

Lenses and Filters for the iPhone

Presented by, Bobbie Pastor for PMUG April 9, 2022

Are Camera Lens Add-ons for Smartphones Worth Buying?

- If your phone doesn't have a trio of lenses, you might be tempted to buy a snap-on set. These allow you to add telephoto, ultra wide, and fisheye focal lengths to your iPhone. But are they worth the money, or should you upgrade your phone instead?

How Do Camera Lens Add-Ons Work?

Lens add-ons attach to your smartphone's camera lens and increase or decrease its focal length. Most late model iPhones have at least one wide-angle lens. The one on the iPhone 11 is equivalent to about 26mm on a real camera.

Lens add-ons can give you more photographic possibilities than you would have on a older or lower end phone. Telephoto lenses might double or triple your focal length, while fisheye lenses are so wide, they cause straight lines appear to curve.



If you're a fan of smartphone photography, aftermarket lenses allow you to go beyond what's possible on your stock device. There are even some clip-on lenses you can mount to the front of your device to take super-wide selfies or make fisheye FaceTime calls.

At the cheaper end of the spectrum are the pocketable plastic lenses you can clip on or off, as necessary. It's not unusual to find multiple lens options in the same clip-on system. You'll find hundreds of these one-size-fits-all options on sites like Amazon, Wish, or AliExpress.

Then, there are the "professional" clip-on systems, made from more robust materials, like glass and metal. Some of these require a purpose-built case, which ensures the lens lines up properly and remains in place.

These pricier options can be much bigger than the simple clip-on lenses. Many of them also come with a carrying case and lens caps to keep them safe.



SandMarc Photography Edition - iPhone 13 Pro



Finally, some mounting systems don't come with lenses. Rather, they're intended for use with SLR and mirrorless lenses from manufacturers like Canon, Nikon, and Sony. These only make sense if you already have an arsenal of lenses you want to use with your smartphone.

You can spend anywhere from a few dollars to a few hundred on a lens add-on system. Unfortunately, none of them quite come close to a native, built-in telephoto or ultrawide lens, like those on the latest and greatest smartphones.

