AKAI PROFESSIONAL

# FORCE

## Quickstart Guide

# Quickstart Guide (English)

## Introduction

Thank you for purchasing the Force. At Akai Professional, we know how serious music is to you. That's why we design our equipment with only one thing in mind—to make your performance the best it can be.

### Box Contents

Force

Power Adapter

USB Cable

(3) 1/8"-to-MIDI Adapters

Software Download Card

Quickstart Guide

Safety & Warranty Manual

**Important**: Visit **akaipro.com** and find the webpage for **Force** to download the complete user guide.

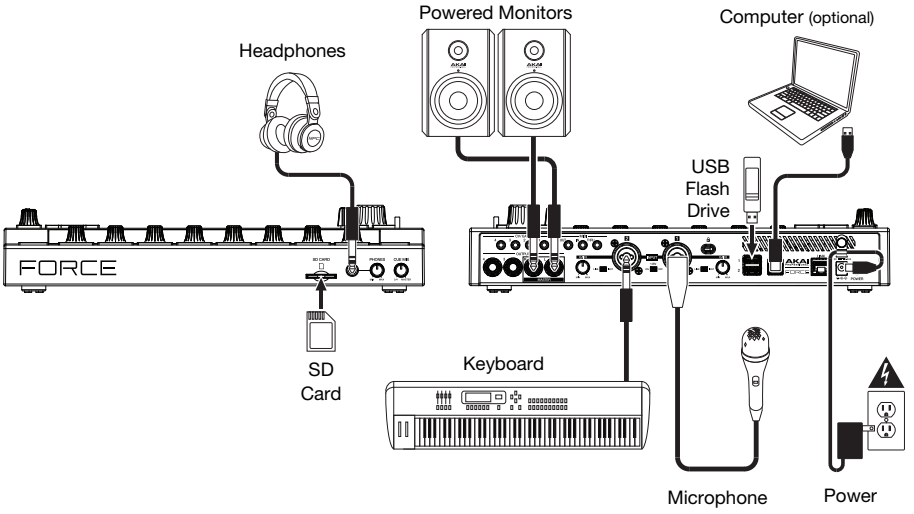
### Support

For the latest information about this product (documentation, technical specifications, system requirements, compatibility information, etc.) and product registration, visit **akaipro.com**.

For additional product support, visit **akaipro.com/support**.

## Setup

Items not listed under ***Introduction*** > ***Box Contents*** are sold separately.



# Getting Started

This section describes how to do basic tasks using your Force.

**Important**: Visit **akaipro.com** and find the webpage for **Force** to download the complete *User Guide*.

When you first power on your Force, you can select a demo project to help get you started, select **Empty Project** at the bottom of the screen to load a blank template, or select **User Template** to load a saved custom template.

For this tutorial, tap the **Deep House - Colors** Demo project to load it.

After loading the demo, Force will automatically open **Matrix Mode**. This display mode gives you an overview of your project and mirrors the 8x8 layout of the **clip launch pads**. Use the **cursor** buttons to move the current view of the matrix by one row or column at a time.

## Launching Clips

Each column in Matrix Mode represents a *track*. Tracks can be used to hold audio samples, drum kits, instrument plugins and more. In the **Deep House – Colors** project, you will see tracks labeled **Kick Loop**, **Top Loop**, **Fill** and more on the display.

To create a new track, tap the **+** icon at the top of the display, or press and hold an empty **Track Selector** button. You may need to scroll the Matrix to the right using the **cursors** to show an empty track.

Each track is made up of *clips*, which are short sequences of audio or MIDI. Only one clip in a track can play at a time. Let's try playing with a few clips to see how they work.

1. Press the **Launch** button to make sure the **clip launch pads** are in **Launch Mode**. In this pad mode, each pad represents a single clip in a track. The lighted pads represent the clips shown on the display, and the dim pads are empty clips.
2. Tap the first clip in **Track 8 – Drum Kit** to begin playing it. The **clip launch pad** will slowly blink green to indicate it is active, and the clip on the display will show the position of the playhead in the clip.
3. While in Launch mode, press the **clip launch pad** below the pad that is currently playing. The second clip will start playing after the next bar.
4. Clips will continue to play until another clip in the same track is launched, until playback is stopped or until the clip is stopped while playback continues.

