

How to take better photos with your smartphone



Created by AnnaLena Seemann
Owner of Photography by AnnaLena

About me

I have been interested in photography since I was a child. I worked at Sears Portrait Studio and the local Snap Magazine as a photographer, and currently have a studio in my home doing portrait photography. As an avid traveller, I have found that my phone camera is very important, as it is small and light and can take amazing photos these days. Let's explore ways to make the best use of your phone cameras while travelling and in your daily life!



Start by cleaning the camera lens!
Wipe off any dirt or finger prints off the lens with a soft cloth.



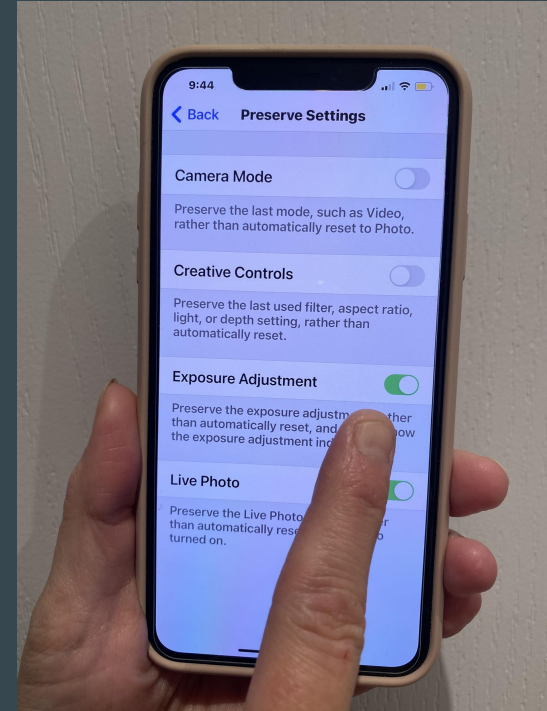
Useful settings for your phone camera (I am using an iphone)

1. Under Settings: select Camera and then Grid to get a grid with 9 squares. This grid will help you take photos using the rule of thirds for the most pleasing compositions

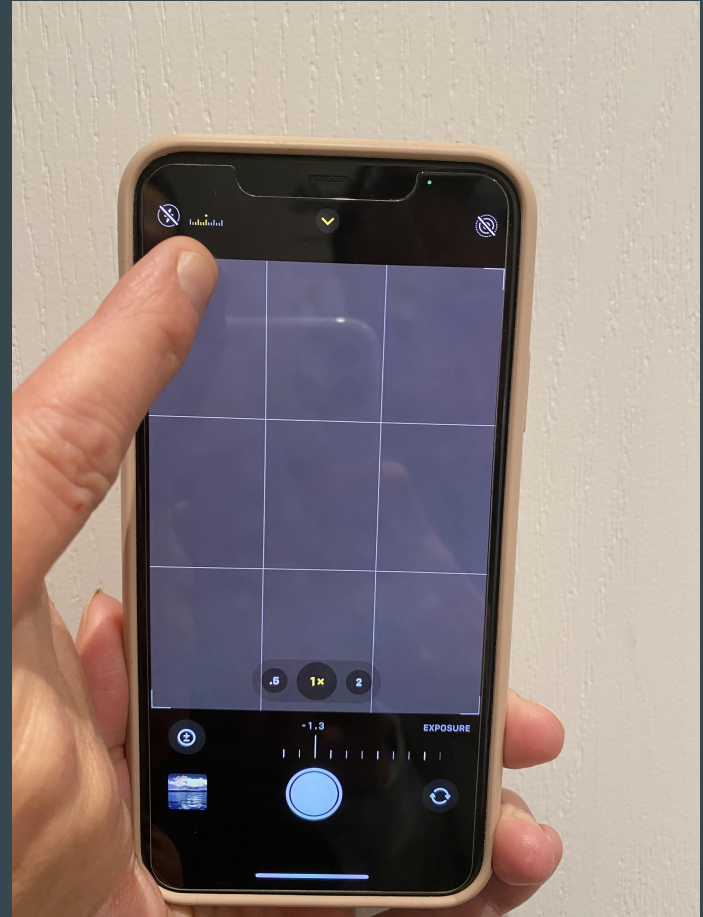


2. Under Settings, select Camera, then Preserve Settings, and Exposure Adjustments. This will allow you to lighten or darken a scene before you take the photo by using a slider.

