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spire 5 review (A515-57 model – a fair budget laptop)

By Andrei Girbea, last updated on January 27, 2023

Summary: This generation of the Acer Aspire 5 refines on its predecessors with a slight update in design and practicality, and a more notable update in specs and internal cooling. Unfortunately, Acer haven't updated the display in the same manner, and only seem to offer basic-level IPS panels for this series, the kind that might not suffice in 2022. The audio quality isn't much here, either, but overall the series remains a serious contender in the budget class of full-size all-purpose laptops.

Our score: 4 / 5
Price when reviewed: from $550

Updated configurations & prices »

THE GOOD

- fair build quality and looks
- good inputs and IO
- balanced performer with good cooling and quiet fans
- small battery, but fair battery life
- competitive pricing

THE BAD

- some flex in the keyboard deck
- washed-out display
- poor audio and camera

Table of Contents [show]

This is my review of the Acer Aspire 5 budget laptop, in a mid-tier well-balanced A515-57G configuration that bundles an Intel i7 processor with Nvidia MX550 graphics and an IPS screen.

These are quite capable specs for an affordable laptop that I bought for around 700 EUR, especially with the thermal module being able to properly cool the hardware in this chassis.

In fact, this Aspire 5 covers the basics very well and should suit most needs for daily use, medium school/office, and some casual gaming in your spare time. At the same time, it is nonetheless a budget-level laptop series, so don't expect much in terms of fancy features, premium materials, or display and audio quality.

The review down below gathers all my impressions of this series, with the positives and the quirks that you should be aware of when looking at one of these.

Specs as reviewed – Acer Aspire 5 A515-57

Acer Aspire 5 A515-57G, 2022 model	
Screen	15.6 inch, IPS, matte, non-touch 16:9 format, 1920 x 1080 px resolution, 60 Hz refresh
Processor	Intel C0re i7-1255U, 2PC + 8Ec/12T (up to 4.7 GHz Turbo)
Video	Integrated Iris Xe Graphics + Nvidia MX550 2GB (30W)
Memory	8 GB DDR4-3200 (2x DIMMs)
Storage	512 GB M.2 SSD (Micron 2450) – two M.2 2280 slots
Connectivity	Mediatek Wifi 6 (MT7921) with Bluetooth 5.2
Ports	3x USB-A 3.2 gen1, 1x USB-C 3.2 with Thunderbolt 4 (with DP and Powder Delivery), HDMI 2.1, LAN, headphone/mic jack, Kensington Lock
Battery	50 Wh, 65W charger with barrel-plug (USB-C charging also possible)
Size	362 mm or 14.25" (w) x 237 mm or 9.33" (d) x 17.9 mm or .7" (h)
Weight	1.8 kg (3.95 lbs) + .27 kg (.58 lbs) for the charger, EU version
Extras	white lit keyboard with NumPad, HD camera, fingerprint reader in the clickpad, bottom-firing stereo speakers, available in two colors – gold and gray

You can get this in multiple hardware configurations, with up to 12th-gen Alder Lake Core U or Core P processors, 16 GB of RAM, and RTX 2050 graphics.

Variants with integrated Iris Xe graphics are also available, on either Core U or Core P platforms, and we've reviewed one as well and we'll discuss it in the article.

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Design and ergonomics

As mentioned, the Aspire 5 is a basic laptop design, but on par with today's expectations and demands.

That means it's fairly compact and lightweight for a full-size laptop, at around 1.8 kg, and is built well, with only some flex in the middle of the chassis and almost none on the lid and screen ensemble. I also haven't noticed any funny noises or other issues when grabbing this along during my daily commute, or even when picking it up from a corner.

In fact, the lid is made of aluminum on this series, available in either a Silver or a Golden variant (the one we have here), while the rest of the case is entirely made out of plastic, with a silver color scheme. This mix of colors is a bit odd, but not a deal-breaker by any means. It's also fairly practical, easily hiding smudges and fingerprints.

Plastic is used for the bezels around the screen as well, which are not as thin as on more premium designs, but still, within acceptable limits – there's a picture below of the Aspire 5 and the Acer Swift Edge series side by side, to help you understand the differences between this sort of design and more portable ultra-light model.

In fact, the chin underneath the display is actually practical here, as it soaks up most of the heat coming out from the exhaust radiator placed just under the screen, and thus it prevents the panel from overheating.

As far as ergonomics go, this sits stably on the desk thanks to the grippy rubber feet on the underbelly, despite their small size. Acer also blunted the front lips and corners, so they're comfortable on the wrists.

The two hinges do a good job at stabilizing the display without it moving or wobbling during daily use, but on the other hand, they're rather stiff so you will need both hands to open up this notebook. BTW, the laptop is designed to lift up on some small rubber feet placed at the bottom of the screen part, in order to allow for better airflow underneath the chassis and into the fans. The screen only leans back to about 155 degrees, and not all the way flat.

The IO is lined around the edges, with most of the ports conveniently placed on the left side.

Aside from a card reader, there's everything you'll want here, including a LAN port, a full-size HDMI, multiple USB-A ports, and a USB-C port with full Thunderbolt 4 support. That means this laptop can charge via USB-C, if you don't want to use the included barrel-plug charger.

