

Zooming Effectively

Being able to zoom in and out on a scene is an element of photography that can make significant differences to the composition of a photo. Smartphone cameras have a zoom function, so you can make subjects appear larger on the camera's screen. However, unlike traditional cameras, which use an optical zoom by changing the distance between the camera's internal lenses, digital zoom is the same as cropping a photo, or zooming in on it using a photo-editing app. Digital zoom works by increasing the size of the pixels on the screen, and produces an inferior quality than using optical zoom. It is therefore important that zooming is not overused on smartphone cameras: the greater the amount of zoom, the greater the reduction of photo quality (and the same effect can be achieved by cropping a non-zoomed photo). However, it can still be useful to use a certain degree of zoom, and there are two ways to do this:



When zooming in on a scene, always leave a slightly larger border around the main subject than you think may be necessary. This can always be cropped out of the final photo, but if the border is too tight on the main subject, this cannot be rectified.



The amount of zoom applied by swiping or pinching is displayed on the screen.



Zooming by swiping

Scenes being viewed by a camera app can be zoomed in and out by swiping and pinching on the screen:

1 Swipe outwards with thumb and forefinger to zoom in on a scene with the camera app

2 Pinch inwards with thumb and forefinger to zoom out on a scene



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Using zoom buttons

Some smartphone cameras also have buttons that can change the amount of zoom by specific factors:

- 1 By default, the zoom button will be at 1x – i.e. no zoom applied. Take a photo with this setting



- 2 Tap on the zoom button to double the amount of zoom – i.e. 2x. Take a photo with this setting to capture the same photo but with a greater degree of zoom applied



Zoom buttons only zoom in or out to a specific degree. To zoom in or out to a custom degree, use the technique on the previous page.