

ApeCoin 2026

ApeCoin (ApeCoin) is the native token of the ecosystem borne from the Bored Ape Yacht Club (BAYC). Initially conceived as a governance and utility token under the ApeCoin DAO, ApeCoin is now in a new phase following the passage of AIP-596, which transitioned strategic decision-making and operational execution to ApeCo.

1. Origins & History

1.1 BAYC: From NFT Experiment to Cultural Force

The Bored Ape Yacht Club (BAYC) launched in April 2021, quickly becoming one of the most recognizable digital brands in the world. Within its first year, BAYC generated over a billion dollars in secondary trading volume and attracted global celebrities, athletes, and artists. The Mutant Ape Yacht Club (MAYC) and Bored Ape Kennel Club (BAKC) NFT collections expanded the brand's reach, while events like ApeFest established a real-world cultural presence. BAYC emphasized NFTs as membership and access tokens rather than speculative assets.

1.2 The DAO Era: Governance, Proposals, and Strategic Decisions

In March 2022, ApeCoin launched as an ERC-20 token to unify the expanding Yuga ecosystem and empower holders with governance rights. ApeCoin was distributed to BAYC, MAYC, and BAKC holders, and the ApeCoin DAO was established to allow token holders to vote on proposals related to treasury allocations, ecosystem initiatives, and partnerships.

Between 2022 and 2025, over 200 proposals were introduced, with a significant number passed and funded. The DAO was supported by Special Councils, with rotating elected members responsible for overseeing governance and maintaining administrative order. Former Special Council members include Yat Sui, Alexis Ohanian and Amy Wu. Key milestones of the DAO included the decision to launch ApeChain, a blockchain built on Arbitrum Orbit.

In 2024, AIP-582 ("ApeChain, On-chain – ApeCoin DAO Governance Revamp") restructured governance, introducing on-chain treasury mechanisms and formal committees for audit and security. This modernization reflected a growing need for efficiency and regulatory readiness, and marked ApeCoin's transition from an experimental DAO to a globally visible ecosystem with professionalized operations.

As ApeCoin matured, the global regulatory environment around token governance also evolved, with leading blockchain ecosystems adopting governance models that leveraged corporate-like execution. Recognizing these realities, the ApeCoin community overwhelmingly passed AIP-596

(“Sunsetting the DAO and Launching ApeCo”) to sunset the DAO and transfer operations to ApeCo.

1.3 AIP-596 and ApeCo at a Glance

AIP-596 dissolved the ApeCoin DAO and transferred the operations of ApeCoin to ApeCo. The objective was to evolve ApeCoin from a slow, proposal-based structure to a nimble organization capable of pursuing a unified multi-year roadmap. ApeCo operates under three guiding principles:

- **Execution:** Deliver real products and integrations that expand ApeCoin’s use.
- **Velocity:** Equip builders with the tools and infrastructure needed to deploy quickly both on chain and in metaverse environments.
- **Authenticity:** Preserve BAYC’s irreverent, creative DNA while scaling to global audiences.

This design merges institutional rigor with the cultural roots that made BAYC and ApeCoin distinctive.

2. ApeCoin’s Role Going Forward

Post-AIP-596, ApeCoin has evolved from a governance token into a utility-first network asset. Among other things, it serves as:

- The native gas token of ApeChain, one of the most popular L2’s on the Arbitrum stack,
- The in-world currency of Otherside, which aims to compete with Roblox and Fortnite,
- The preferred payment medium across BAYC commerce and experiences, whether digital or IRL,
- An interoperable asset across Ethereum, Arbitrum, Solana, Base, BNB, and HyperEVM, to name a few.

This expansion positions ApeCoin as a transmedia economic layer spanning culture, gaming, and technology. As part of that, ApeCo will be focusing its operations on leveraging ApeCoin to support and benefit BAYC, Otherside, ApeChain and their surrounding ecosystems. Below is a bit more information on these pillars.

Pillar I — BAYC & Cultural Infrastructure

ApeCoin underpins BAYC’s ecosystem as the transactional and identity layer. Holders use ApeCoin to participate in digital and real-world events, merchandise sales, and collaborations. As BAYC expands, ApeCoin will unite its diverse experiences .

Pillar II — Otherside & Metaverse Economy

Within Otherside, ApeCoin is the default currency for all in-world activity, whether trades, upgrades, or user-generated content. Builders and players may transact using ApeCoin for supported in-world activities, aligning community activity with token demand. Seasonal events and limited drops create dynamic utility cycles, anchoring ApeCoin at the heart of the metaverse economy.

Pillar III — ApeChain as Infrastructure & Gas Layer

ApeChain, launched in late 2024, is a high-performance blockchain built on Arbitrum Orbit with ApeCoin as its native gas token. Every transaction, from NFT mints to gameplay interactions, consumes ApeCoin. Each ApeCoin paid in gas fees is burned, and ApeCo buys and burns an equivalent amount. These transactions over time reduce the total supply of ApeCoin and create a reinforcing value driver for ApeCoin holders.

As ApeCo looks towards the future, it intends to support these pillars through targeted action. It will continue to strengthen ApeChain by deepening integrations with Otherside, optimizing gas economics, and encouraging burning of ApeCoin. ApeCo will attract developers, particularly those building in Otherside, and onboard partners from gaming, retail, and entertainment. ApeCoin's presence will continue pushing outside of digital environments, seeking opportunities for ApeCoin to be used for brand and partner collaborations and consumer sales. And it will position ApeCoin as a cross-chain cultural currency recognized and used across digital and real-world ecosystems.

3. Token Emission Schedule

ApeCoin has a fixed maximum supply of 1 billion ApeCoin, of which 97.3% is unlocked and circulating, and over 455,000 ApeCoin have been burned as of January 21, 2026. Below is the emission schedule of ApeCoin that started on March 17, 2022.

- **Community Allocation:** 15% of the total supply was allocated to BAYC, MAYC, and BAKC holders.
- **Treasury Allocation:** 47% of the total supply was allocated to the ApeCoin Foundation, which is now controlled by ApeCo. With 117,500,000 unlocked at launch, then 7,343,750 unlocked per month for 48 months.
- **Yuga Labs & Charity:** 16% allocated to Yuga Labs and the Jane Goodall Legacy Foundation. With Initial lock-up 12 months, then 4,166,666.67 unlocked per month for 36 months and 277,777.78 tokens unlocked per month for 36 months allocated to the Jane Goodall Legacy Foundation.
- **Contributors:** 14% distributed to early contributors under vesting schedules. With 10,000,000 tokens upfront, 25,000,000 after 6 months, 25,000,000 after 12 months, and 25,000,000 after 18 months, 757,575.76 unlocked per month for 33 months and 833,333.33 unlocked per month for 36 months.
- **Founders of Yuga Labs:** 8% allocated to the Founders of Yuga Labs. With an Initial lock-up for 12 months, then 2,222,222.22 unlocked per month for 36 months.

After final vesting concludes in March 2026, ApeCoin's supply will be fully liquid, with no inflationary mechanisms. This near-complete emission curve emphasizes a utility-driven demand, ensuring that ApeCoin's growth results from its adoption and transaction activity.

Conclusion

ApeCoin's transformation from a governance experiment to a multi-layered cultural and technological asset represents a new era. With its governance consolidated under ApeCo, its infrastructure powered by ApeChain, and its adoption spreading across BAYC, Otherside, and beyond, ApeCoin stands positioned to become a universal digital currency for culture and creativity.