Keyboard and trackpad

The inputs here are standard for an Acer laptop, with a full-size keyboard with a NumPad section and a spacious clickpad underneath.

Acer went for smooth plastic keycaps that color match the silver chassis, and that helps them hide smudges and finger oil. The overall typing experience is fine, a little on the mushier side, but overall it is what I'd expect from a laptop in this class in 2022.

The flex in the chassis will take some time to get used to, but it doesn't impact the typing accuracy or overall feedback in a significant way.

Acer also implemented white backlighting for the keys, but that is optional and not available in some of the lower-tier configurations. Once more, it's a standard Acer implementation with some slight variations in lighting uniformity, but fine overall. You'll have to physically press a key to bring back the lights once they time out.

The clickpad is spacious and slightly indented from the armrest around. It's a plastic surface and not as smooth as the touch as the glass clickpads out there, but it tracks well and handled all the right gestures and swipes during my time with this laptop.

It does feel a little wonky with taps, and I found the physical clicks to be stiff and somewhat difficult to use.

I'll also mention that there's a finger sensor integrated into the top-left corner of the clickpad. I prefer stand-alone or power-button readers instead, but this one seems to work fine with Windows Hello and doesn't create a blind spot when gliding your finger over it.

Screen

Acer offers a standard 15.6-inch 16:9 matte display on this Aspire 5 series, with a barely acceptable IPS panel for a 2022 laptop.

If you're coming from an older laptop or don't expect much in terms of color quality, I guess this will do OK for you. For me, though, it's hard to accept this with the dim brightness and washed-out colors. In fact, this screen is pretty much the single most important potential deal-breaker that you must account for when looking at this laptop series.

Here's what we got in our tests, with an X-Rite i1 Display Pro sensor:

- Panel HardwareID: Chi Mei CMN15E7 (N156HCA-EAB);
- Coverage: 64.1% sRGB, 44.4% AdobeRGB, 45.6% DCI P3;
- Measured gamma: 2.25;
- Max brightness in the middle of the screen: 372.82 cd/m2 on power;
- Min brightness in the middle of the screen: 21.58 cd/m2 on power;
- Contrast at max brightness: 1399:1;
- White point: 7100 K;
- Black on max brightness: 0.19 cd/m2;
- PWM: No (to be further tested).

As mentioned, this panel doesn't get either very bright (for outdoor use) or very dim (for dark-room use). At the same time, colors are barely adequate at 64% sRGB gamut coverage, but the viewing angles are OK and the contrast and blacks are better than expected.

You'll want to calibrate this to fix the Gammty and White point as much as possible. Once calibrated, this panel ended up uniformly lit and I also haven't noticed any bad light bleeding around the edges.

One final aspect worth covering here is the fact that this is a 60 Hz panel with slow-response times, so if you're planning on running games more often than not on your computer, you should spend a little more for something with a faster and higher-fresh display (and more powerful specs, at the same time).

Hardware and performance

Our test model is a mid-specced configuration of the 2022 Acer Aspire 5, code name A515-57G, with an Intel Core i7-1255U processor and Nvidia MX550 2GB graphics, 8 GB of DDR4-3200 memory, and a middling 512 GB gen3 SSD.

Disclaimer: I bought this unit locally as I was looking for a budget daily driver for a family member. I tested it with the software available as of mid-October 2022 (BIOS 1.15, Care Center 4.00.3042 app). Some aspects might still change with future software updates.

However, I've also reviewed an Intel Core i3-1220P + Iris Xe variant of the laptop (received from Acer), and will mention the findings down below as well, in case you're interested in a configuration without a dGPU.

Spec-wise, this is based on the 2022 Intel 12th-gen Alder Lake Core U hardware platform. The Core i7-1255U is a hybrid design with 2 Performance and 8 Efficiency Cores, as well as 12 combined threads. This 15-inch implementation supplies the CPU with 28+W of sustained power in demanding loads, allowing it to perform better than in more portable and lower-power designs.

Graphics are handled by the Nvidia MX550 graphics chip on our unit, an entry-level dGPU based on the 12nm Turing TU117 graphics cores. It offers 1024 shaders and 2 GB of GDDR6 memory in this variant, and runs at 30W of power. iGPUs-only and an RTX 2050 dGPU are also options for this series.

Our configuration also comes with 8 GB of DDR4-3200 memory, with two 4GB sticks in dual-channel. The memory can be easily upgraded, and 16 GB (2x 8 GB) configurations are also available in stores.

For storage, Acer opted for a middling PCIe gen3 Micron 2450 drive here, but gen4 SSDs are also supported, in case you might want to upgrade it. Two M.2 2280 slots are available inside.

It is possible to open up this device to get to the internals, and it's a basic task, requiring you to remove the back panel held in place by a few Philips screws. Inside you'll find the RAM, SSD, and WiFi slots, as well as the thermal module, battery, and speakers. The image below is from the Core P tested unit, without a dGPU, and with two SSDs.

As far as the software goes, I put a fresh install of Windows 11 on my unit, with only the basic Acer apps from the site, which means I didn't have to deal with any of the bloatware that normally comes preinstalled with Acer laptops.

