



What are Megapixels?

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If you've been shopping the latest smartphones and comparing features, chances are you've come across the term "megapixel"—but do you know what it means? Knowing the ins and outs of megapixels is important if you're focused on the quality of your phone's camera and the images it can produce. To help you get the right smartphone for you, we've answered the most common questions to help you learn more about megapixels in cameras.

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What is a megapixel?

On the surface, the easiest way to explain megapixels is to relate them to a camera's resolution, and its ability to produce crisp, clear pictures... but it goes deeper than that. The term "megapixel" is actually a measurement for counting pixels. One megapixel encompasses one million pixels, which are the tiny squares filled with data that put together an image. So if a camera has 16 megapixels, the pictures it produces feature 16 million tiny data squares. The number of megapixels tells you how much detail the camera can capture in an image. The more megapixels the camera has, the more detailed pictures it can take.

Why do megapixels matter to a phone camera?

While it's not necessarily the end all, be all in terms of camera quality, your phone's megapixel count will impact picture quality. More megapixels means higher resolution photos, giving you more options for what you want to do with those pictures.

If you want to just keep them on your phone, share with friends, or view them on a computer, megapixels might not matter that much to you. But if you're a photography nut who likes to have more than one option for capturing moments, or you want to be able to print your phone images in larger sizes for framing, a higher megapixel count will make that easier for you to accomplish. If you try to enlarge or print pictures taken with a camera with a lower count of megapixels, you run the risk of having pixelated or blurry pictures.

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Do more megapixels mean better quality?

Not necessarily. Megapixels are one part of the equation, but your smartphone camera’s lenses and sensor play a part, too. If your camera doesn’t have as many megapixels but has a good sensor, you can still take high-quality images—especially compared to a camera that has high megapixels, but a poor sensor or lenses. The pixel quality itself can also impact your image. It’s possible to have a camera with less megapixels, but the quality of the pixels is high enough to still deliver excellent photos.

How many megapixels is good quality?

These days, phones come in a wide range of megapixel counts—anywhere from six to 12 to 16 and beyond, even as high as 40. In general, it’s suggested that a 12 megapixel camera on a smartphone is more than enough for even a professional photographer do print out framable images. If that’s not your focus, chances are you’ll be happy with six megapixels for normal camera usage.

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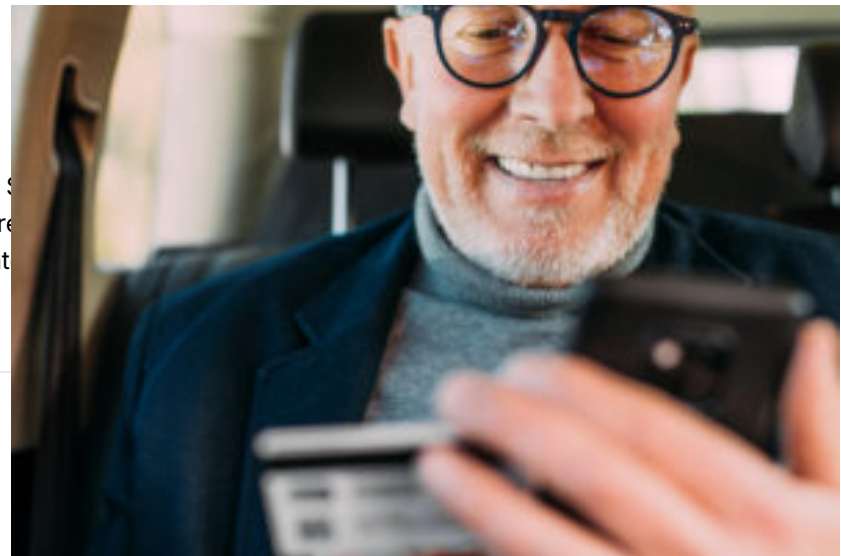
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