

Why Every Smartphone Photographer Should Know About Adobe Project Indigo

If you've ever suffered from the dilemma of whether to bring your DSLR or just your smartphone on a long trip, Adobe's Project Indigo can help you take that burden off your shoulders.

If you've ever struggled with the dilemma of whether to bring a DSLR or just your smartphone on a long trip, Adobe's Project Indigo could help you get over that. Using it for just a few days, you'll be impressed and feel like you're carrying a DSLR in a smartphone.

Adobe Project Indigo turns your phone into a manual camera

Project Indigo is an Adobe camera app developed by former Google Pixel engineers. With Project Indigo's primary focus on improving image quality, the app features tools and controls typically found only on professional camera equipment.

1. Download Project Indigo (Beta) for iOS (iPhone 12 Pro or later or iPhone 14s or later) (Free)

20:51



DNG
+
JPEG



+/- 0.0

1/8000 s

ISO 500



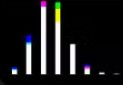
FOCUS 0.79 AUTO



20:44



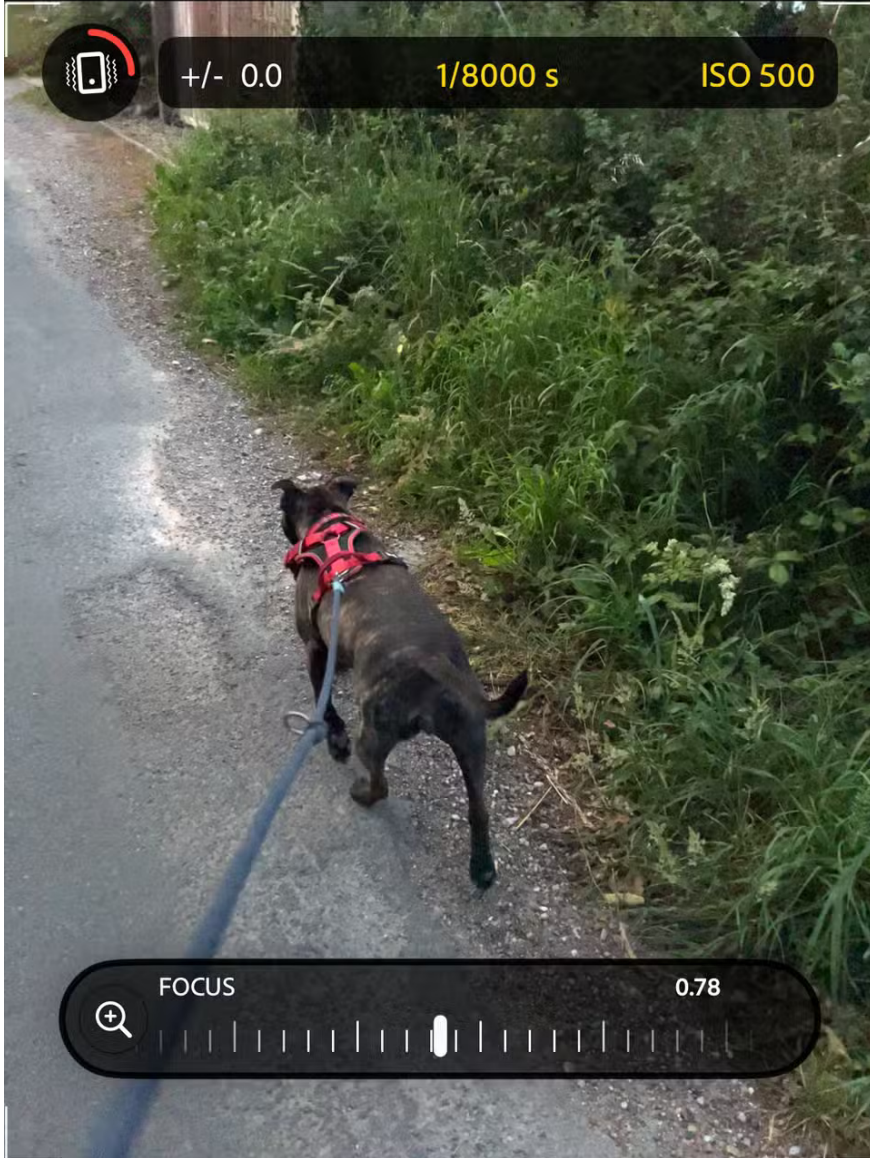
DNG
+
JPEG



+/- 0.0

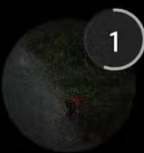
1/8000 s

ISO 500



FOCUS

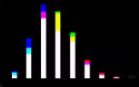
0.78



20:44



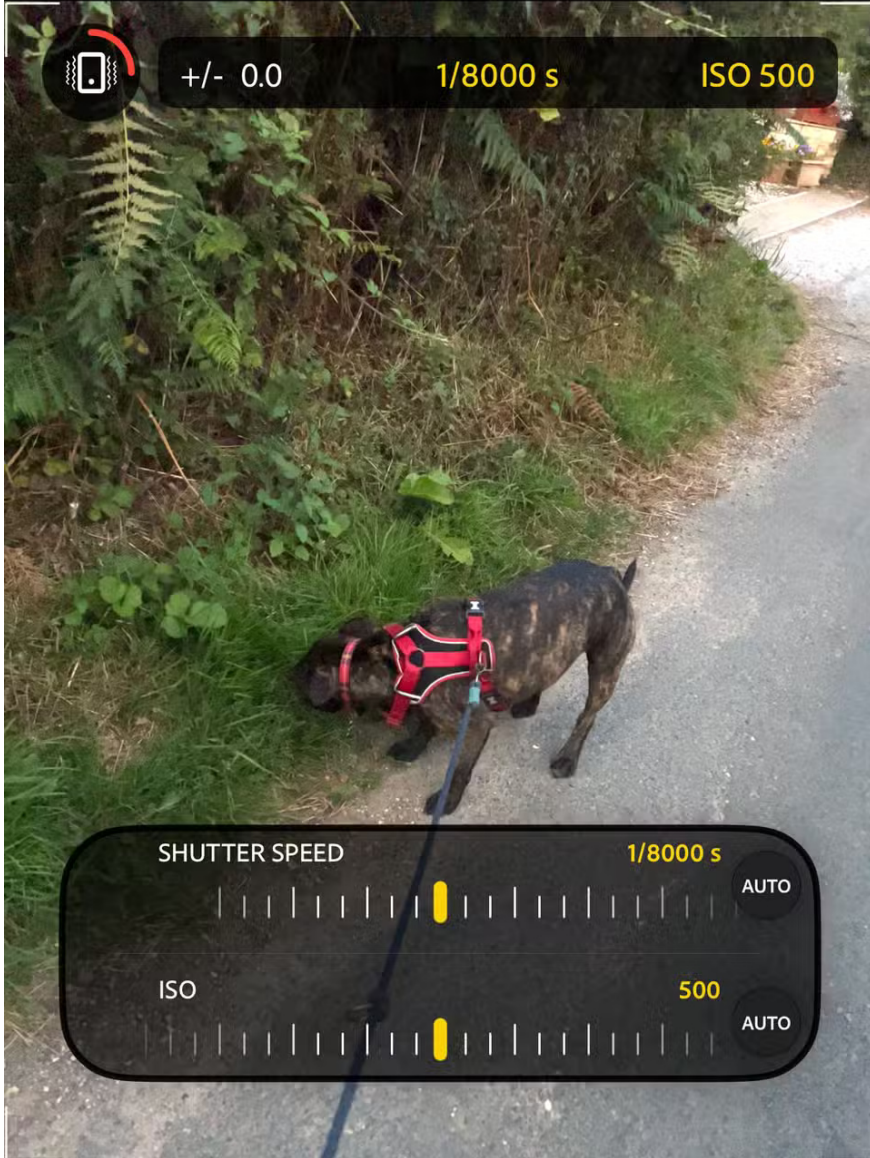
DNG
+
JPEG



+/- 0.0

1/8000 s

ISO 500



SHUTTER SPEED

1/8000 s

AUTO

ISO

500

AUTO



ISO

+/-



DSLR settings offer fully customizable shooting options, such as changing shutter speed, aperture, focus distance, exposure, white balance, and ISO. Most DSLRs also offer a histogram viewer for viewing exposure levels, grid lines, a level (usually found on tripods used with DSLRs, not cameras), access to both RAW and JPEG , and more.