Acer still don't offer any sort of control software with different power modes for these devices, unlike all the other OEMs. That means you'll have to rely on the power modes in Windows 11, and I've used the laptop on Best Performance when plugged in and on Best Power Efficiency when unplugged.

Here's what to expect in terms of speeds and temperatures with daily multitasking and light use.

Performance and benchmarks

On to more demanding loads, we start by testing the CPU's performance in the Cinebench R15 loop test.

We've tested two variants of this laptop, one with a Core i7-1255U and another with a Core i3-1220P, and both performed identically. The system allows for peak PL2 power of 55W for a brief moment, and then 28W of sustained PL1 power in this test, for both processors.

The fans ramp up to about 40 dBA at 55W and then stabilize at sub 35dB at 28W, while the temperatures stabilize at around 65 degrees Celsius. Both are excellent results, and suggest Acer could even allow a higher sustained power setting for this sort of demanding CPU activity. That would come in handy if you opt for a Core i5-1240P or i7-1260P configuration, with the 4PC+8Ec hybrid design.

On battery power, our sample ran stably at 15W, with much briefer bursts to higher-power settings. Hence, the performance on battery power is not quite on par with what you'll get with this device when plugged in. All these

are illustrated in the graph below.

To put these in perspective, here's how this i7-1255U implementation fares against other hardware platforms available in similar kinds of laptops. The extra cores in the AMD platforms allow them to outperform in this sustained multi-threaded load, but the Intel models have an advantage in daily use with the superior IPC and clock speeds, as we'll see further down.

We then went ahead and further verified our findings with the more taxing Cinebench R23 loop test and in Blender, confirming our above findings.

We then ran the 3DMark CPU profile test.

Finally, we ran our combined CPU+GPU stress tests on this notebook, on the Best Performance profile. 3DMark stress runs the same test for 20 times in a loop and looks for performance variation and degradation over time, and both configurations were able to pass it, which means the performance does not degrade and the hardware does not overheat with longer loads.

Next, here are some benchmark results. We ran the entire suite of tests and benchmarks on the Best Performance profile in Windows 11 on this Core i7-1255U + MX550 configuration, with the screen set at the default FHD resolution.

Here's what we got.

- **3DMark 13 – Fire Strike:** 5702 (Graphics – 6205, Physics – 11271, Combined – 2428);
- **3DMark 13 – Night Raid:** 22654 (Graphics – 32751, CPU – 8247);
- **3DMark 13 – Time Spy:** 2667 (Graphics – 2502, CPU – 4265);
- **Uniengine Superposition – 1080p Extreme:** 983;
- **Uniengine Superposition – 1080p Medium:** 4886;
- **Handbrake 1.3.3 (4K to 1080p encode):** 36.42 average fps;
- **PassMark 10:** 4247 (CPU – 16587, 3D – 2355, Memory – 5220, Disk – 23567);
- **PCMark 10:** 5857 (Essentials – 9710, Productivity – 8355, Digital Content Creation – 6722);
- **GeekBench 5.4.3 64-bit:** Single-Core: 1683, Multi-core: 7453;
- **CineBench R15 (best run):** CPU 1508 cb, CPU Single Core 253 cb;
- **CineBench R20 (best run):** CPU 3154 cb, CPU Single Core 668 cb;
- **CineBench R23:** CPU 8362 cb (best run), CPU 7936 (10 min loop test), CPU Single Core 1750 CB (best run);
- **x265 HD Benchmark 64-bit:** 45.66 s.

And here are some work-related benchmarks:

- **Blender 3.01 – BMW scene – CPU Compute:** 5m 10s;
- **Blender 3.01 – Classroom scene – CPU Compute:** 12m 41s;
  PugetBench – DaVinci Resolve: 430;
- **PugetBench – Adobe Photoshop:** 554;
- **PugetBench – Adobe Premiere:** crashed;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – 3DSMax:** 18.02 ;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – Catia:** 18.91;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – Creo:** 43.07;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – Energy:** 0.62;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – Maya:** 110.79;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – Medical:** 12.22;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – SNX:** 11.15;
- **SPECviewperf 2020 – SW:** 58.52;
- **V-Ray Benchmark:** CPU – 5039 vsamples, GPU CUDA – 140 vpaths;

These are some competitive results.

On the CPU side, sure, this isn't as fast in multi-threaded loads as the 12th-gen Core P or the current Ryzen U platforms, but is still fast enough for everyday use and multitasking and even some occasional workloads such as Photoshop.

On the GPU side, the MX550 is only 10-20% slower than an RTX 1650 35W of the past years, but much slower than an RTX 3050/3050Ti at similar power.

At the same time, the MX550 trades blows with the Radeon 680M graphics in the AMD Ryzen 6000 processors and is faster compared to the lower-power configurations of the AMD Ryzen specs, such as the Zephyrus S 13. Plus, it's 25-50% faster than the Intel Iris Xe graphics available in the Core U and Core P configurations, based on the power settings of each implementation.

In fact, Acer also offers the laptop in Core P or Core U variants with Iris Xe graphics, without a dGPU. If interested in one of those, here's what to expect in terms of performance on the i7-1255U + Iris Xe model (we measured these by disabling the MX550 on this review unit).