This can be useful in many situations such as dimly lit museums or very bright sunny buildings



Prior to taking the photo, select the exposure icon at the top left to reveal the slider bar at the bottom. Move the slider to the left or right to adjust the scene to get darker or lighter, so that you will end up with a more well-exposed photo.



How to take sharp photos:

1. Hold the phone steadily with two hands and use the thumb to take the photo



2. Use a small portable tripod

3. Rest your elbows on a firm surface.

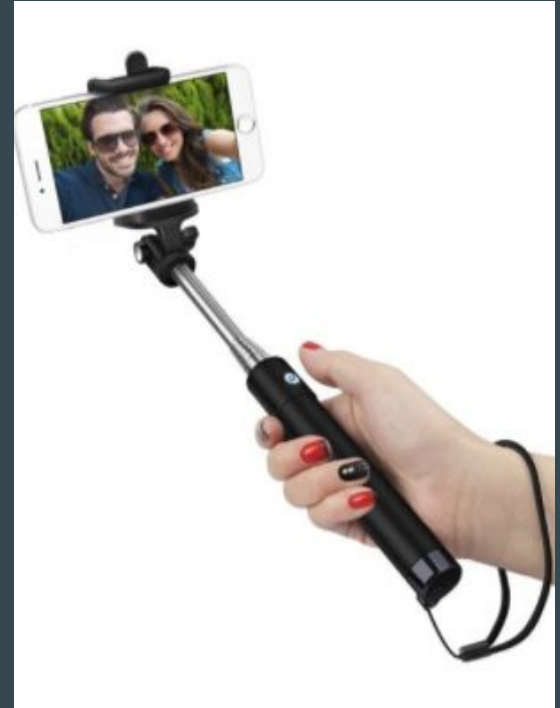
4. Tap the screen (on the subject) to focus



Tripods can be very useful on a trip when you want to take a selfie in front of a beautiful landscape or a tourist destination and you don't want to ask anyone to take your photo.

A selfie stick is another great option.

The reason why a tripod is preferred is because the rear camera has a higher resolution than the front camera (used for selfies), and will give you a higher quality image. This is important if you want to print the photo.

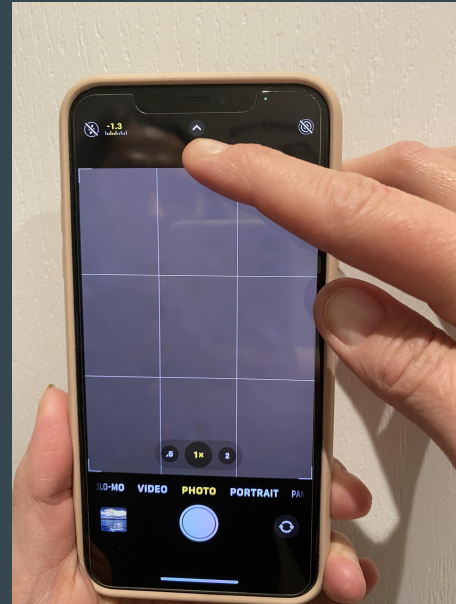


Self timer

This tool is most useful for selfies.

On my iphone 11 Pro Max, it can be found by clicking the small arrow at the top centre of the screen, while having the camera screen open. Then I can select the self timer icon.

Remember that the rear camera takes higher quality images.



Avoid using flash

On camera flash can look very washed out. Unless the situation absolutely calls for the use of flash, turn it off and look for other sources of light, such as candles, lamps, billboards, windows. Move around a bit to find a good light source. A small portable LED light can be very useful to carry along.



