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THE GOOD

- The JBL Flip 4 has solid sound quality. It's also waterproof and has built-in speakerphone capabilities along with Siri and Google Now integration.

THE BAD

- Audio can be uneven at times. Sounds great with some tracks and so-so with others.

9.5
 OVERALL SCORE

The JBL Flip 4 is the latest entry in JBL's growing line of Bluetooth enabled speakers. At one point, Sonos was the dominating force in wireless speakers. However, a few manufacturers have been vying for that top spot and JBL has positioned itself as a serious contender with its growing portfolio of Bluetooth speakers. The Flip 4 replaces (you guessed it) the Flip 3. The 4 is a little bit bigger than its predecessor and has slightly better sound quality.

RELATED: [UE Wonderboom Review](http://avproductreviews.com/ue-wonderboom-review) (http://avproductreviews.com/ue-wonderboom-review)

JBL Flip 4 Design & Features

The tubular JBL Flip 4 looks nearly identical to the Flip 3, however, under closer inspection, it's a tad bit longer and a smidge heavier. The 4 has a nice solid feel when you hold it in your hand. The majority of the speaker is wrapped in a textured woven fabric. The fabric provides the speaker with visual interest and also makes the little tike easy to grip and hold. The front of the speaker is emblazoned with JBL's crest. On the right and left sides are dual passive radiators which serve to boost the **Flip 4's** (https://www.amazon.com/JBL-Flip-Waterproof-Bluetooth-Black/dp/B06X1GLH1C/ref=as_li_ss_tl?s=electronics&ie=UTF8&qid=1493565776&sr=1-2&keywords=jbl+flip+4&linkCode=ll1&tag=avproductreviews-20&linkId=c53786be5870d794a0fac7d3b397037) bass response. Along with the radiators, the speaker has dual 40mm drivers each driven by 8-watt amplifiers.



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Like UE, JBL doesn't shy away from color. It currently comes in 7 colors; black, gray, white, teal, blue, red and camouflage. Powering the JBL Flip 4 is a 3,000mAh rechargeable lithium-ion battery that JBL claims will supply 12 hours of listening enjoyment at moderate volume levels. On the other hand, if you like to playing your music excessively loud you can expect to get less listening time.

Rugged and Durable

The Flip 4 is designed to travel. The speaker has a tough rubberized construction so it should hold up to occasional drops. I dropped mine on a carpeted floor and it survived. Similar to the [UE Wonderboom](http://avproductreviews.com/ue-wonderboom-review) (<http://avproductreviews.com/ue-wonderboom-review>) which is one of its main competitors, the JBL Flip 4 has an IPX7 waterproof rating which means it can be submerged in up to 3 feet of water without suffering any damage. I'm always reluctant to dip my electronics in water, but since the 4 boasts an IPX7 rating I had no choice but to test it. The 4 passed with flying colors as it held up during shower use and multiple underwater encounters. Speaking of shower use, the Flip 4 has a shoelace style lanyard that you can use to hang the speaker.

Operation & Connections



JBL gives you a couple different ways to sync up with the speaker. Bluetooth is the main way to connect to the speaker. However, JBL also throws in a 3.5mm input so you can make a wired con-

nection. This input, as well as the USB charge port, are hidden under a waterproof flap on the Flip 4's backside. Next to the flap are the power button, pairing button (for syncing multiple speakers together), and five LED lights which indicate the speaker's charge level.



On the top of the Flip 4 are the customary control buttons for play/pause, Bluetooth pairing, and volume. The play button has multiple functions. Pressing the play button twice lets you skip tracks and holding the button down gives you access to the Flip 4's voice assistant integration courtesy of Apple's Siri and Google Now. So if you want to find out what movies are playing simply hold down the play button and speak into the Flip 4.



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If that wasn't enough, the Flip 4 also has speakerphone capabilities. When I tested this, its audio quality was solid although on occasion I did hear a little static on my end.

Sound Quality

Let me start by saying that the **JBL Flip 4** (https://www.amazon.com/JBL-Flip-Waterproof-Bluetooth-Black/dp/B06X1GLH1C/ref=as_li_ss_tl?s=electronics&ie=UTF8&qid=1493565776&sr=1-2&keywords=jbl+flip+4&linkCode=ll1&tag=avproductreviews-20&linkId=c53786be5870d794a0facf7d3b397037) sounds bigger than its meager dimensions indicate. Compared to the UE Wonderboom they're very close to overall sound output. Listening to Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come", the Flip 4 had clearer vocals than the Wonderboom. On this track, in particular, the 4 did a great job projecting sound into the room while the Wonderboom's audio sounded slightly recessed. Now here's the kicker, Chuck Mangione's "Feels So Good" was the exact opposite. The Wonderboom had better sound projection, while the JBL Flip 4 sounded more recessed and smaller. The bottom line with small speakers like these is that they'll sound great with some tracks and not so with others.

However, overall the JBL Flip 4's sound is impressive. Bass is solid. And like I mentioned previously, it will sound better with some tracks and not so well with others. For a speaker this size, its bass output is good. Could it be better? Yes, but heck, this is a tiny speaker. You can only expect so much. One thing I noted when listening to the Flip 4, is that it does have a tendency to accentuate treble. Again this varies from track to track. At high volumes, this was more noticeable.

The UE Wonderboom has the same list price as the JBL Flip 4, and based on what I heard in terms of sound quality it's a draw. Both speakers sound great with some tracks and so-so with others. On the other hand, their sound quality is pretty impressive considering how small these speakers are.

The Verdict

Despite being slightly uneven in its audio performance, the **JBL Flip 4** (https://www.amazon.com/JBL-Flip-Waterproof-Bluetooth-Black/dp/B06X1GLH1C/ref=as_li_ss_tl?s=electronics&ie=UTF8&qid=1493565776&sr=1-2&keywords=jbl+flip+4&linkCode=ll1&tag=avproductreviews-20&linkId=c53786be5870d794a0facf7d3b397037) is still one of the best small Bluetooth speakers you can get. While the UE Wonderboom and Flip 4 are tied in sound quality, the Flip 4 edges out the Wonderboom in the features department. Speakerphone capabilities and access to Siri and Google Now voice assistants give the Flip 4 the upper hand.

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