



Image: Pebblebee

At a glance

Expert's Rating

★★★★★

Pros

- Rechargeable battery
- Distinctive sound
- Flashes LEDs for attention
- Option to use with Find My or as app-based proximity tracker
- USB-C for charging
- IPX6 water resistant

Cons

- Exposed charging port could collect debris
- Twice as heavy as an AirTag at 0.88 ounces/25 grams
- Lacks the extra two radios found in AirTag

Our Verdict

The Pebblebee Clip tracker outdoes Apple on features while competing on price.

Price When Reviewed

\$29.99; \$99.99 four-pack

Best Prices Today: Pebblebee Clip

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Apple is worth trillions, but that doesn't mean it gets everything right. Started on the back of a Kickstarter project in 2014, the tiny firm Pebblebee has produced a range of compact tracking products. Its latest, [Pebblebee Clip](#), outshines Apple's AirTag tracker in most important regards except weight.

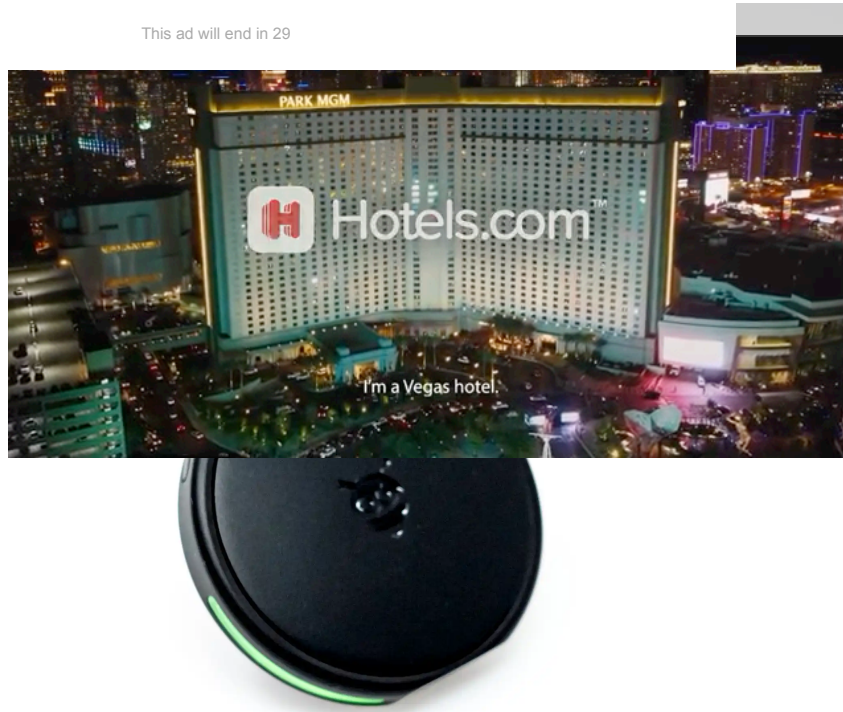
The Clip works with Apple's Find My network just like an AirTag, although Pebblebee has put in a larger battery to power a higher-powered Bluetooth transmitter. The battery is rated for six months on a single charge—that's right, it's a rechargeable battery, sporting a built-in USB-C jack and including a short USB-C to Type-A cable. It has an attractive matte black finish on its plastic center and metal frame and keyring, with just a tiny bit of concavity around its center on both sides. The package includes a snap-on metal keyring.

Curved LED panels on two edges of the Clip reveal the current battery level when you hold down its logo-button for about four seconds—different LED colors indicate the current charge. Its power level is also available via the Find My app, like other trackers; or, via the Pebblebee app when you choose that network.

The LEDs also come into play when you trigger the device to produce a sound, or when it crosses any of the Apple triggers for potentially unwanted tracking. The Clip blinks as an additional alert to the loud, unique tuneful sound it emits. That light can help when you're trying to find something in the dark, when you're in a loud environment, or if you are hard of hearing or deaf.



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The Pebblebee Clip has curved LED panels that light up and flash.

Image: Glenn Fleishman

Pick a network

Pebblebee is unique among third-party Find My items so far in offering you a choice between associating the Clip or its wallet-sized Card with either Find My (Apple only) or the Pebblebee app (iPhone and Android).

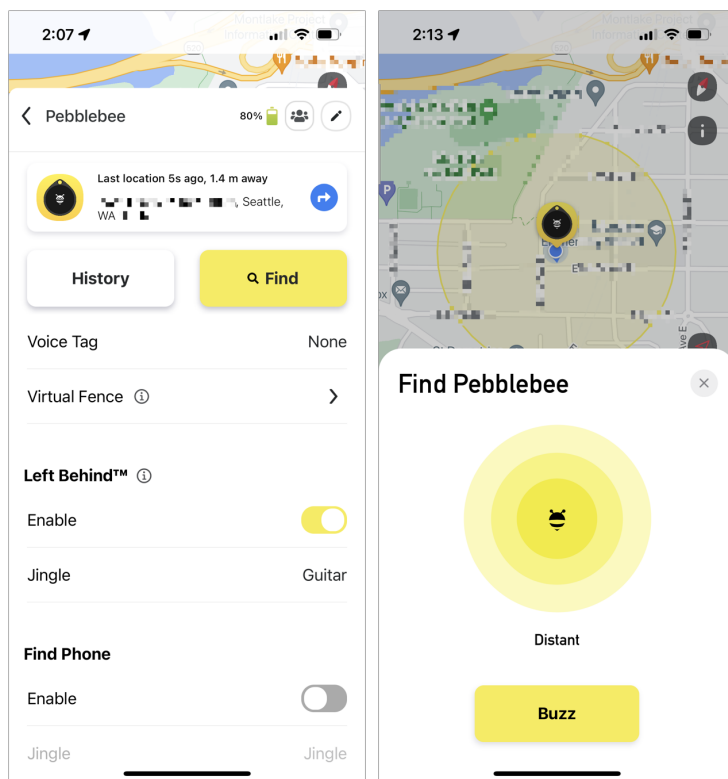
The Find My network relies on hundreds of millions of Apple devices operated by other people to pick up a Bluetooth broadcast from your item, tag it with the receiver's known location, and relay it back to you in a secure fashion. Find My items have to be paired with an individual iPhone or iPad, but then are available across all Find My native apps in iOS, iPadOS, and macOS on your iCloud-linked devices.

