

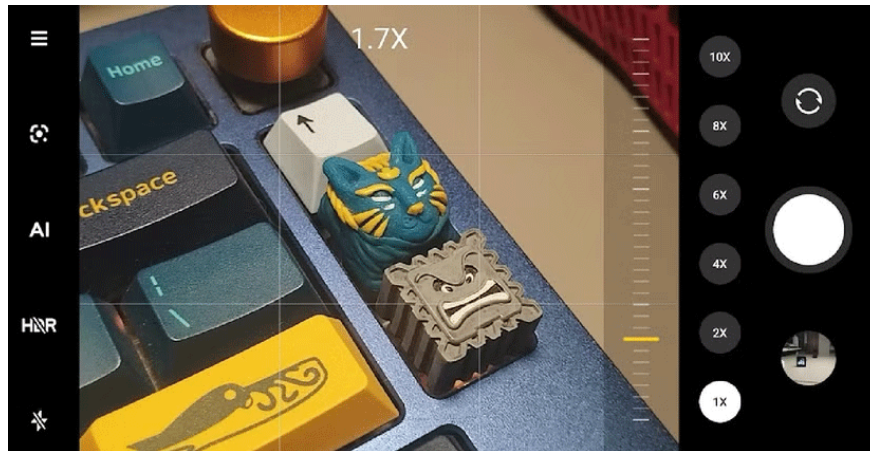
Why you should use digital zoom to take beautiful photos with your phone

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How does digital zoom affect photos?

Digital zoom is known as a destructive process because it erases data from the entire image, as opposed to optical zoom, where the lens zooms in instead of erasing parts of the image captured by the sensor. Digital zoom is essentially cropping, but before you take the photo.



When you zoom digitally, you end up with fewer pixels in the entire image. Let's say you have a 1200x600 image. If you double the size, you're left with a 600x300 image. That's a pretty low resolution image. However, most phones these days have much higher resolutions.

Why use digital zoom?

At 1200x600, you won't want to zoom in with only 720,000 pixels. However, modern smartphone cameras already have pretty good cameras.

There are a few key features to look out for in a smartphone camera, such as having at least a 12MP sensor that produces images with 12,000,000 pixels—giving you more to work with.

Even a budget phone like the Redmi Note 11, which costs just a few million VND, can still shoot 12MP photos and has a 50MP mode, which is enough resolution to zoom in without too much loss of quality on most platforms you post photos on. The images below are a comparison of zoomed in and unzoomed. You may notice the loss of quality if you look closely on a large screen, but not from your phone or after compression on social media.



Why should you care about zoom on your phone? Here's a quick demonstration: Compare two identical images and it's clear that the zoomed-in image has more depth, more focus, and less distraction.

Zooming is like using a longer lens on a camera. Phones tend to have a wide focal length, which can make your face look big or have odd proportions. It's not exactly the same as a fisheye effect, but sometimes it just doesn't look good.

Putting your subject further away and zooming in effectively narrows the field of view, creating a more natural look that's closer to how our eyes see things. But what's more important: All those pixels or how good the image looks as a whole?

How to use digital zoom to take beautiful photos with your phone

Before you zoom in to take every photo, here are a few tips to keep in mind to get the most out of your zoom.

1. Step back and zoom to take a portrait

Standing too close to your subject's face often makes their face look big and elongated. Instead of getting close, take a step back and zoom in with your camera.



On the left of the image above, the 1x zoom is getting closer to the cat's face, while on the right, it's zoomed in a little further. Features farther from the center will be stretched out in the 1x zoom, like the cat's arm at the bottom of the image and the cat's ears looking elongated at the top.

2. Zoom in to make the photo less cluttered

Getting close to your subject will result in warped edges due to the wide-angle nature of phone lenses; while stepping back will result in a distracting frame. This is especially true for product shots and busy environments.



Take this keyboard for example; the surroundings are very cluttered. On the right, it is zoomed in for more focus. It also makes objects straighter with less warped edges.

3. Zoom in to highlight the background more

Longer focal lengths tend to make distant objects appear closer and larger. Take a look at the two images below; the objects are the same distance apart in both images, but the zoomed-in image on the right makes the more distant object take up more space in the image. This phenomenon is often referred to as 'compression,' but it's simply the effect of a narrow field of view.



There are other ways to take advantage of the zoom feature on your smartphone camera. In most cases, the loss in quality is barely noticeable. Some phones even have optical zoom, like the Samsung Galaxy S24+ with 3x optical zoom, so you don't lose any quality. Zoom in and get the shots you've always wanted!

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