   To stop a clip, first press the **Clip Stop** button to assign the **Track Assign** buttons to stop mode. Then, press the **Track Assign** button for the track with the clip playing. You can also press the **Stop All Clips** button to stop clips in all tracks.
5. To create a new clip, enter Matrix view on the display and double-tap an empty clip slot in a track. New clips are always created at the default length, which can be set by holding **Shift** and pressing the second **Track Assign** button.

   Alternatively, you can create an empty clip using the **clip launch pads**. First, press the **Launch** button to enter Launch mode. Press and hold the **Select** button, then double-tap an empty pad.

In addition to launching clips in a track, you can launch multiple clips across tracks in the same row. Each row of clips is called a *scene*, and these can be used to arrange different parts of a song.

1. Press the top-most **Scene Launch** button to launch the first row of clips, and then continue launching other scenes in order.
2. While one scene is playing, try launching clips from other rows to experiment with different variations.
3. To create a new scene, press and hold the **Edit** button, then press a **Scene Launch** button.

You can also assign tracks to Force's crossfader. This allows you to seamlessly transition between clips from multiple tracks.

1. To assign a track to a crossfader side, press and hold the **Assign A/B** buttons and press a **Track Assign.**
2. To clear crossfader assignments, hold **Shift** and press the **Assign A** or **Assign B** button.

## Note Mode

In addition to using the clip launch pads for launching clips, you can use them to play and record notes chromatically as you would use a MIDI keyboard, or to play and record a drum kit. This is enabled by pressing the **Note** button to enter **Note Mode**.

1. In the **Deep House – Colors** project, select **Track 6 – Classic Bass**. When using a melodic track such as a Keygroup or Plugin, the root note or chord will be lit in one color, and the notes or chords in between will be lit pale blue.
2. Select **Track 2 – Top Loop**. When using a drum track, bottom left quadrant of 16 **clip launch pads** will be lit and can be used to play the drum kit.
3. Hold **Shift** and press **Note** to configure the Note mode settings for each track.

## Step Sequencer

When recording drums, you can also use Force's built-in **Step Sequencer** to quickly enter note events by using the clip launch pads as "step buttons," simulating the experience of a traditional step-sequencer-style drum machine.

1. In the **Deep House – Colors** project, select **Track 8 – Drum Kit** and select an empty clip slot.
2. Press the **Step Sequencer** button to cycle between step sequencer modes for the **clip launch pads**. Select **Drum** mode.
3. In Drum Step Sequencer pad mode, the top four rows of **clip launch pads** represent the steps in the sequence. The bottom four rows are split into two groups of 4 columns.

   Use the bottom left quadrant to play the drum kit. The last pad played will be selected for sequencing. Tap any pad in the top four rows to insert the selected drum sound at that step in the sequence. The sequence will start playing automatically when a step is inserted.

   The bottom right quadrant is used to set the velocity of the notes. In this quadrant, select the bottom left pad to set the velocity as played. The remaining pads, from left to right going up, represent minimum to maximum fixed velocity.
4. Alternatively, press **Menu** and then tap **Step Sequencer** to use the display to sequence note events.

## Editing Clips & Tracks

Now that you are familiar with the basics of launching clips, let's try editing clips and tracks for even more customization of your project.

1. Press **Clip** to enter **Clip Edit Mode**, or press **Menu** and then tap **Clip Edit**.
2. In **Clip View**, you can view and edit the parameters of the clip itself, such as length, launch mode, and quantization.

   **To select a clip,** press and hold **Select** and press a **clip launch pad**.
3. Depending on the type of clip selected, you can also edit an audio clip using **Region View** or edit MIDI note events using **Event View**.

In addition to Clip Edit Mode, you can edit the parameters of a track using **Track Edit Mode**. This mode is not available for audio tracks.

1. Hold **Shift** and then press **Clip** to enter Track Edit Mode, or press **Menu** and then tap **Track Edit**.
2. Use **Note Mode** to select the pad or keygroup you would like to edit, and use the tabs of pages to edit the different parameters available.

