

» **Mini SportSuit Safari (\$20)**

Marware, www.marware.com

WHY Fuzzy animal prints make the Mini SportSuit Safari cute, but it's practical, too, with a built-in belt loop, a neoprene lining, and a removable, adjustable quick-release lanyard for around-the-neck wear. The plush exterior protects your mini from falls; unfortunately, it also covers everything but the hold button and the headphone jack.

COLORS black, pink, white, giraffe, leopard, zebra



« **Action Jacket mini (\$30)**

DLO (sold by Netalog),

www.everythingipod.com

WHY The Action Jacket has a clear plastic screen protector, and a reinforced black neoprene cover that shields the mini's back and sides from bumps. Strap on your mini via a built-in belt loop, an arm-band, or a removable swiveling belt clip. You can access the dock connector through a bottom opening in the case, but the Velcro tab that secures your mini covers the hold button, and the scroll-wheel cutout tends to gape open.

COLOR black



iSkin Mini (\$25) »

iSkin, www.iskin.com

WHY This molded silicone case comes with a hard plastic screen protector and a rotating, removable belt clip. The case leaves the scroll wheel, hold button, and headphone jack exposed; you access the dock connector via a bottom flap. Oh, and did we mention that the case glows in the dark?

COLORS light green, orange, purple, white

Safe and Sound

Your iPod is a thing of beauty, so give it the protection it deserves.

Try out these little numbers on your mini.

BY DAN FRAKES AND FRITH GOWAN

miniSleevez (\$18) »

RadTech, www.radtech.us

WHY Although the miniSleevez covers the mini's scroll wheel, the controls still work through the suedelike fabric. The case leaves the top and bottom surfaces exposed, but the surprisingly strong material should offer plenty of protection against scratches, and a clear screen protector covers the display.

COLORS black, indigo, light purple, purple, red, titanium



SkinTight Mini Skin (\$20) »

Speck Products,

www.speckproducts.com

WHY This shock-absorbing rubber case offers a removable quick-release lanyard so you can wear your mini around your neck. The case leaves the screen and scroll wheel exposed, but it protects the mini's corners while letting you access the dock connector, the hold button, and the headphone jack.

COLORS blue, clear, gold, lime, pink





« **Classic** (\$55), **i-Volution** (\$50)

Vaja, www.vajacases.com

WHY Vaja's full-grain leather cases are handcrafted and custom-made, with impressive attention to detail. The rigid, semipadded i-Volution, with its clear, protective face and many color combinations, and the executive-appropriate Classic, with its flip cover and pocket, are stylish cases that look, feel, and work great.

FITS Classic: full-size iPods;

i-Volution: third-generation iPods

COLORS Classic: 7 color combinations; i-Volution: 73 color combinations



« **Xtremity** (\$30)

XtremeMac, www.xtrememac.com

WHY You can use the Xtremity as either a slip-in holster or a fully enclosed case. It's designed to be the center of an iPod accessory system: the back has a slot for attaching a number of custom add-ons, including a belt clip, a car or wall mount, and a wireless audio transmitter (the latter is in the works).

FITS Full-size iPods with dock connectors

COLOR white-and-gray

The Big Cover-up

When it comes to full-size iPods, you have even more choices. (A few of these cases come in mini models, too.)

Incase Belt for iPod (\$25) »

Incase (sold by Apple), Apple store locations, www.apple.com

WHY The Incase Belt is a running pouch done right. It's svelte and light, protecting your iPod in a padded neoprene compartment with a hidden pocket for cards and cash. There's a small hole in the belt for your headphone and/or remote cable and a separate, zippered compartment with a clip for keys and coins. Finally, a mesh backing keeps the iPod—and you—cool.

FITS All iPods

COLOR black



« **Timbuk2 iPod Case** (\$20)

Timbuk2, www.timbuk2.com

WHY If you're rarely without your bag or backpack, this case is ideal: you can securely attach it to the strap of your bag or to a belt; a small pocket holds your earbuds. The padded pouch fits your iPod like a glove, although you can't access the iPod's buttons. (Bonus: Thanks to elastic sides that stretch to fit, the case can also protect small digital cameras.)

FITS All full-size iPods

COLORS black, burgundy, green, light blue, light green, navy blue, orange, pink, purple, red, silver, yellow



« **Sheldon** (\$25)

Case Closed Bags, www.caseclosedbags.com

WHY Crave attention? You need the Sheldon case. You won't find these patterns on any other case—whether it's the watery hues of Miami Geo, the skater chic of Checkerboard, or the metallic iPod mini-like sheen of Pink Polish. This basic, protective case includes a belt clip.

FITS Third-generation iPods

COLORS Checkerboard, Metallic Blue, Miami Geo, Pink Polish, Silver Bullet



iPod Armor (\$50) »

Matias, <http://halfkeyboard.com/ipodarmor>

WHY For skateboarders, snowboarders, and klutzy types, the iPod Armor is the ultimate in crushproof protection. The molded aluminum shell encloses the iPod; inside, a layer of dense foam keeps the shell from scratching the device. It comes with a belt clip.

FITS All iPods

COLOR aluminum

**SportSuit Convertible (\$40) »**

Marware, www.marware.com

WHY In its basic state, the SportSuit Convertible is a neoprene case with rigid walls, rubber grips, and a flexible, protective front. Add the removable lid, and you get a hard shell that can store earbuds and a remote while still letting you use the iPod's buttons. You get a belt clip and an armband; optional accessories include a car mount, a bike mount, a lanyard, and a sport belt.

FITS All iPods

COLORS black, blue, graphite, navy, red, yellow; iPod mini only: black, blue, gold, green, pink, silver

**LiliPod (\$40) »**

Eroch Studios, www.lilipods.com

WHY Tired of leaving your iPod at home while you climb mountains and ford streams? The waterproof LiliPod seals your iPod safely (and snugly, thanks to the foam lining) inside. Wear it on your belt or around your neck—only the extended headphone jack reveals its contents. You can't control your iPod when it's inside the LiliPod, but what do you expect from a waterproof case?

FITS Full-size iPods with dock connectors

COLOR white

Covertec iPod Case (\$40) »

Covertec, www.covertec.com

WHY This leather flip case is in the same class as the Vaja Classic: it looks and feels expensive, but only you need to know how little you spent on it. The soft leather comes in several colors, the elastic sides provide a perfect fit, and the removable belt clip doesn't leave a protruding knob when you detach it.

FITS All full-size iPods

COLORS black, orange-and-black, red, tan

**WaterField iPod Case (\$40)**

WaterField Designs, www.sfbags.com

WHY This case adds a bit of flair with its unique, patterned fabric. The flip cover protects your iPod's face and controls, while still allowing easy access to them. It also doubles as a pocket for stashing earbuds, a driver's license, or cash. Unlike many cases, WaterField's lets you use your iPod's dock base while it's in the case. It comes with a belt clip.

FITS All full-size iPods

COLORS blue, lead, red, white

Showcase (\$33) »

Contour Design, www.contourshowcase.com

WHY The Showcase's rubber edges offer a solid grip and protect the device from impact, while the clear front and back panels let you access the buttons and ports. We like that you don't have to wrestle your iPod out of the case, and the detachable belt clip doesn't leave an annoying protruding knob behind. However, the rubber case picks up dirt easily.

FITS Third-generation iPods

COLORS black, blue, green, light blue, pink, red, white, yellow



DAN FRAKES has an unhealthy interest in cases and bags. San Francisco-based freelance writer FRITH GOWAN likes to wear an iPod mini strapped to her head.