- **3DMark 13 – Fire Strike:** 3616 (Graphics – 3893, Physics – 18571, Combined – 1320);
- **3DMark 13 – Night Raid:** 14260 (Graphics – 16474, CPU – 8097);
- **3DMark 13 – Time Spy:** 1530 (Graphics – 1357, CPU – 5533);
- **Uniengine Superposition – 1080p Extreme:** 781;
- **Uniengine Superposition – 1080p Medium:** 2042;
- **PassMark 10:** 4365 (CPU – 16682, 3D – 2830, Memory – 2599, Disk – 23011);
- **PCMark 10:** 5508 (Essentials – 10435, Productivity – 7025, Digital Content Creation – 6187);
- **PugetBench – Adobe Photoshop:** 557;
- **PugetBench – Adobe Premiere:** 187;
- **V-Ray Benchmark:** CPU – 5223 vsamples, GPU CUDA – 140 vpaths;

These are excellent results for an Intel U implementation, thanks to the high sustained power settings possible in this chassis.

Back to our i7 + MX550 unit, as far as gaming performance goes, you can run most simpler or older games on this device, at FHD resolution and Low/Medium settings.

Here's what to expect on Low settings compared to a few iGPU models and the GTX 1650 35+W version of the Acer Swift X14.

Low settings	Acer Aspire 5 – i7-1255U, MX550 30W, FHD 1080p	ZenBook 14 2022 – i7-1260p, Iris Xe, 30+W, FHD+ 1200p	ZenBook S 13 2022 – R7-6800U, Radeon, 15+W, FHD 1200p	ZenBook 14 2021 – i7-1165G7, Iris Xe, 19+W, FHD 1080p	Swift X 14 – Ryzen 7, 1650 35W, FHD resolution
Bioshock Infinite (DX 11, Low Preset)	167 fps (117 fps – 1% low)	70 fps (48 fps – 1% low)	102 fps (63 fps – 1% low)	70 fps (40 fps – 1% low)	142 fps (103 fps – 1% low)
Doom: Eternal (Vulkan, Medium Preset)	55 fps (45 fps – 1% low)	29 fps (15 fps – 1% low)	45 fps (34 fps – 1% low)	–	–
Far Cry 5 (DX11, Low Preset)	61 fps (48 fps – 1% low)	29 fps (15 fps – 1% low)	45 fps (34 fps – 1% low)	–	–
Dota 2 (DX 11, Best Looking Preset)	94 fps (50 fps – 1% low)	76 fps (52 fps – 1% low)	74 fps (46 fps – 1% low)	56 fps (44 fps – 1% low)	84 fps (44 fps – 1% low)
Shadow of Tomb Raider (DX12, Lowest Preset, no AA)	70 fps (43 fps – 1% low)	36 fps (23 fps – 1% low)	47 fps (35 fps – 1% low)	28 fps (16 fps – 1% low)	64 fps (36 fps – 1% low)
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt (DX 11, Low Preset, Hairworks Off)	71 fps (48 fps – 1% low)	38 fps (20 fps – 1% low)	41 fps (26 fps – 1% low)	–	73 fps (60 fps – 1% low)

- Doom, Dota 2, Witcher 3 – recorded with MSI Afterburner in game mode;
- Bioshock, Tomb Raider games – recorded with the included Benchmark utilities;

And here's what to expect on Medium compared to a few iGPU and lower-level dGPU configurations.

Medium settings	Acer Aspire 5 – i7-1255U + MX550 30W FHD resolution	Zephyrus G14 2022 – R9 + Radeon 680M FHD+ resolution	ZenBook 14X – Core i9 + Iris Xe FHD+ resolution	XPS 15 – Core i7 + 3050Ti 35+W FHD+ resolution
Far Cry 5 (DX 11, Normal Preset, TAA)	48 fps (36 fps – 1% low)	43 fps (38 fps – 1% low)	33 fps (29 fps – 1% low)	72 fps (54 fps – 1% low)
Shadow of Tomb Raider (DX 12, Medium Preset, TAA)	42 fps (27 fps – 1% low)	35 fps (24 fps – 1% low)	24 fps (17 fps – 1% low)	52 fps (26 fps – 1% low)
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt (DX 11, Medium Preset, Hairworks Low)	62 fps (42 fps – 1% low)	47 fps (34 fps – 1% low)	40 fps (22 fps – 1% low)	92 fps (59 fps – 1% low)

Bottom point, yes, you can run some games on this laptop and you're getting better performance than on ultraportables designs with only iGPUs graphics, but if gaming is important for you, I'd suggest opting for a more powerful laptop with a faster display.

With that out of the way, the performance logs down below show the CPU/GPU clocks and temperatures in a couple of games.

On the i7-1255U + MX550 configuration, the CPU runs at 10-15W of power, and the GPU at 28-30W, right at the design power limit. Temperatures stay within mid-60s to mid-70s on the CPU, and mid to high 60s on the GPU, with the laptop sitting on the desk.