## Mixing Tracks

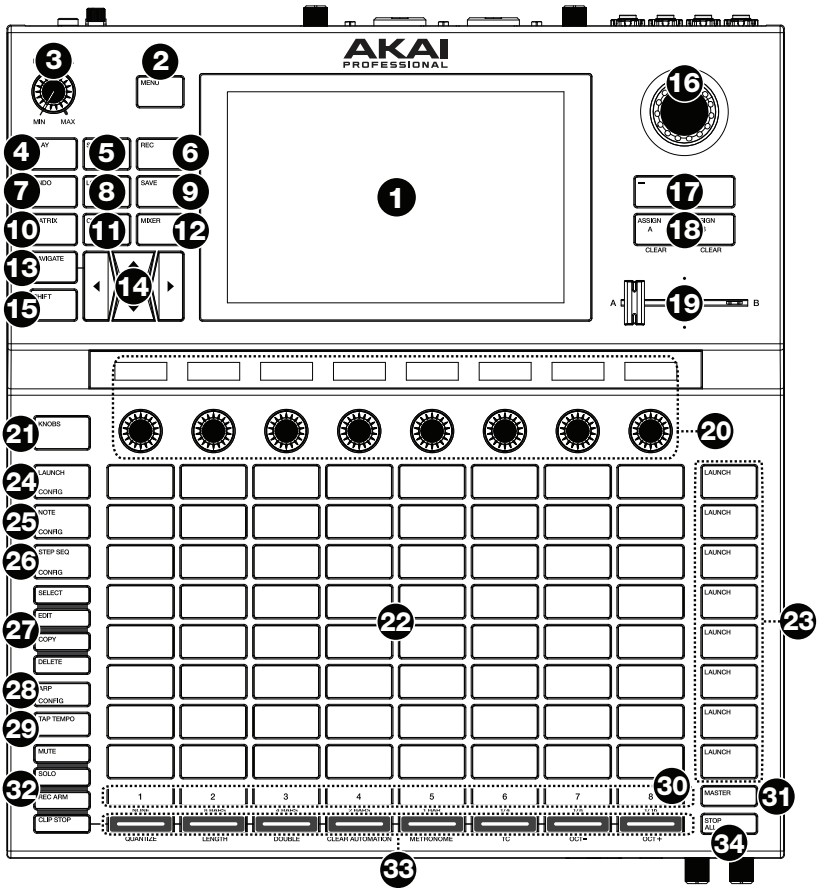
Force's mixer allows you to adjust parameters such as level, stereo panning and routing the same way you would with a traditional mixer or digital audio workstation.

1. Press **Mixer** to open the **Mixer**, or press **Menu** and then tap **Mixer**.
2. The Mixer contains four tabs of pages that let you control different settings for the tracks and master. Tap and drag your finger to scroll through available tracks, or use the **cursor** buttons.

# Features

**Important**: Visit **akaipro.com** and find the webpage for **Force** to download the complete User Guide.

## Top Panel




1. **Display:** This full-color multi-touch display shows information relevant to Force's current operation. Touch the display (and use the hardware controls) to control the Force interface. See ***Display*** to learn how to use some basic functions.
2. **Menu:** Press this button to open the menu. You can tap an option on the menu screen to enter that mode, view, etc.
3. **Master Volume**: Turn this knob to adjust the volume level of the **Master L/R outputs**.
4. **Play:** Press this button to start playback.
5. **Stop:** Press this button to stop playback. Double-press this button to immediately stop all sound.
6. **Record:** Press this button to start or stop recording.

7. **Undo:** Press this button to undo your last action.
   Press **Shift** and this button to redo the last action you undid.
8. **Load:** Press this button to open the Browser, where you can load projects, clips, and more.
9. **Save:** Press this button to save your project, sample or track, or to start a new project from scratch.
10. **Matrix:** Press this button to open Matrix View, an overview of your project with an 8x8 view of your clips.
11. **Clip:** Press this button to open Clip Edit View, which gives you finer detail of a single clip.
    Press **Shift** and this button to open Track Edit View, where you can edit parameters of your drum kit, plugin, MIDI or CV tracks.

**Tip:** While in any of the menu or pad modes, you can press and hold the button for another mode to momentarily switch to that mode. You will return to the previous mode when you release the button.