While currently in Beta mode, Project Indigo – which will likely eventually be integrated into Adobe's Lightroom Mobile app – will add all of the above-mentioned features to your phone's camera.

Night mode can compete with high ISO of DSLR

Many people have used night mode on phone cameras before, and the results are pretty good. The night mode on Project Indigo directly simulates using extremely high ISO on a DSLR - a more realistic way to get images in the dark.

22:20 ↗

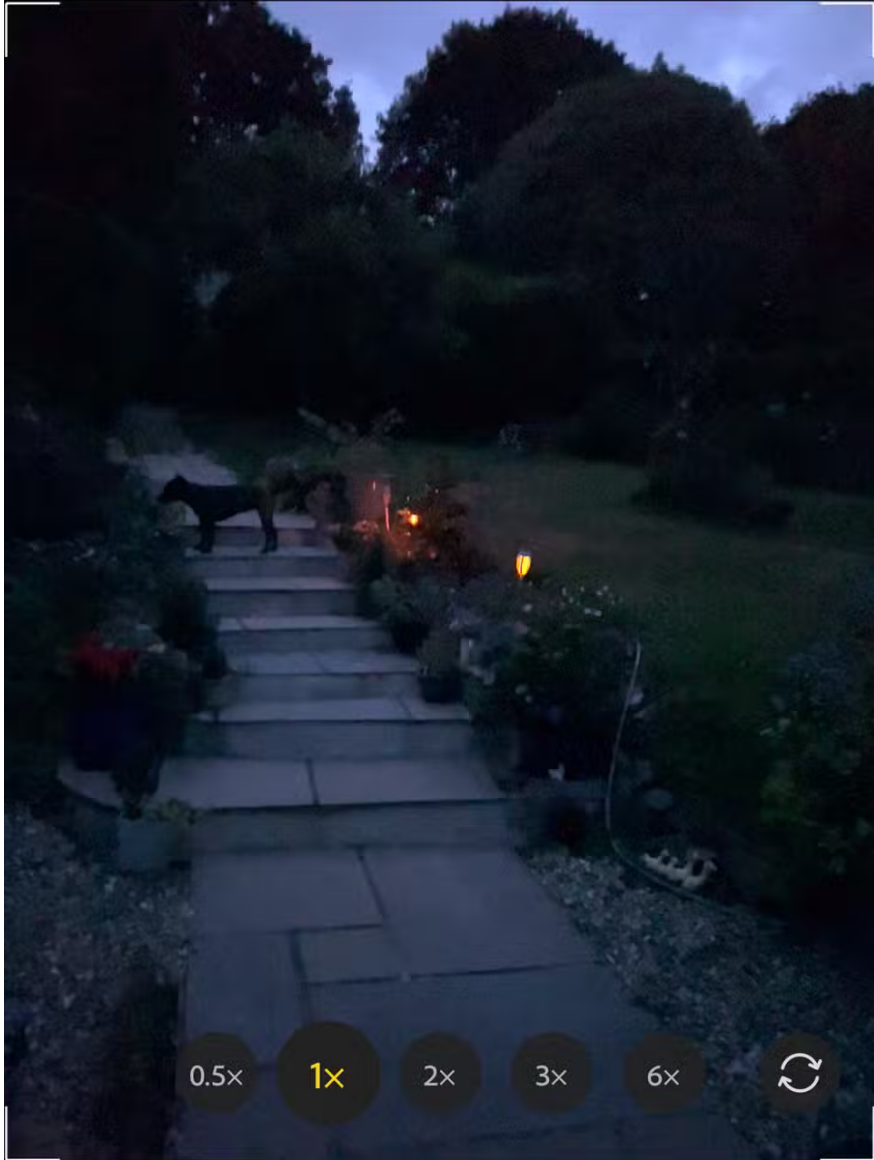


DNG
+
JPEG



1/10 s
ISO 2500

🌙 3s



0.5x

1x

2x

3x

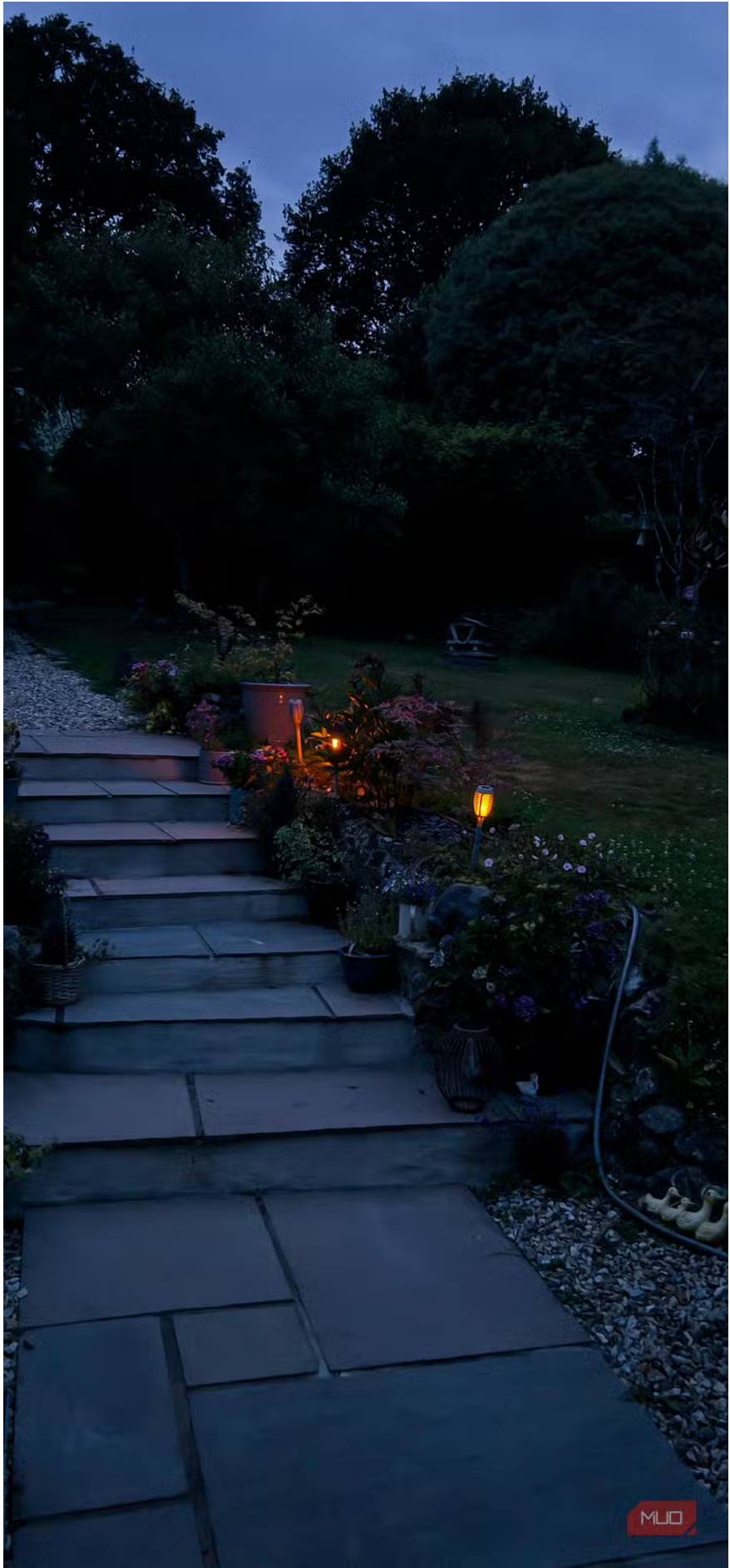
6x



Photo

Night







Most phone camera night modes don't let you customize the ISO, but instead choose an automatic exposure level. ISO reflects the light sensitivity of the film on the camera, even in digital cameras it works the same way with film.