On the Intel i7-1255U + Iris Xe or the Intel Core i3-1220P + Iris Xe configurations without a dGPU, the CPU package runs at 28W sustained (or lower in the less demanding titles), with temperatures in the 50 or 60s.

The fans ramp up to 40 dBA on the Best Performance profile on all models.

Running games on battery power is possible as well, with the MX550 GPU slightly limited at 25W in this case.

Noise, Heat, Connectivity, speakers, and others

Acer puts a mid-level thermal module on this laptop, with two fans, two heatpipes, and one long radiator.

The image illustrates the Core P configuration without a dGPU, while the MX550 model gets the dGPU placed in between the radiator and the CPU, with an extra thermal plate over the vRAM.

Battery life

Air comes in mostly through the bottom of the laptop, with the open-grill design, and is pushed out through the radiator positioned in between the hinges.

That means the hot air goes into the screen, but the components are never running hot on this design, and most of the heat is soaked up by the bottom plastic chin. Thus, the panel never gets above high-30s C, so you should not worry about any heat-induced damage here.

In fact, the entire laptop runs mostly cool even with demanding loads, both on the Core U i7+MX550 and on the Core P i3 + Iris Xe models. Of course, the iGPU-only model heats up less.

There is a hotspot on the back of the laptop on the i7+MX550 model, just over the GPU vRAM. That heats up to 55-60 degrees Celsius on my unit, but it doesn't seem to affect the performance in any way.

Gaming – playing Dota 2 for 30 minutes, Best Performance mode, fan at ~40 dBA

With daily use, the laptop barely gets warm in some spots despite the fact that the fans keep mostly idle and rarely kick on with multitasking. I did notice some slight electronic creaking on these samples, though, so it's best to look carefully into this aspect once you receive your unit. Electronic noises are a random issue and can occur in all designs.

Daily Use – streaming Netflix in EDGE for 30 minutes, Best Power Efficiency mode, fans 0-30 dBA

For connectivity, there's WiFi 6E and Bluetooth 5 through a Mediatek module on this laptop. It performed well with our setup and the signal and performance remained strong at 30 feet away from the router, with obstacles in between.

Audio is handled by a set of stereo speakers that fire through grills placed on the underside, which means you should be careful not to cover and muffle them when using the laptop on the lap. The audio quality isn't much, with very little on the lower-end, as with most Acer Aspire and Swift laptops. It's fine for some music and movies, but make sure to properly adjust your expectations here.

As for the camera, it's HD and placed at the top of the screen, but overall washed-out and just poor quality. It's flanked by microphones, and the two will get the job done for calls, just once more, don't expect much in image or audio quality.

Battery life

There's a 50Wh battery inside this Acer Aspire 5, rather small for a full-size laptop by today's standards, so don't expect much in terms of runtimes on a charge.

Here's what we got in our tests, with the screen's brightness set at around 120 nits (~60 brightness).
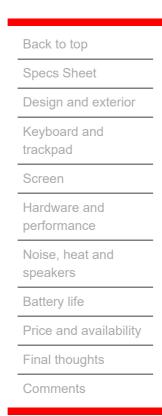
- **9 W (~5-6 h of use)** – text editing in Google Drive, Best Power Efficiency Mode, screen at 60%, Wi-Fi ON;

- **7.5 W (~7 h of use)** – 1080p fullscreen video on Youtube in Edge, Best Power Efficiency Mode, screen at 60%, Wi-Fi ON;
- **6.5 W (~8 h of use)** – Netflix FHD fullscreen in Edge, Best Power Efficiency Mode, screen at 60%, Wi-Fi ON;
- **12.5 W (~4-5 h of use)** – browsing in Edge, Balanced Mode, screen at 60%, Wi-Fi ON;
- **55 W (-1 h of use)** – gaming – Dota 2, Balanced Mode, screen at 60%, Wi-Fi ON.

There are fair results for an Intel platform, so most of you should be fine even with this 50 Wh battery here.

Expect the Core P variants to require a little more energy with basic loads.

Acer pairs the laptop with a compact and lightweight 65W charger that plugs in via a barrel-plug connector. It's a dual-piece design with long cables. A full recharge still takes over 1.5 hours. You can also plug this in via USB-C, if that's convenient to you – you're going to get the same performance with a 65W USB-C charger.

Price and availability- Acer Aspire 5

The Acer Aspire 5 series is widely available in stores in most regions of the world.

I've bought my i7-1255U + MX550 model for around 700 EUR over here in Europe, while other models are available for under 600 EUR.

In the US, the i5-1240P + RTX 2050 configuration seems to be the most widespread Aspire 5 A515-57G option, at just shy of $900. Core U models with Iris Xe graphics are also available as the Aspire 5 A515-57, many for under $600.

Various discounts might apply at the time you're reading the article, so follow this link for updated prices and configurations in your region.

Final thoughts- Acer Aspire 5 A515-57G

This generation of the Aspire 5 refines on its predecessors with a slight update in design and practicality, and a more noticeable update in specs and internal cooling.

Unfortunately, Acer haven't updated the display in the same manner, and only seem to offer basic-level IPS panels for this series, the kind that might not suffice by today's expectations. The Audio quality isn't much here, either.

