Email Client Support Cheat Sheet

Email clients don't all speak the same HTML and CSS. Apple Mail supports nearly everything, while classic Outlook for Windows supports the least, so every email has to be designed with both in mind.

The table shows how the most common clients handle popular features. **Yes** means reliable support, **Partial** means it works with limits, and **No** means it won't work without a fallback. Support changes as apps update, so confirm current details on Can I email before relying on a feature.

Feature support at a glance

Feature	Apple Mail (iOS & Mac)	Gmail (web & app)	Classic Outlook (Windows)	Outlook.com & new Outlook	Yahoo Mail
`<style>` block in the head	Yes	Partial: size limits, some selectors stripped	Partial	Yes	Yes
Media queries (responsive layouts)	Yes	Partial: not with non-Gmail accounts in the app	No	Yes	Yes
`max-width`	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Web fonts	Yes	No	No	No	No
CSS background images	Yes	Partial	No: needs VML code	Yes	Yes
Rounded corners (`border-radius`)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Animated GIFs	Yes	Yes	Partial: older versions show the first frame only	Yes	Yes
Dark mode styles (`prefers-color-scheme`)	Yes	No	No	No: uses its own selectors	No
SVG images	Yes	No	No	No	No
Embedded video	Yes	No	No	No	No

Support levels are approximate as of October 2026 and simplified for quick reference.

What this means in practice

- **Build layouts with tables.** Tables are the only layout method that holds up everywhere, including classic Outlook.
- **Put styles inline.** Inline CSS survives in every client, while `<style>` blocks can be stripped or trimmed.
- **Design mobile-first.** Where media queries don't work, a single-column or fluid layout still reads well on a phone.
- **Always set a fallback font.** Web fonts are a bonus for Apple Mail users; everyone else sees the fallback, so choose it on purpose.
- **Treat extras as enhancements.** Rounded corners, background images, GIFs, and video should improve the email where supported, with nothing important lost where they aren't.
- **Know your audience's clients.** Your ESP's reports show which clients your subscribers use, so you can prioritize testing.

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