

# ① I want to buy a digital camera, but don't know the difference between a DSLR and a point-and-shoot digital camera?

To start, the lines between the two sides are quickly beginning to fade. Some manufacturers produce cameras that seem to behold aspects of both varieties. As with many industries, that of the digital camera advances at a quick rate.

In very general terms, a DSLR (digital single lens reflect) camera offers the option of removable lenses. The lenses have a reflex mirror, which allows the owner to view an intended, captured image through the camera's lens. The owner can see the image through the view finder, and when the shot is taken, the camera's mirror pops up allowing the image sensor to capture the intended sight (what you see is what you get).

Point-and-shoot digital cameras are economically-priced, and offer a lot of abilities for a novice photographer as well as those seeking to perform basic camera functions, though lack some abilities compared to a DSLR digital camera.

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Let's consider some advantages and disadvantages of both varieties:

## **DSLR advantages**

- Allows for large pixel sizes
- Adaptable in many situations regarding multiple lens use, accessory use (flashes and filters), and indoor/outdoor settings
- Great speed time regarding startup, focusing, and shutter lag
- Due to the reflex mirror function, they provide genuine images (what you see is what you get)
- Vast array of ISO settings (determines how sensitive the image sensor is to light)
- Variety and finger convenience of manual controls
- Can be expensive
- Larger in size and come with accessories
- Requires more maintenance (cleaning and care)
- Requires more knowledge of photography
- No 'LCD' window, though some DSLR models feature a 'live view' option modeled after the LCD window

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## **Point-and-Shoot Digital Camera advantages**

- Lightweight and compact (some can fit in pocket)
- Very quiet
- Excellence of auto-mode
- Economically-priced
- LCD display windows (help with framing)

## **Point-and-shoot disadvantages**

- Image quality is great for a novice or intermediate, but may be disappointing to professionals or those seeking to produce large prints

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- Poor shutter lag time (the time between when the button is pressed and the actual picture is taken) – though this is improving through time
  - Poor viewfinder option as opposed to LCD (though most point-and-shoot camera owners only use the LCD window)
  - Limitation of manual controls
  - Less adaptable in comparison to DSLR accessory capabilities

### **What's the lowdown on megapixels?**

A digital camera's associated number of megapixels will improve the quality of the captured image, so a six megapixel camera will capture a crisper image than that of a five megapixel camera. That being said, it is important to ask yourself what the ultimate desire will be regarding your pictures. Are you going to blow up your pictures for printing? If so, then it is recommended to look for as many megapixels as possible (and/or purchase a DSLR camera). If images will be printed or digitally transferred to a computer at normal size, then any digital camera starting at five megapixels will serve you well.

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### **What are some digital camera added accessories?**

That is a good question because sometimes a manufacturer's quoted price only refers to the camera itself; added accessories will cost you extra. Here are some digital camera accessories to think about, which may or may not be included in the original, quoted price:

- Camera case
- Memory cards
- Recharger
- Lenses
- Filters
- Tripods/monopods
- External flashes
- Reflectors

An associated tip is to check to see if you have any compatible gear leftover from prior purchases (or ask a friend or family member for theirs). For instance, some memory cards, lenses, flashes, and filters may be interchangeable regarding digital camera models.

### **What is the difference between 'optical' and 'digital' zoom?**

Both 'zooms' make the captured image bigger, but many believe an optical zoom is superior to a digital zoom. The reason being is that a digital zoom, though making an image bigger, only enlarges the pixels, which can make the image appear more pixilated and a bit distorted. Optical zooms, like digital zooms, will increase the size of a captured image, yet maintain better integrity of the image. Most digital cameras offer optical zooms up to 3x the image, while some offer 'super zooms' can make the image 12x larger or more.

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### **What kind of memory card should I buy for my digital camera?**

This depends on how many pictures you want to store. Many standard digital cameras come with a 16MB (megabyte) card; these memory cards can only maintain a handful of images (less than 10) at once. You can always buy supplemental cards, but be sure cards are compatible with your digital camera model. For instance SDHC (secure digital high capacity) cards exist and have storage capacities of 4 GB (gigabytes), yet are not compatible with standard, SD (secure digital) slots.

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### **What are some extra, digital camera buying tips?**

- Ask yourself what you are going to do with the digital camera. Is it for occasional event keepsakes? Sporting events? Freelance work? Shooting landscapes? Addressing this question will help you determine core and extra accessories and your budget.
- Are you an experienced photographer or do you intend to further your camera knowledge? If so, then a more advanced digital camera model may be for you.
- How important is camera size and ease of portability to you? Some digital cameras are very compact, yet those more involved are bigger and come with added accessories.
- Think about what features are most important to you. Write down from most sought-after to least-needed features before beginning the purchase cycle for your digital camera.
- How realistic is your budget? More advanced models can be expensive, so that needs to be realized. In addition, if you're looking to become more involved in your hobby, then opting for a superior model may better serve you now than deciding on an upgrade a short time from now.
- Many people now shop on the Web due to convenience and variety of selection. It is recommended to take advantage of what both schools of shopping have to offer. Visit camera shops and play around with some cameras to get a sense of how they feel and how their abilities function. Once you narrow your decision down to a few models, come back online and see what kind of deals the Web has to offer. Web suppliers often offer lower prices because they do not have to associate prices with salespeople, rent of brick and mortar stores, and other marketing endeavors.
- Some digital cameras come with auxiliary lights, which will help in dim or indoor settings. If a majority of shots will be taken indoors, look for this option.