12. **Mixer:** Press this button to open Mixer View, where you can control each track's volume, pan, and send controls.
    When using a drum track, press **Shift** and this button to open Pad Mixer View, where you can control each pad's volume, pan and send controls.
13. **Navigate:** Press this button to open the Navigate view, which gives you an overview of the entire project. Tap a section to jump the Matrix view directly to that section.
    Press **Shift** and this button to open the XYFX.
14. **Cursors**: Press these buttons to move the Matrix View and the pads by one row or column at a time.
    Press **Shift** and press these buttons to move by eight rows or columns at a time.
15. **Shift:** Press and hold this button to access some buttons' secondary functions.
16. **Data Dial**: Turn this dial to scroll through the available menu options or adjust the parameter values of the selected field in the display. Pressing the dial also functions as an **Enter** button.
    Press **Shift** and turn this dial to adjust parameters in finer detail.
17. **–/+**: Press these buttons to increase or decrease the value of the selected field in the display.
18. **Assign A/Assign B:** Press one of these buttons and an **Assign Mode** button to assign the corresponding track to the crossfader A or B grouping.
    Press **Shift** and press one of these buttons to clear all crossfader A or B assignments.
19. **Crossfader:** Use this crossfader to mix between clips assigned to the A or B grouping.
20. **Assignable Knobs:** Use these knobs controls track panning, track send levels, or other user-assignable parameters. Use the **Knobs** button to change the active knob bank or mode (described below). The display strip above each knob indicates the parameter it is controlling and its current value or setting.
21. **Knobs Button:** Press this button to cycle between up to two banks of knobs for the currently active mode. The display strip above the knobs will indicate the currently active parameters.
    Press and hold this button to quickly select one of several preset knob control modes.
    Press **Shift** and this button to open Knobs Mode, where you can edit knob assignments.
22. **Clip Launch Pads:** Use the velocity-sensitive pads in this 8x8 to launch clips, play notes, and more, depending on the active mode.
23. **Scene Launch Buttons:** You can press one of these buttons to launch the corresponding scene, represented by the row of clips to its left.
    Press the **Edit** button and one of these buttons to quickly insert a new row, capture the currently playing clip(s) as a new scene or clear a row.
24. **Launch/Config:** Press this button to set the **clip launch pads** to Launch mode. In Launch mode, each pad represents a single clip slot. The eight columns represent eight tracks while the eight rows represent eight scenes. You can launch the entire scene by pressing the **Scene Launch** buttons to the right of the row of clips.
    Press **Shift** and press this button to configure the Launch mode settings.

25. **Note/Config:** Press this button to set the **clip launch pads** to Note mode. In Note mode, you can use the pads to play a configurable scale of MIDI notes.

    When in Note mode and using a Keygroup, Plugin, MIDI or CV track, press and hold this button to select different play modes, such as scales, chords, progressions and more. When in Note mode and using a Drum track, press and hold this button to select a time division for note repeat.

    Press **Shift** and press this button to configure the Note mode settings, such as scale and root note. You can also press and hold this button to quickly select a mode.

26. **Step Seq/Config:** Press this button repeatedly to cycle through three different pad views for using the Step Sequencer.

    Press and hold this button to quickly select a Step Sequencer mode.

    Press **Shift** and press this button to configure the Step Sequencer's settings.

27. **Edit Buttons:** Press and hold one of these buttons to edit a clip or track according to the following:

    - **Select:** Press and hold this button to view the currently select clip. While holding, tap another **clip launch pad** to select another clip.
    - **Edit:** Press and hold this button then tap a **clip launch pad** or **Track Selector** button to edit a clip or track, respectively.

      Hold this button and press any **Scene Launch** button to open the Edit Row window, where you can quickly add or clear rows in the Matrix.
    - **Copy:** Press and hold this button to copy a clip or track. While holding, tap the **clip launch pad** or **Track Selector** button of the clip or track you would like to copy, then tap a new pad or button to copy it.
    - **Delete:** Press and hold this button then tap a **clip launch pad** or **Track Selector** button to delete it.

28. **Arp/Config:** Press this button to enable or disable the internal Arpeggiator, whose rate is based on the current Tempo and Time Division settings.

    Press **Shift** and this button to configure the Arpeggiator's settings.

29. **Tap Tempo:** Tap this button at the desired rate to enter a new tempo.

    Press **Shift** and this button to open the Tempo window, where you can enter a new tempo.

30. **Master:** Press this button to view the Master and Return channels.

31. **Track Selectors:** Press one of these buttons to select a track, represented by the column of clips just above it.

    Press and hold **Shift** and then press one of these buttons to select a Global Quantization setting: **None**, **8 Bars**, **4 Bars**, **2 Bars**, **1 Bar**, **1/4**, **1/8**, or **1/16**.

