 GB DDR4-2666 SDRAM modules, each with four 1 GB [H5AN8G6NCJR](#) DDR4 SDRAM ICs.

Step 7



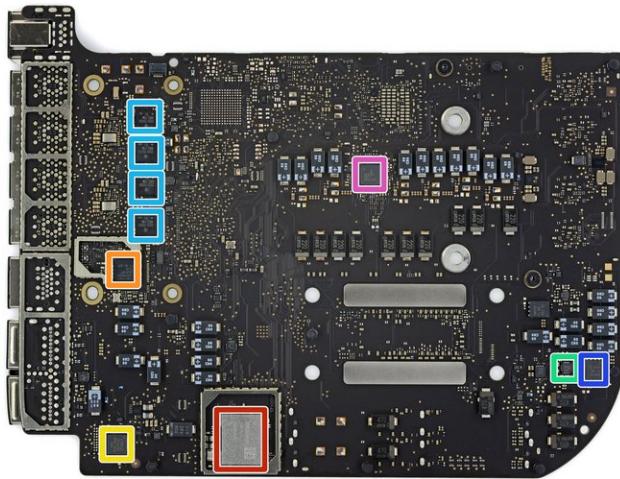
- Just one connector and two screws sets the little system speaker free.
- *(i)* [iMac](#) and [MacBook](#) speakers seem to be getting bigger all the time, but this one looks about the same size as in older Mac minis.
- Beneath the speaker, we find some antenna cables, but unfortunately no [modular AirPort card](#)—in what is [becoming a trend](#), these are socketed right to the main board.
- Alas, AirPort cards are just a distant memory now that logic boards have [assimilated](#) all wireless functions.
- From here we set to work freeing the heatsink, twirling away Torx screws and exposing the paste-y (soldered) CPU.
- One last screw, and the port cover is free, uncovering ... the ports. As it departs, it takes some antenna hardware with it.

Step 8



- This mini still holds a lot of silicon—let's take a look!
- 3.6 GHz quad-core Intel Core i3 CPU with Intel UHD Graphics 630
- Toshiba TSB3225V81199TWNA1 flash storage (128 GB total)
- Apple APL1027 339S00604 T2 coprocessor
- Intel [SR40E](#) CM246 platform controller hub
- Intel [JHL7540](#) Thunderbolt 3 controller
- Broadcom BCM57766 Gigabit Ethernet controller
- 338S00342-A0 (likely an Apple PMIC)

Step 9



- And the backside holds even more:
 - Murata 339S00458 Wi-Fi / Bluetooth module
 - MegaChips [MCDP2920A4](#) DisplayPort 1.4 to HDMI 2.0 converter
 - Cirrus Logic CS42L83 audio codec
 - Texas Instruments [51916](#) memory power solution synchronous buck controller
 - Texas Instruments CD3215C00 power controller x4
 - Texas Instruments 58872D TI 881 A1L2 E4
 - Intersil 95828A HRTZ X832QXH

Step 10



- The last thing between us and an empty mini is the internal power supply!
- The linchpin holding this unit in place is a familiar one—so familiar that we follow [our own repair guide](#) to remove it.
- The power supply is a nice enclosed unit, making for safe, easy replacement.
- *(i)* The only thing it's missing is a [cute label](#).
- The mini power supply gets an upgrade from [days past](#), jumping from 85 watts to 150.

Step 11



- It appears we've maxed out our mini, feast your eyes on these cool components!
- Back in the day, a Pro Mac meant a computer you could upgrade, configure, and connect as you pleased. This new mini aligns so well with that ideal that we're surprised it didn't earn itself a "Pro" title—especially compared to the increasingly closed-off MacBook Pro line.
- Perhaps the most exciting part of this mini is a return to upgradable RAM. In fact, our users are so excited they *already* made a [RAM replacement guide](#). **Stay tuned for the official guide and upgrade kits!**

Step 12 — Final Thoughts



- Mac mini Late 2018 Repairability: **6 out of 10** (10 is easiest to repair).
 - No tough adhesive holds the Mac mini or its components hostage.
 - Using fairly common tools, disassembly is straight-forward.
 - The mini packs standard SO-DIMMs allowing both DIY upgrades and replacements.
- The CPU and storage are both soldered to the logic board and not user-upgradeable.
- If any of the many ports is damaged or worn, the entire logic board will need replacing.