The lower the ISO, the less sensitive the sensor is to light. This means that night mode photography requires a higher ISO to increase the sensor's sensitivity to light. Combining this with a stable camera (on a tripod or balanced on a stable surface) means you can take great photos at night.

After trying out Project Indigo's night mode at dusk, I was impressed with the results. Even when zoomed in, the results were still high quality.

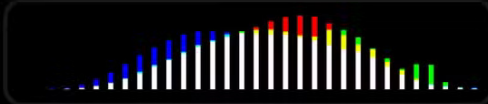
Manual focus range for portrait mode

One of the settings on the Project Indigo camera is the manual focus range. This feature is typically found on DSLR cameras by switching between autofocus and manual focus. This feature then allows you to activate the focus ring to choose which parts of the image are in sharp focus and which are blurred by the bokeh effect. Aperture also affects the contrast between the in-focus and out-of-focus areas.

21:18



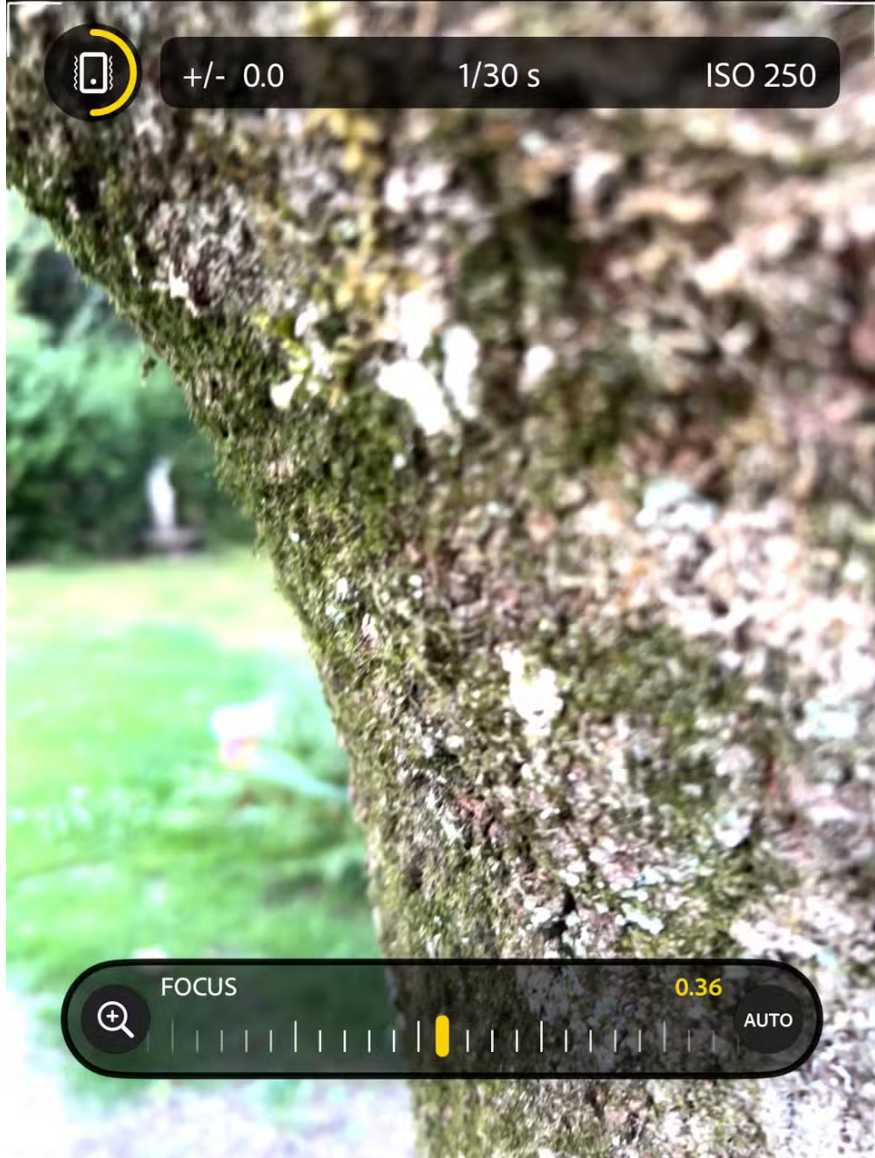
DNG
+
JPEG



+/- 0.0

1/30 s

ISO 250



FOCUS 0.36 AUTO



21:19



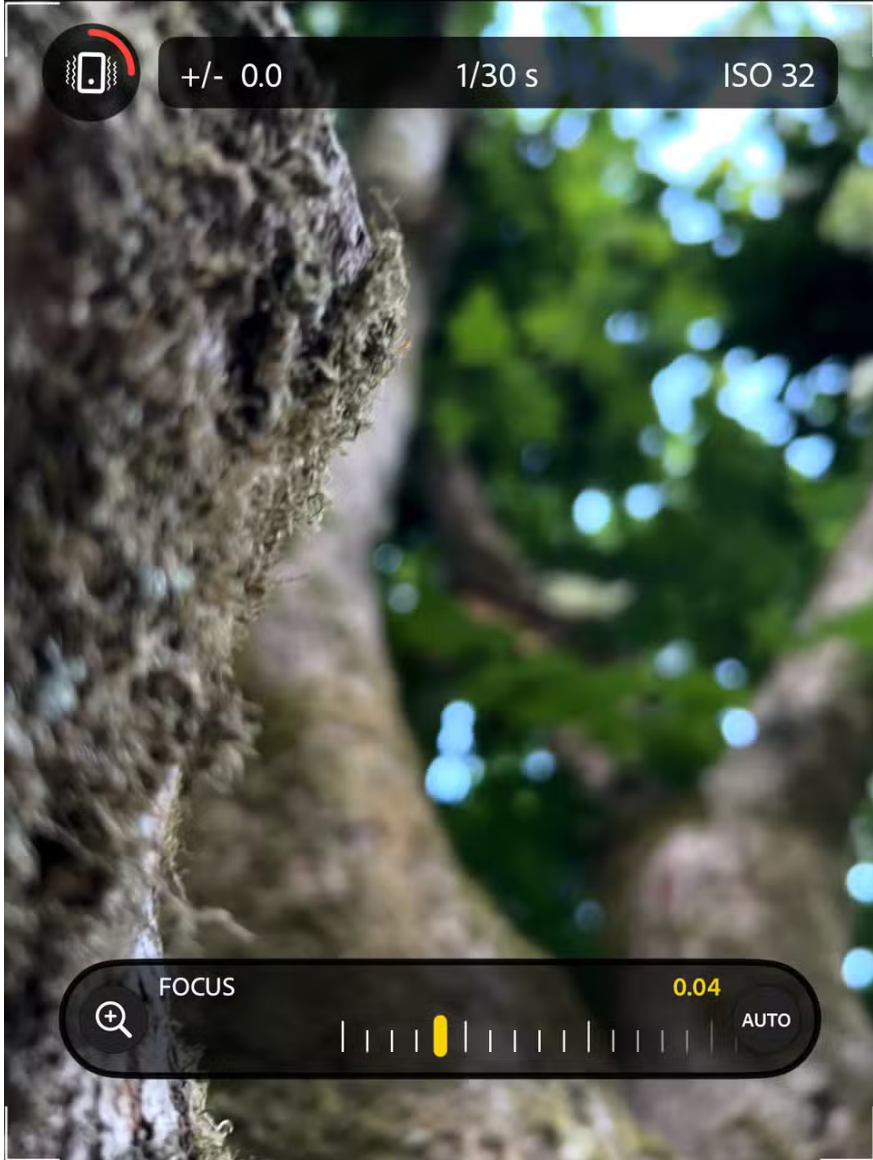
DNG
+
JPEG



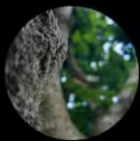
+/- 0.0

1/30 s

ISO 32



FOCUS 0.04 AUTO



Project Indigo doesn't have a specific aperture setting, but the app's focus range is fully customizable - or you can choose Auto mode - to choose how sharp your photos will be. The camera benefits from the iPhone's multiple lenses, even though you can't manually select the aperture.

Unlike the iPhone's Portrait Mode, there's no clear line between sharp areas and blurred areas due to the bokeh effect, because Project Indigo is technically changing the focus, not doing it artificially like Portrait Mode.

Connect directly to Lightroom Mobile for more benefits

Adobe Project Indigo is still in beta, so this isn't the end goal for the app. While it's not confirmed how or where we might find these tools in future Adobe features, it's a strong assumption that they'll be integrated into the Lightroom Mobile app rather than being a separate tool.

14:57



HDR

HEIC



14:27



Early access



Early access Content Credentials

Applying Content Credentials when exporting or sharing files can help you protect your work and build trust with your audience.

[Learn more](#)

Leave feedback

Early access Dynamic text size



Add support for in-app dynamic text sizes.

Tech preview features are experimental. They may not be as stable or work as expected.