32. **Assign Mode Buttons:** Press one of these buttons to set the function of the **Track Assign** buttons when pressed:

    - **Mute:** Press this button to mute the track.
    - **Solo:** Press this button to solo the track.

      Press **Shift** and this button to configure the solo button and crossfader behaviors.
    - **Rec Arm:** Press this button to record-arm the track.
    - **Clip Stop:** Press this button to stop the clip that is playing in the track.

33. **Track Assign:** Press one of these buttons to apply an assignment to a track, represented by the column of clips just above it. Use the **Assign Mode buttons** to set the assign function.

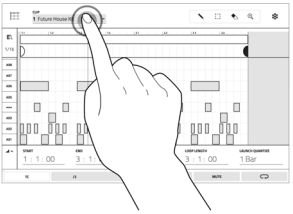
    Press and hold **Shift** and then press one of these buttons to access secondary functions, printed below the buttons.

34. **Stop All Clips:** Press this button to stop all clips when they reach the end.

## Display

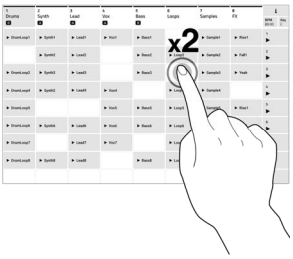
Here is some general information about how to use the Force **display**:

Tap a button or option to select it. Use the **data dial** or **–/+** buttons to change its setting or value.

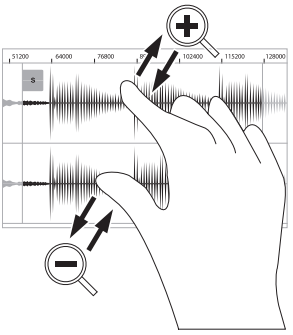


Double-tap a control to access advanced editing options. In some cases, this will show a numeric keypad that you can use to enter a value (an alternative to the **data dial** or **–/+** buttons). Tap the upper-left part of the display to return to the previous view.

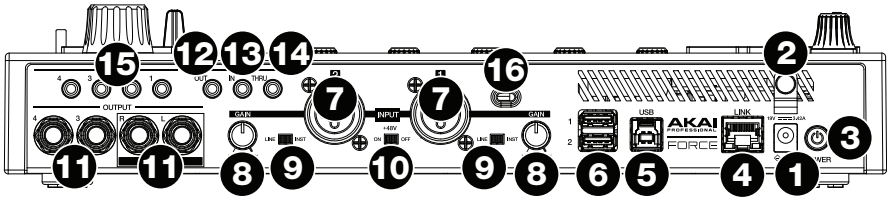
In Matrix View, double-tap an empty clip slot in your track to create a new clip.




Spread two fingers to zoom in (into a section of a waveform, for example). Pinch two fingers to zoom out.



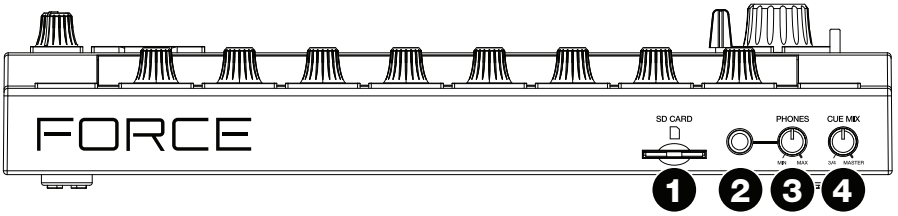
## Rear Panel




1. **Power Input**: Connect the included power adapter (19 V, 3.42 A, center-positive) to this jack then into an electrical outlet.
2. **Power Adapter Restraint**: Secure the power adapter cable to this restraint to prevent it from accidentally unplugging.
3. **Power Switch**: Press this button to turn Force's power on or off.
4. **Link:** Connect a standard Ethernet cable to this port to use Ableton Link and other compatible devices with Force. Download the full *User Guide* for more information.
5. **USB-B Port**: Use the included USB cable to connect this high-retention-force USB port to an available USB port on your computer.
6. **USB-A Ports**: Connect USB flash drives to these USB ports to access their files directly using Force.
7. **Input 1/2** (XLR or 1/4" / 6.35 mm): Use standard XLR or 1/4" (6.35 mm) TRS cables to connect these inputs to audio sources (microphone, mixer, synthesizer, etc.). When using a 1/4" cable, the Mic preamp is removed from the circuit, and the **Line/Inst** switch can be used to set the impedance.