All in all, though, the Acer Aspire 5 is still a solid contender in its price range, especially in the affordable A515-57 configurations without a dGPU, but also in the MX550 model tested here and widely available in most regions.

The competition in its class are devices like the Asus VivoBook 15, HP Laptop 15, Huawei MateBook D15, the Dell Inspiron 15/16, or the Lenovo IdeaPad 5. We're also covering a more ample selection of good 15-inch laptops in this separate article.

Let me know what you think of this series and get in touch in the comment section below if you have any questions about it.

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Andrei Girbea, Editor-in-Chief. I've a Bachelor's in Computer Engineering and I've been covering mobile technology since the 2000s. You'll mostly find reviews and thorough guides written by me here on the site, as well as some occasional first-impression articles.

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12 COMMENTS

Ron
October 18, 2022 at 6:39 am

There is Acer software for power modes. I had Acer Aspire and there was this little app that looked very primitive but had option to change profiles.

Reply

Andrei Girbea
October 18, 2022 at 9:21 am

Hmmm, thanks, but I haven't noticed it on any of the recent Acer laptops that I've tried. Do you remember what it was called?

Reply

Aurelio
October 25, 2022 at 1:01 pm

"Acer Quick Access"
There is an option, under "Acer Signature Features", on "System Usage Mode", between Silent, Normal and Performance.

Maybe this was the software he was talking about?

NikoB
January 4, 2023 at 11:47 pm

Andrei, have you checked the HDMI capabilities on this series? Why you write about obsolete 1.4b, if Acer claims HDMI 2.1 (8k@60 with DSC loss compression), and apparently it full version with at 48Gbps? acer.com/us-en/laptops/aspire/aspire-5

It is also interesting – does the TB4 port support 2 x 4k monitors at the same time or not through the hub?

Also, a question for you – it's not clear, with 1255U/1235U/1240p variants without the external gpu, exactly 2 heat pipes and 2 coolers installed?

And could you add a cache and memory test from AIDA64 to your reviews (screenshot). In all profiles of work, including from the battery? Usually it is 6-8 screenshots. This says a lot about RAM/Cache (L1/L2/L3) performance. For example, AMD versions always lose very strongly in these tests to Intel versions, especially in 2022. Up to 2 times…

Reply

Andrei Girbea
January 5, 2023 at 9:49 am

The HDMI part was an error. I don't have an answer to your other questions about this sort of entry-level laptop.

Reply

NikoB
January 6, 2023 at 2:25 pm

In reality, this "starter" series is capable of doing some gaming laptops bundled with eGPUs.

The i7 1260p is faster than the i9 12900H with an external desktop GTX4090, as proven by real world benchmarks.

I like this series, if only Acer would sell them with normal 2.5k/4k@120Hz screens with 100% sRGB and normal RGB (for each key separately) keyboard (with normal numpad) like Legion series. 4k@120Hz from the AUO retails around $180-200, which is quite bearable. An RGB keyboard is another $100. As a result, with a normal cooling system, I see no problem selling it for $1000, instead of $600 in the junior series. And for $ 1200-1300 in high series ones with such hardware.

I don't understand why Acer, MSI, Asus, Gigabyte always ruin keyboards with a broken numpad. Or spoiled totally or an arrow to the right in place of the insert button.
They themselves are killing their own mass sales with such a damaged keyboard, unsuitable for fast blind typing…

NikoB
January 4, 2023 at 11:57 pm

And a couple more questions that many do not pay attention to – is it possible to set up S3 (Suspend to RAM) sleep mode on this model (and others), instead of the inconvenient S5? People write that on AMD it has problems with Zen3+ on AMD, but on Intel it works (at least if you patch the Windows registry).

Also for laptops, the following important details in sleep S3 mode are important, about which almost no one writes:
– is it possible to disable waking up from the keyboard (only by the power button and nothing else) and waking up from opening the screen lid? At home, waking up from the keyboard is very annoying if it is not disabled, as, for

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COMPARISONS AND TOPS

Fanless laptops (completely silent) in 2023 – the best options

Andrei Girbea | February 10, 2023
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example, in some Lenovo series. Everything is easily turned off on my Dell G5, which is very convenient, I can't accidentally turn on the laptop from the keyboard.

And it would be nice to introduce an eGPU test in the future, because it is becoming more and more popular. In addition, as has been proven in various tests, the H series performs worse with eGPUs than the U / P series, which have the TB4 controller built right into the SoC. The H series has to connect an external chip.

Reply

:23 pm

with a QHD screen and 100% sRGB – it's not bright, but with good color reproduction, viewing e best (claimed 170/170, 75% AdobeRGB 8 bit, 16M colors, 20ms response, 15k hours of hard coating, ADS type/oxide IPS), but not bad . Panel backlight with multi-row 10S5P stips. The d for movies and TV series in complete darkness (contrast 1200:1+, no light bleeding), but it t 2.5K resolution is not compatible with fhd and 4k video, because. neither 3840 is divisible by 0, nor is 2560 divisible by an integer by 1920. The result is a slightly muddier picture than if a 4k d and preferably at 120Hz. Their prices have already dropped significantly. In addition, on a 4k o set 200% scaling right away and get the same size as on the fhd panel, but with a huge clarity, especially in cloudy Chrome, where Direct Write is not disabled from version 50, unlike azy irregular anti-aliasing is easily turned off with one setting. In addition, you can compile rom source and remake it as you need.