Avoid using the optical zoom on your phone camera

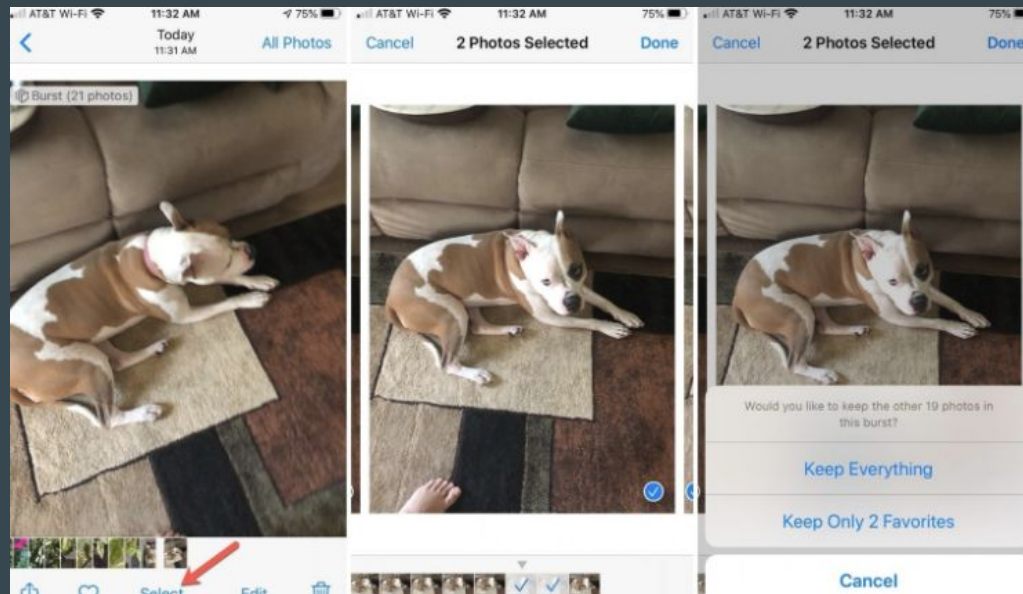
When zooming in, pixels and quality is lost. It is better to move your feet to get closer to your subject.



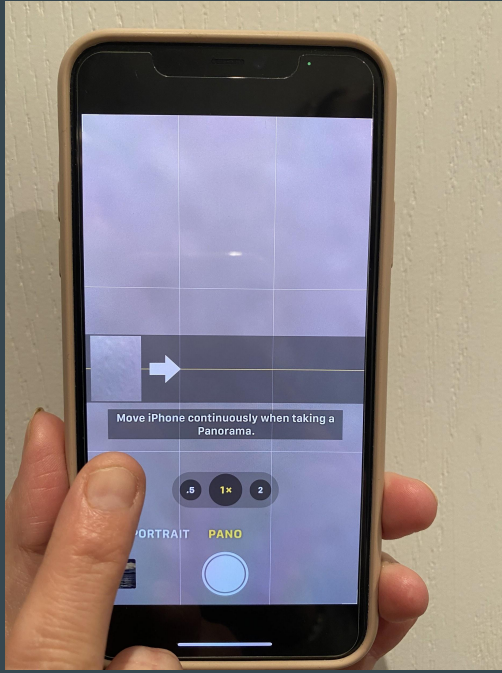
If you can't move closer to your subject, bringing a specialized mobile lens that you purchase as an extra, can up your game a lot. I would recommend a telephoto lens first and foremost, since when travelling, we often want to zoom in closer on a scene. A macro lens will allow you to take super close-up shots. I don't know what brand to recommend, but with some research, you should be able to locate a good quality lens



Use the burst mode to capture multiple shots, in a row, very quickly. This can be useful for action scenes or for animals that will not stay still for long. In Camera Settings, under Camera, select “Use volume up for burst” to be able to use the outside volume button to take a burst of photos.



Panorama mode is a great tool to capture a wide and expansive scene, whether it is a landscape or a city scene.



Take photos from many angles for the most impact and variety

1. Move in close. Close-ups are great for details of products or faces
2. Get low for an exaggerated look. Great for architecture.
3. Shoot straight up. Tree crowns look interesting from this angle
4. Use an object as a frame to your subject
5. Walk around the other side, look for reflections and shadows



Take photos of the locals

Capture them in action or ask to take their portraits, by talking to and connecting with them. Sometimes it requires patience and going off the beaten path, but these type of photos tend to be very meaningful and memorable.



Look for stories to tell!

Photography is all about capturing the moment and telling the story. Find the emotions and capture them. The crashing waves, the laughing children on the carnival ride, the man at the market cutting up fish, the hugging of your travel partners on the beach etc.



Editing

To improve the quality of your photos consider editing them a little. In Photos select Edit to open up the editing panel. The sun icon at the bottom left opens up the adjustments panel. You can click on each icon here to fine tune and adjust the photo, such as exposure, adding /removing shadows, increase the saturation, warm up or cool down the image, sharpen it and more. You can also click the crop tool icon to crop the photo and the filter icon to change the look and colour. Click done when finished.



Third party editing apps

If you find the editing options on the smartphone limiting, you can buy editing apps with more functions.

Note: some smartphones come with a portrait photography mode, like my phone does. It has multiple lighting options, such as natural light, studio light, stage light and high key light. Therefore I need less editing when taking portraits.























































Thank you for listening!

Photography by AnnaLena
905-716-6384



Offering Family Portraits, Headshots and Beauty Portraits