Master iPhone PHOTOGRAPHY

Snap, Edit, and Share Your Mobile Images
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Foreword

Growing up, I spent my allowance on two things: books and disposable cameras. I went through the latter about as fast as the former, at times snapping a whole roll of pictures in a day.

This resulted in a lot of terrible photos, sure. But it also got me in the habit of carrying a camera around just about anywhere; and when my dad bought his very first digital camera, you can bet it found its way into my knapsack, hidden away while I scouted for perfect shots and hilarious moments.

Thanks to the iPhone, many more of us have a camera in our pocket. But, like any art, perfect photography takes time. (Maybe not so much money wasted on roll upon roll of 35mm film, but still.) That’s why we put together this book—our attempt to help you glide through the rough patches and on to photographic stardom.

This book explains it all: the nitty-gritty bits of taking pictures (where’s the shutter button?), editing and sharing your work, and using third-party apps and accessories to move from mischief to mastery.

We can’t teach you to have fun or love your iPhone camera. But with any luck, this book will put you on that path.

—Serenity Caldwell
San Francisco, June 2012
CHAPTER 1

Get Started

FROM THE BEGINNING Let's start with the basics, so you can learn to take beautiful iPhone photos like this one.

Digital photography is as much about our technical gear as it is about art, making our digital cameras one of the most unique gadgets in our day-to-day lives. You don't need to have an expensive DSLR or to lug around a point-and-shoot to capture good photos. If you have a smartphone with a built-in camera, you may already have the only camera you need in your pocket. The iPhone makes a surprisingly robust camera, thanks in large part to the built-in apps that let you shoot, manage, and sync your images.

If you own an iPhone or iPod touch, chances are you've used it to take a photograph or two before. But you can use your device for so much more—if you're willing to give it a shot. In this chapter, we explain why you might want to use an iPhone for such tasks, in what cases a digital camera might work better, and some good basics to know when it comes to iPhone photography.
CHAPTER 1  Get Started

Why Use an iPhone?

An iPhone isn’t perfect for your every photographic need. But it can serve awfully well in many situations where you might once have needed a digital camera.

When you look at basics, it doesn’t get any simpler than a camera phone. Smartphones are constantly upgrading the quality of their built-in cameras. Many even shoot high-definition (HD) video. While the image caliber of smartphones is still catching up with that of the most basic point-and-shoots, their popularity has skyrocketed.

The iPhone also has features that other cameras don’t, including access to fun and creative editing apps. The phone stays in your pocket, so you always have a camera handy when unexpected moments come up. It’s also incredibly small, which makes it easy to capture scenes without drawing attention to yourself. You can edit images and share them instantly with friends and family. Finally, the simplicity of its camera tools makes a smartphone the ultimate entry-level camera.

True, with an iPhone you lack some settings controls. The gadget also sports smaller image sensors and a fixed aperture (the depth of field in an image). Digital cameras and SLRs may allow you greater flexibility in that arena.

So yes, there are still situations where you might want a heftier piece of equipment, such as in low-light areas or when you’re trying to capture fast motion. But for many others, the iPhone can be just as good as—if not better than—your DSLR. As the popular saying goes, “The best camera is the one you have with you.”

THE iPhone VERSUS A DIGITAL CAMERA: WHICH IS BETTER?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>DIGITAL CAMERA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids</td>
<td>Fast movement may result in blurry pictures, but quick access to the camera allows you to capture moments otherwise forgotten. Takes higher-quality pictures, but you risk kids moving before you set up the shot or freezing up at the sight of a proper camera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>It’s always in your pocket, and you can quickly whip it out at the dinner table, though shooting dishes in low light may prove difficult. The iPhone’s lack of white balance controls may also over-color images; try a third-party app to warm up your food photo. Has better focus than a fixed-lens camera like the iPhone, but is clunky to bring out at the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscapes</td>
<td>May not capture detail as well as a camera with a larger sensor, but colors and apps can augment photos. Try third-party panoramic apps for fun. Lenses and better, bigger sensors result in a richer picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion and Sports</td>
<td>Often produces blurry images due to the iPhone’s automatic shutter speed controls and sensor size. Cameras either have a dedicated sports setting or allow you to set custom aperture and focus settings to achieve blur-free motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live from the Scene</td>
<td>The iPhone’s small size and common form factor means you may be able to surreptitiously capture images and video. Digital cameras may be bulkier and can draw unwanted attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underwater</td>
<td>You can often get cheap waterproof housings for the iPhone, though pictures may end up with a light halo. Underwater casings for digital cameras are often expensive and require custom rigs, though you can purchase dedicated underwater cameras.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Light</td>
<td>The iPhone 4S sensor is better than that in previous iPhones at handling low-light situations, but it’s still not as good as that of a dedicated camera. LED flash is subpar. Bigger sensors and custom flash options result in better low-light pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>Use apps and external accessories to aid in focusing and framing, and you can take stunning macro shots. Lenses and manual focus give digital cameras a leg up, but the result depends on the lens and the camera.</td>
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Your iPhone as a Camera

So you'd like to use your iPhone as your primary camera. Before you start, it's good to know your device inside and out and understand just what it can do in terms of photography.