I disagree with the author about a normal cooling system. It is bad, despite 2 heat pipes, a large radiator and 2 coolers. With 1235U, the noise is clearly audible even from a meter, despite the fact that it is not turned on for only 2-3 minutes.

There is no protection against hot air being blown directly onto the screen panel electronics.

I want to emphasize a critical thing – the maximum temperature of the QHD panels is 50C. This means that you cannot use this laptop with the screen lid closed (as many people like as a system unit) – 100% guaranteed overheating, for example, when backing up the system volume using dism in esd compression mode. And these are standard Windows tools.

Even the 2019 Lenovo S340 with a single cooler and heatpipe is much quieter with the R5 3500U than this laptop. It is literally inaudible when the video is running on YouTube from half a meter in the latest version of Chrome 109.

The author writes that the keyboard is suitable for people who need a numpad. I am such a professional. NOT suitable. I own fast blind typing and in this mode using numpad as a navigation block is IMPOSSIBLE. The memory of the hands is constantly poked into the missing 4th row. Tactile is also bad. This is a complete ugliness from Acer (and the same is in Asus in a number of models). They themselves stupidly reduce their sales by orders of magnitude because of such an ugly keyboard, instead of the classics like in Thinkpad earlier with a key travel of 1.8mm at least. The new P16s from Lenovo already have an ugly keyboard in terms of tactile feedback. It is not suitable for long blind typing.

Also, as a right-hander, I didn't like that the audio jack on the right – when you use it on the couch, reclining – the headphone cord gets tangled on the mouse pad and hand (and they headphones have cable only 1.2-1.4m long).

I didn't like the BIOS at all. After 10 minutes of ordeal (and knowing about Ctrl+S) I was unable to turn off safe mode and boot from the flash drive in CSM (Legacy) mode. Safeboot/Legacy page fully disabled and no instruction from Acer for bios in manual. Acer NOT support Linux for drivers and service utils.

All newfangled WinPE ISO images (for endf 2022) cannot detect the built-in SSD and touchpad. So if sell it to you with eShell (where Acer programmers don't even increase the font by 2-3 times – everything is very small on QHD), to test the laptop, you need to bring your wired or radio mouse to the store.

The laptop starts from the BIOS for a very long time, monstrously long. The stupid power button(inside numpad ulgy block) does not turn off the laptop after 3-4 seconds, like on all normal laptops. Its behavior is unpredictable by the shutdown time. The overall impression of his thoughtfulness is several times worse than that of the 3500U in the S340, where everything is very fast. And Asus N550JK starts even faster with i7 4700HQ – literally 10 (ten) times!

The memory works in Gear2 slow mode, and not in Gear1 fast mode for the memory controller, despite the fact that Acer saved on DDR5, so the build-in potential and support for TB4 with two 4k monitors, and even more so in parallel HDMI (2.1 is most likely a lie – the usual 2.0b) is unrealistic with such a slow memory.

A laptop with a QHD screen (its only advantage for it and TB4 port for Intel versions) with a 16GB/512Gb SSD and 1235U costs $850-900.
I don't think that this series can cost that much, given the many obvious shortcomings and critical problems like overheating of the QHD panel with max working temp 50C – this huge problem with close lid. Moreover, I have already seen a video from Asia, where they changed burnt panels on this series…

The red price for this model with QHD 16/512 1235U is $600-650. It is not worth more, taking into account all the associated risks and only 1 year warranty with us.

Reply

Andrei Girbea
February 3, 2023 at 12:16 pm

Good feedback, thank youy! You have some over expectations from this class of laptop imo, but most of the points that you're mentioning are valid.

Reply

NikoB
February 4, 2023 at 2:19 pm

The most surprising thing is that there is plenty of space for a full-fledged keyboard with a full numpad even in 15.6 "models, but such a keyboard is installed by Acer only in 17.3. But ironically, in 17.3" there are no 2560×1440 panels, at least in Asprire 5, and there text pixelation is already significant – why I never buy a 17.3 with a fhd screen, the grain is too large, the text is already grainy… With 2.5k it was at least about 170ppi…

I also noticed that the cable for connecting the screen to the 15.6" Aspire and the webcam / microphones is very short and close to the loops.
Because of the same jamb in the N550JK, the block is shaking, because. the cord is short, very stiff and shakes it in the connector, and there is no metal retainer plate, as in normal series as in my old Thinkpad and other laptops. As a result, the Asus N550JK apparently frayed the short cable when bending and the panel burned out exactly 1 month after the end of the 2-year warranty, I changed it, and for the block I made a home-made aluminum bracket and clamped it with bolts from above and now, once again, I try not to cover the screen close.
Here, apparently, there will be the same problem with time, only the warranty for the series is only 1 year, but I would like to have 3 years out of the box like the Travelmate series. In general, I don't want to take Intel in the U series at all, but I want something of the 6600/6800U level with USB40 ports, but AMD(Lisa) itself recently admitted at the end of the year that they deliberately do not sell large batches of processors in order to keep the price high… It's disgusting, but there's nothing we can do about it. Therefore, it is not surprising that for the whole of 2022 there were practically no reviews on the 6600/6800U in the 15.6"+ class with a full keyboard. And the availability of such laptops in the world is minimal – they are in terrible short supply even in the United States – "out of stock" always.