The Pebblebee app, by contrast, is all about proximity: it pairs with a single iPhone, iPad, or Android [device](#), and tracks the last-known location of the Clip relative to that device. With background location tracking enabled, you can set the app to alert you if you've left a Clip behind. More actively, the app

can determine a Clip's current whereabouts, or play a sound and flash lights, only when the device and Clip are within Bluetooth range of each other. The app also works with the Pebblebee Card, another Find My/Pebblebee device, and with other Pebblebee products. (Pebblebee does include a device-finding feature it calls CrowdGPS that offers similar secure relaying when someone with the Pebblebee app installed passes by a device marked as lost in the Pebblebee database.)

You have to fish or cut bait with the Clip: you can put the Clip on either the Find My network or pair with the Pebblebee app—not both. However, it takes just seconds to perform a factory reset on the Clip (triple click its logo button and hold for 10 seconds) to put it back into Find My/Pebblebee pairing mode, then re-pair with the network of your choice.

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The Pebblebee app provides Find My-like capabilities within Bluetooth range.

I used to call out the extra steps in pairing a non-Apple item

with the Find My app. In truth, though, it's a one-time operation per device, and Apple has improved on the speed of the original operation. It took almost no time to find and pair the Clip. The same is true when using the Clip with the Pebblebee app: pairing and enabling it takes just seconds. (That app has some overhead the first time you launch it as you have to grant a number of iOS permissions to allow it to use Bluetooth, track your location continuously, and push notifications to you.)

I also used to consider it a negative that Find My items other than Apple's lack an ultrawideband (UWB) radio for direction-finding over short distances and near-field communications (NFC) tech for proximity or tap to pair and to reveal contact information on any NFC-equipped device. However, it has never been clear whether Apple doesn't allow other companies to include those radios for certified Find My items, or it's simply unaffordable from an engineering and production standpoint to bundle them in.



The Pebblebee features the company's logo on its matte-black front.

Image: Glenn Fleishman

Regardless of the reason, I rarely use precision finding. I'm more likely to have an AirTag play a sound to find it. The Clip's higher-powered radio seems to let it provide better ranging information in any case than an AirTag, making it almost as

broadly useful over short distances. Apple provides no guidance in any of its product or support documentation about the range at which an AirTag works solely over Bluetooth; Pebblebee says its tracker has a 500-foot (150 meter) range.

Having no NFC transmitter means that if your device is lost or you find a Clip, a different mode in an iOS or iPadOS Find My app has to be used to retrieve associated contact information. But all non-Apple item devices still have to conform to Apple's rules, which alert people if a Find My item is traveling with them and the owner isn't nearby, or if it's been separated from the owner for an interval between 8 and 24 hours. Someone who finds a Clip can also use the Find My app to identify it, or discover nearby Clip trackers with Apple's Android app, [Tracker Detect](#), as with other Find My items.

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Weigh it against the competition

The clip has just two minor strikes against it. First, its size and weight. If you're looking for the smallest and lightest Find My tracker, the AirTag is about 20 percent smaller and less than half as heavy—when not in a case. It's likely you'd put an AirTag in some case—see our recent reviews—and if so the difference might be minimized.

The Clip is 1.57 inches (40mm) in diameter, with an integral keyring mount that extends in one direction to a total of 1.93 inches (49mm). That compares to the AirTag's 1.26 in. (31.9mm) diameter. The Clip weighs in at 0.88 ounces (25 grams) compared to the AirTag's 0.39 ounces (11g). Both are water resistant: the AirTag is rated IP67 (includes dust resistance) and the Clip at IPX7. Both units are tested to withstand short periods of time underwater at up to 3.3 feet (1m).



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That X in IPX7 is the other negative mark against the Clip: it can't be rated against dust intrusion because its [USB-C](#) jack has no cap to put in place when not in use. (The jack must be internally sealed, as the Clip is water resistant.) Given that you only need to charge a Clip every six months or so, this seems like a flaw. That was highlighted for me recently after one of my teenagers accidentally grabbed my laptop and headed out with it in his bag instead of his own. On his return, I spent minutes with a needle and an iPhone's magnifying viewer picking out tortilla chip pieces from one of the Mac's USB-C ports.

The higher weight seems to stem from the USB-C jack, the rechargeable battery, circuitry to support recharging, the LEDs, and seemingly further-than-AirTag Bluetooth range. The company says the battery can go six months between recharges.

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