A) Front Camera

If you have an iPhone 4 or 4S, you have a VGA-quality camera (0.3 megapixels) on the front of your device. This isn't particularly good for serious photography, but can be fun to use with third-party photo-booth apps.

B) Shutter Button

When you have the Camera app open, your iPhone's Volume Up button can also act as a physical shutter for either your front-facing or your rear-facing camera. This is true as well for the Volume Up button on your headphones; if you have Bluetooth headphones with volume controls, you can trigger your iPhone's camera remotely.
C) Camera App Shortcut

If your iPhone is running iOS 5 or later, when you wake it you can quickly access the Camera app by swiping upward on this icon, so as not to miss any sudden memorable moments.

D) Rear Camera

The rear camera is your iPhone’s main photography feature. If you have an iPhone 4, this consists of a 5-megapixel backside-illuminated CMOS sensor and a 3.85mm camera lens with a fixed aperture of f/2.8; the iPhone 4S has an 8-megapixel backside-illuminated CMOS sensor and a 4.28mm camera lens with a fixed aperture of f/2.4. Both devices automatically adjust the shutter speed and ISO to get the best exposure.

In nontechnical terms, this means that your iPhone 4 or 4S can take photos at print-quality resolution with decent low-light exposure, and though you can focus the lens through the Camera app and other third-party apps, you won’t be able to manually zoom it or alter how much light it sees. (You can, however, use a digital zoom. You can also attach lens accessories that give you more flexibility; see the “Add Apps and Accessories” chapter for more information.)

The iPhone 4 and 4S can also take HD video; on the iPhone 4, you’re limited to 720p, whereas you can take full 1080p on the 4S.

E) LED Flash

Both the iPhone 4 and the 4S have an LED flash to help illuminate low-light situations. While LED flashes aren't traditionally as useful as full-form bulb flashes, your iPhone's flash can illuminate a scene well up to five feet; at ten feet, it projects some light but won't illuminate the full picture.
CHAPTER 1  Get Started

Work with the Camera App

To shoot photos and video with your iPhone, it's simplest to use Apple's built-in Camera app. You can launch it in one of two ways: Swipe up on the camera icon from the iPhone's lock screen, or unlock your device and tap the Camera app's icon (which looks like a camera lens against a gray background).

IT'S A SNAP! You can line up, snap, and view pictures within the Camera app.

The app launches by default in still image mode; you can take a shot by tapping the camera icon at the bottom of the screen or by clicking the Volume Up button.

Switch between the front and back cameras by tapping the camera icon with the circular arrows in the top right corner. For help in composing your shots, tap the Options button at the top of the app's screen and turn on Grid; this overlays a three-by-three grid on the screen. That's also where you can turn on the camera's high dynamic range (HDR) feature, which combines three separate exposures to create a single image with optimal lighting. HDR is best for landscape and outdoor portrait shots; don't use it for action photos.
OPTIONS, OPTIONS Set your flash choices and any extra camera tweaks before snapping your shot.

If you're in a low-light setting, tap the flash button in the upper left corner to turn the flash to On or Auto; turn it to Off if you want to ensure that there's no flash in your shot.

To shoot video, tap the photo/video toggle in the bottom right corner. A round red light replaces the camera icon. Tap this button to start recording and tap it again to stop. While you're recording, a time code appears in the upper right corner. Tap the toggle in the lower right corner again to return to still mode.

The Camera app automatically sets exposure and focus points, but it doesn't always do so correctly. To focus and set the exposure level on a specific part of an image, tap that area on the screen. If you move your iOS device, or if you have moving subjects in your photo, the Camera app recalibrates and picks new focus and exposure points. To prevent this from happening, tap and hold on the part of the image where you want the camera to focus and set the exposure; this creates an AE/AF (autoexposure/autofocus) Lock. You can tap the screen again to reset that selection.

To view images you've recently snapped, you can either swipe on the live image to the right, or tap the square thumbnail icon in the lower left corner of the app.

