

## The Cassette Revival

What used to be 'in' years ago, often returns years later in a trendy retro form. Fashion styles, haircuts, make-up, music, and furniture: it all comes and goes, only to return later. So too, has the cassette tape returned. Funnily enough, it's today's Top 40 artists that are not only streaming their music, but also releasing it on CD, vinyl, and more recently cassette tape.

### History

People discovered ways to record and play music using records (or vinyl) in the early 1900s. For years, records were the way artists could record their music and share it with the masses. Technology kept developing and in 1962 the cassette tape was invented. However, it wasn't until 1966 that the first albums were released. The cassette was smaller than a record and less fragile. The cassette tape remained popular, reaching its peak in 1989. After that, the cassette tape was replaced by the more technically advanced CD.

### 25 Playing tapes

A cassette tape worked by using magnetic tape upon which the music was recorded. To play the music, a tape was inserted into a tape player, and the tape wound around the wheels from left to right. When one side was finished, the tape was flipped over to play the other side. In 1979, Sony introduced a portable cassette player called the Walkman. To listen to music on your Walkman, you inserted the tape, plugged in the headphones, and then put them on. People were seen walking, jogging, or just hanging out listening to music by themselves on their Walkman. This was revolutionary!



### 40 The comeback

First, there was the comeback of vinyl records. Now, the tape cassette is making a comeback. In recent years, pop artists like Billie Eilish and Lady Gaga, to name a few, have helped bring the tape back from extinction by bringing music out in this form. Even more recently, Taylor Swift, released her newest album *Midnights* not only on LP and CD, but also on tape. Because popular artists are doing this, sales are going up. For example, the number of tapes sold in the USA has jumped in the past few years, from 173,000 tapes in 2020, to 343,000 in 2021, and already more than 306,000 this year.

### 55 Pandemic

Funnily enough, there is another reason for the cassette revival. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the vinyl-pressing plants that produce records slowed down. Producing vinyl takes months and is also expensive. Cassettes are quick and cheap to produce – production takes only two weeks. Being cheaper, more and more pop artists use tapes to publicise their music.

### 65 Nostalgic

If you want to be a part of this newest revival, before spending money on vintage items, first check with your parents or grandparents. Many will certainly have some of these nostalgic items hanging around in their attics!

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Sources: [bbc.co.uk/newsround](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround); [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com)