Tech preview Use Indigo for camera

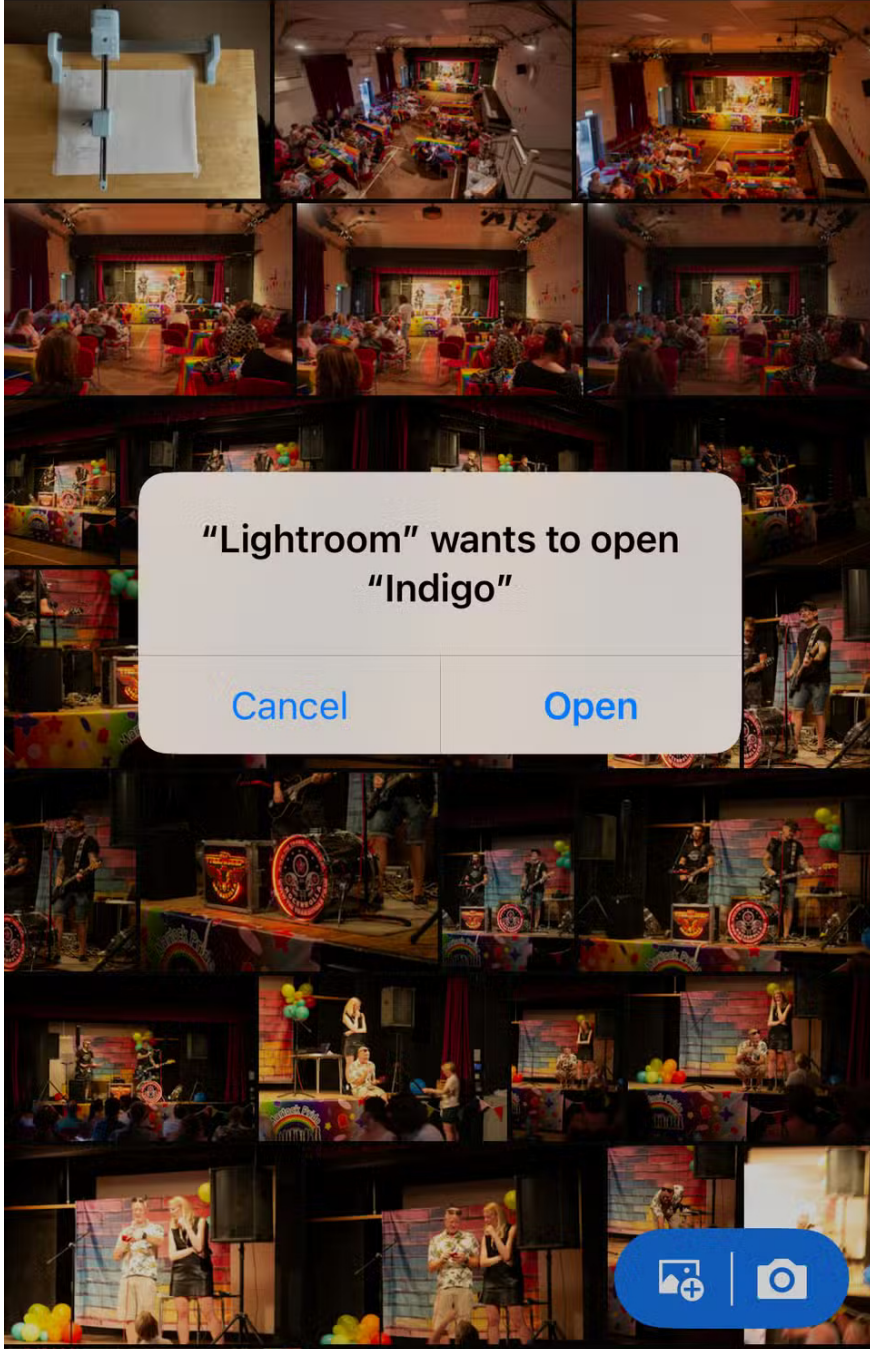


Open Indigo instead of Lightroom's built-in camera when tapping the camera button.

14:27



All photos ▾



"Lightroom" wants to open
"Indigo"

Cancel

Open



Device



Lightroom



Community

Using Project Indigo, you can easily send your new photos to Lightroom Mobile to continue editing. Selecting any photo from the Indigo film library will prompt you to open or install Lightroom Mobile. It will send a JPEG if you shot in JPEG mode, or if you shot in DNG or the JPEG and DNG blend option, it will open a RAW image to Lightroom so you can focus on the finer details in your editing.

This free beta app won't be around forever.

As mentioned, Project Indigo is currently in beta mode at Adobe Labs. This allows smartphone users to install and use Project Indigo for free until the beta ends.

As a beta app, Project Indigo is only available for the iPhone 12 Pro and later, or the iPhone 14 and later for non-Pro iPhone models. Once the beta ends, there will likely be a separate beta for Android models (guessing based on the history of Adobe's other mobile apps).



What is Project Indigo?

Indigo is a camera app, but different from most camera apps. You can skip this introduction and start taking pictures right away, but you will probably want to come back and read it. Go to camera Settings in the top panel to access it later.

- Photo vs Night mode ▾
- Shutter button ▾
- Zooming ▾
- Viewfinder ▾
- Filmstrip ▾
- File formats ▾
- Pro controls ▾

08:42




Camera Features



✓ Shutter button 

✓ Zooming 

✓ Viewfinder 

✓ Filmstrip 

✓ File formats 

✓ Pro controls 



Pressing this icon brings up buttons that allow manual control over focus, exposure time and ISO, exposure compensation, and white balance. Dismissing the controls reverts to automatic operation.

Focus control includes an optional magnified loupe. White balance control lets you adjust temperature and tint, or tap on an object in the scene known to be neutral gray.

Unique to Indigo is manual control over the number of frames aligned and merged to make a photo, available in Night mode only. More frames means lower noise but a longer time to capture and to process the photo. There is also a 'Long Exposure' button, which adds images together without alignment. If your phone is on a tripod, you can use this mode to produce water-into-silk and similar effects.

Once all the beta testing is complete, it's likely that Project Indigo — with its new, currently unnamed name — will become part of Adobe's subscription model, meaning some of its features could be premium-only, or even the entire app.

You finished reading the article "**Why Every Smartphone Photographer Should Know About Adobe Project Indigo**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.