   Turn the **Gain** knobs to set the input level of each one.
8. **Gain:** Use these knobs to adjust the gain of the incoming signal from **Input 1/2** on the rear panel. Be careful when setting this knob at higher levels, which can cause the signal to distort.
9. **Line/Inst:** Use these switches to set **Input 1/2** to accept either a Line-level or Instrument-level sound source when using a 1/4" connection.
10. **Phantom Power** (**+48V**): This switch activates and deactivates phantom power for **Inputs 1/2** when using an XLR connection. When activated, +48V of phantom power will be supplied to both inputs. Note that most dynamic microphones do **not** require phantom power, while most condenser microphones **do**. Refer to your microphone's documentation to check if it needs phantom power.
11. **Outputs** (1/4" / 6.35 mm): Use standard 1/4" (6.35 mm) TRS cables to connect these outputs to your monitors, mixer, etc.). The **Master L/R** outputs are the same as **Outputs 1,2**.
12. **MIDI Out**: Connect compatible 1/8" MIDI devices to this output, or use the included 1/8"-to-MIDI adapter to connect a standard 5-pin MIDI cable from this output to the MIDI input of an external MIDI device (synthesizer, drum machine, etc.).
13. **MIDI In**: Connect compatible 1/8" MIDI devices to this input, or use the included 1/8"-to-MIDI adapter to connect a standard 5-pin MIDI cable from this input to the MIDI output of an external MIDI device (synthesizer, drum machine, etc.).
14. **MIDI Thru:** Connect compatible 1/8" MIDI devices to this thru-port, or use the included 1/8"-to-MIDI adapter to connect a standard 5-pin MIDI cable from this input to the MIDI output of an external MIDI device (synthesizer, drum machine, etc.). Incoming MIDI from the **MIDI In** port will be passed along to this output.
15. **CV/Gate Out**: Use standard 1/8" (3.5 mm) TS cables to connect these outputs to optional modular devices. Force will send control voltage (CV) and/or Gate data over this connection.
16. **Kensington® Lock Slot**: You can use this slot to secure your Force to a table or other surface.

## Front Panel




1. **SD Card Slot**: Insert a standard SD/SDHC card into this slot to access its files directly using Force.
2. **Phones** (1/4" / 6.35 mm): Connect standard 1/4" (6.35 mm) stereo headphones to this output.
3. **Phones Volume:** Turn this knob to adjust the volume of the **phones output**.
4. **Cue Mix**: Turn this knob to adjust the balance between the **Master** and **3/4** signals in your headphones. **Master** is the signal sent from the **Master outputs**. **3/4** is the signal sent from the **Outputs 3/4**.

# Appendix (English)

## Technical Specifications

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pads** | (64) velocity- and pressure-sensitive pads, RGB-backlit |
| **Knobs** | (8) 360° touch-sensitive Knobs<br>(1) 360° encoder for display navigation and selection via push<br>(5) 270° knobs for gain, mix & level adjustment |
| **Buttons** | (56) dedicated function buttons; red-, amber-, or green-backlit |
| **Display** | 6.9” / 176 mm (diagonal)<br>5.9” x 3.7” / 150 x 93 mm (width x height)<br>Full-color LED-backlit display with touch interface |
| **Connections** | (2) XLR+1/4” (6.35 mm) TRS inputs (Input 1/2)<br>(4) 1/4” (6.35 mm) TRS outputs (2 stereo pairs)<br>(1) 1/4” (6.35 mm) stereo headphone output<br>(1) 1/8" (3.5 mm) MIDI input<br>(1) 1/8" (3.5 mm) MIDI output<br>(1) 1/8" (3.5 mm) MIDI thru port<br>(4) 1/8” (3.5 mm) CV/Gate outputs<br>(1) Ethernet link port<br>(2) USB Type-A ports<br>(1) USB Type-B port<br>(1) SD card slot<br>(1) power adapter input |
| **Power** | via power adapter: 19 V, 3.42 A, center-positive, included |
| **Dimensions**<br>(width x depth x height) | 13.8” x 15.3” x 2.85”<br>350 x 389 x 72.5 mm |
| **Weight** | 8.53 lbs.<br>3.87 kg |

Specifications are subject to change without notice.