You write that I demand a lot from a laptop for $900, but let, Legion 5 Pro c 6800H+3070Ti 16/512 sell in the US in the fall for $1100-1200. Obviously, the Acer Aspire does not even come close to it in terms of quality and features, so I just look at it as a laptop with a very high price and do not understand why I should pay $900 for it, when for 1100-1200$ you can buy in times cooler laptop with 2 times longer warranty and many times better technical support for the future.

My first attempt to buy Acer was about 7 years ago. There were 2 attempts – at first they took out 3 boxes to me and they all turned out to be defective after the start of testing. After a while, I tried again with 4 copies, but it turned out to be defective. After that, I stopped trying to buy Acer. For the first time in 7+ years, I wanted to personally try the new Aspire 5, but the disgusting keyboard and all the other shortcomings described again put a red cross on Acer, at least for me personally. Maybe I'll try again with 17.3" if I find it with 2560×1440 panel and i5 1240p as minimum, but so far I don't see such options for sale anywhere. 17.3" at least have a full numpad…

∧

Andrei Girbea
February 4, 2023 at 2:26 pm

The Legion (and others such as a TUF, Nitro, etc) is a different kind of laptop: thicker, heavier. Lenovo also have the pricing power that smaller OEMs cannot match, for multiple reasons.

At the end of the day, it's up to you to decide on waht best suits your needs. Looks like this Aspire is not for you, so why not just move on to something else?

2:33 pm

doesn't matter. It is important for me not to overpay for extra functionality. I don't need discrete long time. I don't play anymore.

5587 and an Asus N550JK both bought for less than $900. I see no reason why the Aspire 5 so much – because it is radically worse than both in every way, exclude very good screen can be seen at first glance and this feeling only intensifies with a head-on comparison.

ne with the right set of fast and important ports. But now I understand that HDMI 2.1 is not real there, it is (with the connivance of the HDMI consortium) a cynical wrapper for the old 2.0b. Pleases only TB4 and 3 USB-A ports, the presence of RJ45 (it's a pity that it's not 2.5-5Gb / s so necessary for accessing the NAS) and an angular and more reliable (at times) round power plug on the left, convenient for use on sofas, in contrast from idiotic usb-c protruding from the case on the left of many manufacturers (what prevents them from making two usb-c ports on the right and left on the edge or one in the back – it's not clear, except for greed)

Legion is good for everyone, but it costs more and with an unnecessary discrete in the appendage, but why do I need it?

Given the lack of strength of the Aspire 5 case (which is noted in all reviews), I really don't understand why it strives for low weight in such series – it's just a scam of an incompetent public for a "portable solution", which in reality is better not to carry anywhere, because to it is guaranteed to destroyed quickly, including the body and hinges.

It's a shame that for the home there is no series with 17.3 4k panels or at least 2.5 (16:10) with a normal (heavy and quiet) system cooling, but without a discrete video chip. And a full-fledged keyboard, which was not even in the Thinkpad of the worst series. Increasingly, 1.5mm key travel, almost everywhere a narrowed row of Esc, F1..F12 and damaged numpads. Either completely or with an arrow to the right in place of Insert, as always in MSI/Gigabyte, most Asus models, not to mention the rest of the Chinese. And where the numpad is full – buttons are often narrowed in width, although there is definitely a place for full ones on the case in width. In this sense, for me, the HP Omen 2018 has the perfect case and keyboard (not counting the tactile sensations). There is literally everything right. I almost bought it, but Dell at that moment turned out to be significantly cheaper and, to be honest, I didn't think that I couldn't get used to its terrible, tactile keyboard, as if you were tapping your fingers on the board, and not on the elastic keys. One of the first models to switch to 1.5mm and a very weak response for smartphone and tablet lovers.

But the Dell G5 5587 pleases me for 5 years with complete noiselessness in operation (HP Omen 2018 too noisy) – the coolers do not turn on for hours at all, I recently opened it 4 years later – they are like new – not a hint of dust on their impeller.

I'd like a 17.3" laptop with 16:10 4k@120Hz (<10ms response on G2G/B2W), powered at the rear or at the very edge of the rear with an angled round plug, left or right. Lots of ports, with RJ45 from 2.5 Gbps, with a full keyboard with a key travel of at least 1.8 mm and without a discrete video chip, but with a TB4 port. If necessary, I can connect an external eGPU. And of course, it is as quiet as possible with a background load on the cores of up to 50%. Weight? That's all for me even if it's 2.8-3kg, I'm not going to drag him around the streets (perhaps a few times a year), but it will often move from room to room and from the table to the bed, sofa and back. Therefore, a stationary computer, as an alternative, does not suit me. I have it and not one, but these are other goals.

But alas, there are simply no such solutions on the market. Why, I don't understand…

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