

# **AUDEZE LCDI3 HEADPHONES: EXCEPTIONAL AUDIOPHILE SOUND THAT WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC**

Audeze delivers world-class IEM headphones that produce audiophile-level sound, specifically designed with your mobile device in mind.

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The Audeze LCD-i3 with the Astell&Kern AKjr Headphones designed by a rocket scientist? Yes, in a manner of speaking the high-end Audeze headphone brand was founded with a flexible circuit material that was intended for spacecraft by an ex-Nasa scientist. The engineers understood that the material was ideal for creating diaphragms for their planar magnetic headphones.

This very strong and exceptionally thin material was perfect for disrupting the status quo in planar headphone design, and that's just what they did with their first on-ear headphones the LCD-2. Since then, the brand has gone on to create some of the best headphones in the world and expand their line up to professional, gaming, and in-ear headphones that deliver positively exceptional sound.

## What is a planar design you may ask?

Instead of using traditional cones, a planar magnetic design creates sound with a thin, electrostatic-style, flexible material sandwiched between the outer layers of the mechanism. Similar to a dynamic driver, the sound in a **planar magnetic** driver is generated by regulating the electrical flow through wires suspended in between **magnets**.

You can get your nerd on here if you want to get more in-depth on the subject with this great article from out on it here from [HowToGeek.com](https://www.howtogeek.com)



What's in the box:

- 1.5m Auxiliary (3.5mm) Cable
- 1.5m Cipher Lightning Cable
- Audeze CIPHER Bluetooth Module
- Nylon Travel Case with foam insert
- Selection of Offset Ear Hooks and Ear Fins for a customizable fit
- Cleaning brush and shirt clip
- User Guide and Warranty Card
- Certificate of Authenticity

The new LCDi3 in-ear headphone is the latest edition to the iSine series of IEMs coming in between the lower end iSine 10 and LX and the top end LCD-i4, permanently replacing the iSine 20 in the line-up. [The entire line of IEM's from Audeze](#) is worth checking out and offers superior sound for almost all budgets.



The LCD-i3 borrows from its more expensive sibling the LCD-i4 and uses the magnesium housing and grill design offering a step up from previous iSine 20. This new design reduces unwanted resonance and offers improved resolution, but also comes in at almost twice the price of its predecessor coming in at around \$900.

So let's get into it, are these buds worth almost a grand?

### **Design and Build Quality**

These buds are purpose-built, and due to the planar magnetic design and open back, they are quite large for a pair of IEMs. However, the product

design team have helped to alleviate the bulk with ear hooks and fins that help to hold these beasts in place. At first, I was a bit skeptical, but after fumbling around with the hooks, fins, and different tips, I managed to get a perfect fit.

The other design element that is both a pro and a con is that these are open-back headphones. So if you are in a loud environment like a subway, train station, etc. you simply get too much background noise to enjoy your music. I found using these in quiet spaces like my office, libraries, etc. renders the best user experience and allows you to completely immerse yourself in the incredible sound.

The modular design of these headphones allows the user not only find the perfect fit but also the ideal cable input set up for whatever device and sound level you are looking for.

I tested the LCD-i3s in the following configurations below, ranked in order of sound quality.

1. **3.5 mm cable with an Astell&Kern AKjr high rez media player.**
2. **iPhone with the Cipher lightning cable which includes an in-line DAC and amplifier.**
3. **iPhone with the Cipher Bluetooth module which also consists of a DAC and amp as well and works with aptX/aptX HD codecs and supports AAC.**

**How do they sound?**

So let's start with the fact that in every configuration these IEMs sound absolutely top-notch and deliver an audiophile-level experience. If you are a true audiophile, you will probably want to use your HD music player and FLAC or DSD files to get the most out of them. However, even audiophiles should be ok with the compressed formats due to the exceptional quality of the Cipher cable's built-in DAC and amp.

The 3.5 mm cable did yield the best sound, capturing every possible nuance and detail imaginable. I didn't think that I could get much more out of my Astell&Kern HD audio player, but these buds delivered on every level and I almost felt like I could hear John Coltrane breathing in the DSD version of *Blue Train*.

However, most people are not lugging around an extra media player for their music and just want to use their phones. Audeze's Cipher cable and module have changed the entire playing field and take what was once rather pedestrian audio and turn it into a sparkling and brilliant experience.

Once you hear these verses your AirPods or other run-of-the-mill buds, you will never be able to go back. Not ever.

The built-in DAC (Digital Audio Converter) and amplifier dramatically improve the listening experience by bringing in balanced, crisp, and exceptionally clear sound. Everything works in harmony, and you will hear your music like never before, and hear things in your music that you have never even noticed.

## **Summary**

If you are someone that loves music and listens to it every day then just pull out your credit card now and head over to the Audeze website because these will change your life. For just under a grand you will completely change the way you listen to your music and find yourself listening even more than you did before. Yes, it seems like a lot of cash, but if you are using these every day, the upgrade is worth every dollar.

Pros: Insane sound quality, customizable, strong warranty, audiophile sound can be achieved from your mobile phone.

Cons: Expensive, a bit bulky, open-back design restricts you to quieter areas

Manufacturer Notes:

- LCD-i3's cast magnesium housing with an open back design brings greater transparency and deep, clean bass extension.
- -The low impedance driver leverages our patented Uniforce™ voice coil and Fluxor™ magnet technologies to achieve the highest dynamic range of any in-ear, pushing up to 130dB with no audible distortion.
- With the ability to be paired with Bluetooth, Lightning, or Auxiliary devices, the LCD-i3's dynamic and engaging musical presence is matched only by its versatility, ensuring you'll be able to enjoy the best audiophile sound quality over any device.

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