

GENERAL OVERVIEW

for Audio and MP3 CDs

STANDARD AUDIO CDs

Standard audio CD's are a great way to distribute your audio content when compatibility is paramount. Standard audio CD's have an 80-minute capacity, can contain anywhere from 1 to 99 tracks, and can be played on any compact disc player, including car stereos, dvd players, blu-ray players, gaming consoles, computers, and standalone or portable CD players.

Files can be in any format that iTunes supports, including MP3, AIFF, WAV, Mpeg-4, AAC, or Apple Lossless. Simply drag and drop the folder onto the blank space at the bottom of the playlists section of the sources sidebar in order to add the content to your library. This will create a new playlist containing all the files found in the folder. The playlist name will also be the title of your CD, so if you want to change it, you may do so by simply double-clicking on the playlist title. Select the playlist title to view all the tracks contained in that playlist. The order in which the tracks appear in your playlist corresponds to the order they will be on the recorded CD. You can drag and drop the tracks to arrange them into the desired order. Remember that an audio CD has a limited duration of up to 80 minutes. The current total time is displayed at the bottom of the iTunes window.

If you activate Sound Check, it will help to normalize the volume levels of all the tracks so that they are all approximately the same volume. Do note however, that for this specific feature to work you'll first need

to enable the Sound Check option which is located in the Playback tab of the iTunes Preferences. For drives that support it, you can also select the option to Include CD Text, which will write basic track title information to the CD, which is visible on some players.

MP3 CDs

MP3 CD's are a good option when you have more than 80 minutes of audio content you want to fit on one disc. The maximum disc capacity depends on the bit rate encoding settings of the MP3's themselves. To give you a reference point for various bit rates, you can fit roughly 5 hours of audio at 320 kbps, 13 hours of audio at 128 kbps, or 25 hours of audio at 64 kbps on a single MP3 CD. MP3 CD's may contain one or more tracks. The big drawback to MP3 CD's is compatibility, since they are only playable on certain CD, DVD, and Blu-Ray players that feature the MP3 playback capability. They will also play just fine on computers.

If you have audio files in other formats that you want to put on an MP3 CD, you will need to convert them to MP3's first. Take the folder that contains your MP3 files and drag and drop it onto the blank space at the bottom of the playlists section of the sources sidebar in order to add the content to your library. This will create a new playlist containing all the files found in the folder. The playlist name will also be the title of your CD, so if you want to change it, you may do so by simply double-clicking on the playlist title.

Select the playlist title to view all the tracks contained in that playlist. You can define the playback order by sorting by either the song name, the artist, or the album. Click on the column header that corresponds to the attribute you want to use to define the playback order.

Audio files contain metatag information that helps identify what the content is inside the file. Some of these attributes include the song name, artist, album, genre, and more. Editing this information is easy to do. Simply right-click on the song, and select the Get Info option from the contextual menu. Then select the Info tab to view and edit the metatag information. When you're done, click OK. When naming your songs, avoid using any special characters, since they can cause playback and compatibility issues. Try to stick with letters, numbers, spaces, hyphens, and underscores.

When creating an MP3 CD, your limiting factor is the total data size, not the audio duration. The total data size, as well as the total playback time, is displayed at the bottom of the iTunes window. You simply need to keep the total disc size under 700 MB in order to fit on a single CD.

WHAT IS GRACENOTE?

Gracenote is a universally-recognized, easy-to-use, online database that contains artist, album, track, year, and genre information for standard audio CD's. Once the information for your CD has been submitted to Gracenote, the data will be available to anyone

who has a copy of the same CD and is using Gracenote-compatible software. Submitting your CD to Gracenote before it hits the market is fast, easy, and free, and ensures that your customers don't get confused by incomplete or incorrect track listing information.

Gracenote identifies CD's by using a unique fingerprint ID for each disc, which is calculated from the exact number and length of the audio tracks on the disc. When CD playback software that supports Gracenote loads an audio CD, it calculates the fingerprint ID, sends it to the Gracenote server, and then downloads and auto-populates the corresponding information for that CD.

If no information exists in their database for a specific fingerprint, nothing will happen, and the tracks will continue to be displayed as Track 1, Track 2, etcetera. If there is no exact match, but there is a similar match, then Gracenote may get confused, and download and populate incorrect information. This is why it's so important to make sure you, as the content producer, have already submitted your tracks to Gracenote before your CD is on the market.

HOW DO I SUBMIT MY CD?

Since Gracenote uses a fingerprint ID that's based off the format of your CD for identification, you need to use an actual physical CD to submit your tracks, not just MP3's or other audio files you have saved on your computer. Please refer to the Gracenote site, <http://www.gracenote.com/> for current information and support.