While the built-in Camera app is fine for most users, more serious photographers will want a third-party app with more features. Tap tap tap's Camera+ ($1) and Jens Daemgen's ProCamera ($3) are excellent choices: Both let you lock the exposure on one part of an image and focus on another—something Apple's Camera app can't do. They also provide more advanced features, including stabilizing modes, self-timers, and burst modes to take quick successive photos. (For more information on third-party apps, see the “Add Apps and Accessories” chapter.)
Now that you know your way around the iPhone's Camera app, you can start snapping away. These tips will help you take better photos.

**KNOW YOUR CAMERA** Any camera is better than no camera, but there is a difference between the various iPhone generations. If you are set on taking the best possible photos with your device, opt for the latest hardware. An iPhone 4S will take more print-friendly pictures than previous iPhones because it delivers images with a higher pixel count. Increased pixel count manifests itself as a slight improvement in an image's overall sharpness. Also, because the iPhone 4 and 4S allow selective focus and metering, they offer more shooting flexibility. But even if you're working with an earlier-generation iPhone, you can still take decent shots.

**PUT YOUR BACK INTO IT** If you are using an iPhone 4S, use its back camera. While the front-facing camera makes shooting self-portraits much easier, it also yields substantially lower-quality images than the back camera.

**SHOOT HORIZONTALLY** When you hold your iPhone for games and reading, you generally hold it in portrait view. When you shoot pictures, however, you should rotate your phone into landscape mode; you'll fit more into the frame and have a steadier shot.

**KEEP IT LIGHT** Remember that the iPhone likes to have as much light as possible, so if you're shooting indoors in low light, try to brighten the scene by switching on more lights or by enabling your LED flash. If you have an image with both very dark and very bright spots, turn on the iPhone's HDR feature, which composites three separate images at different settings for a final shot with a wider dynamic range. This is especially useful when you are shooting night shots, such as cityscapes, or a backlit subject indoors.

**GO EASY ON THE FLASH** As with any illuminator, overdoing it with the iPhone 4S's LED flash will leave your images overexposed. The iPhone doesn't offer any kind of flash exposure compensation, so the only control you have is distance. The farther away you are, the less intense the flash's effect will be. While the use of digital zoom isn't usually recommended, with the iPhone it's worth using the zoom and risking a little pixelation to get your flash exposure under control. If you want a tight shot of someone, try standing farther away and zooming in to reduce the flash exposure.
Snap Pictures

Thanks to the iPhone camera’s automatic adjustments, you don’t need to know much about f-stops and focal length to get decent shots; you just point and shoot. But if you want to go beyond “decent” to get truly beautiful and unique shots, you need to understand how your iPhone sees the world. You may not be able to manually adjust your device’s camera settings, but you can still make smart choices about light, exposure, and focus.

In this chapter, we’ll walk you through different situations, explain effects, and give you strategies for taking control. We’ll also help you master the most essential element in photography: lighting. Once you’ve gotten the basics down, you can troubleshoot challenging photo situations and experiment with unusual shots.

READY TO ROLL Get your trigger finger ready to snap some great photos.
As any good photographer knows, taking the pictures is just the first step: After that, you still have to decide how to sort, tweak, and share them. Luckily, your iPhone can do it all—you don't need a computer or external device unless you really want one.

In this chapter we'll run down the best ways to find and organize your images, discuss how to edit them in the built-in Photos app and iPhoto, and show you where you can disseminate your pictures once they’re ready for public viewing.

**View and Organize Photos**

As we discussed briefly in the “Snap Pictures” chapter, you can access all images you've snapped previously from the Camera Roll, an album built into the Camera app. This album also shows up in your Photos app (and, if you've purchased Apple's $5 iPhoto app, there as well).
Add Apps and Accessories

TIME TO EXPERIMENT Get more out of your iPhone with an alternate camera app like Digital Arch’s $2 Pris.

As you’ve seen, the built-in Camera and Photos apps on your iPhone can be invaluable when you’re snapping and editing images. But sometimes you need to go above and beyond the basics—and when you do, there’s a good chance that some apps in the App Store and external accessories can fulfill your photographic desires.
Thanks for Reading!

We hope that this *Superguide* has helped you make sense of iPhone photography and that you’re ready to embark upon your own photographic journey. For even more information on snapping great images, take a look at our *Digital Photography Superguide*.

And check out [Macworld.com](http://macworld.com) and the rest of our *Superguide* program for the latest tips, tricks, how-tos, and news about the iPhone, iOS, and all of Apple's other products.