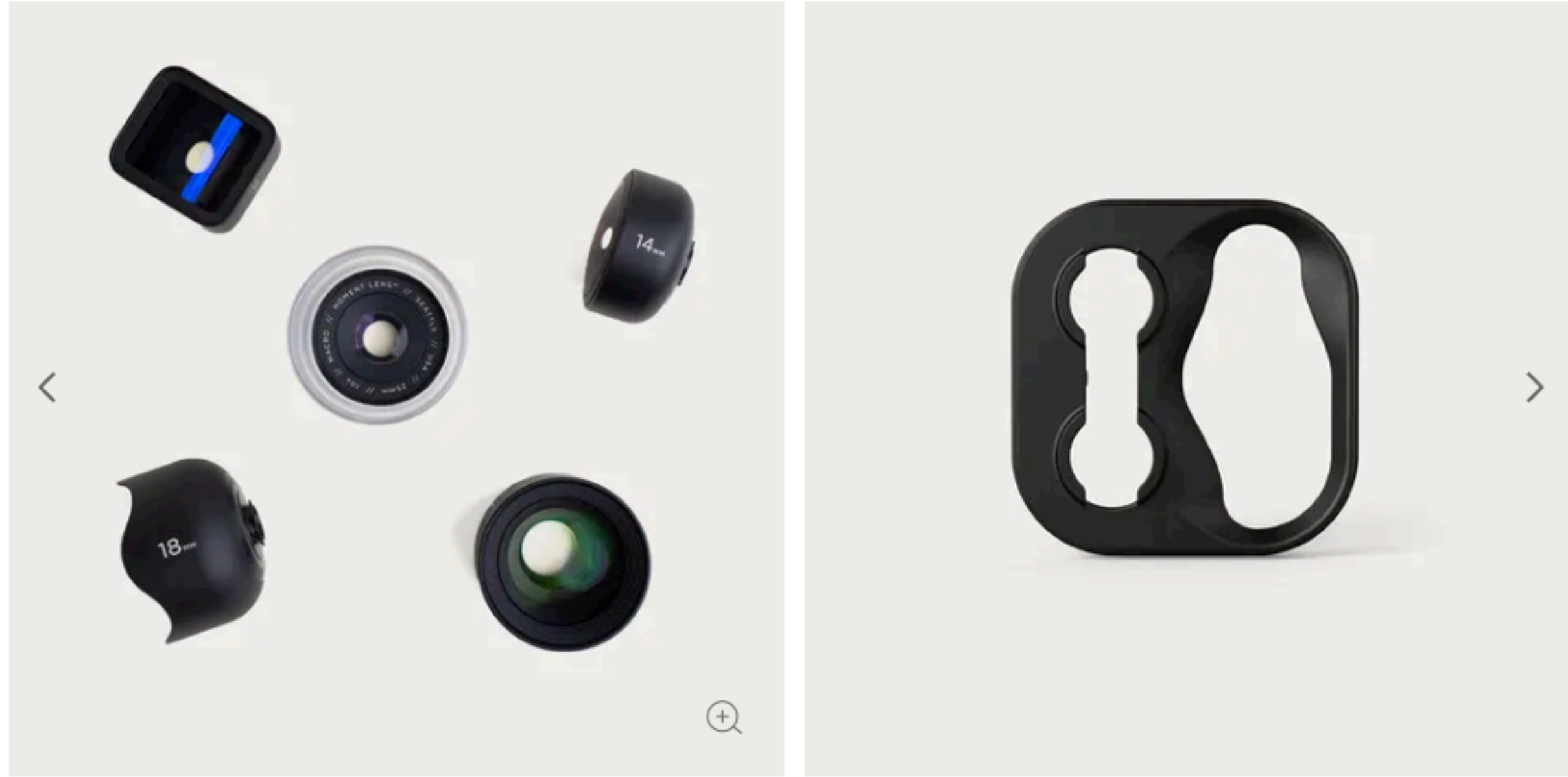
Why do you need additional lenses, when iPhone 13 has almost everything accept a Fish Eye?



Spring Sale

Moment iPhone 13 Starter Kit - Three Lenses

[Shop Moment Store](#)



\$364.90 USD ~~\$414.90~~ \$50 off

Or 4 interest-free payments available for orders over \$10.

Klarna. ⓘ

✓ In Stock

📍 Arrives in 3-5 days. Update your location.



Choose a case:

Moment Cases in various colors and all MagSafe compatible

CASE FOR IPHONE 13 - COMPATIBLE WITH I ▼

Select a Device

IPHONE 13 PRO MAX ▼

Select a Color: Black



Choose a drop-in lens mount:

This insert is what Moment Lenses attach to

Select a Device

IPHONE 13 PRO & IPHONE 13 PRO MAX ▼



Choose A Lens:

A Moment Lens to give you focal length options

FISHEYE 14MM LENS ▼



Choose A Lens:

A Moment Lens to give you focal length options

FISHEYE 14MM LENS ▼



Choose A Lens:

A Moment Lens to give you focal length options

WIDE 18MM LENS ▼

Here is an example of a lens kit. It is pretty pricy, however, it is for the iPhone 13. If you have older models of phones, the price point goes down.

Adding to this, a smartphone camera is also bound by the core limitation of its sensor. The sensor ultimately governs image quality by limiting how much light can make it into a single exposure. Larger sensors, like those found on full-frame cameras, have much better native low-light performance. They also offer more overall detail, since a greater surface area is used to capture a scene.

Another drawback of lens add-ons is their size—some of the larger ones protrude significantly. Smartphones are often favored by street photographers due to their inconspicuous nature. If you slap a lens on the back of it, you lose the reason so many embrace smartphone-photography in the first place.

Cheap clip-on lenses are a lot of fun, and many of them are priced accordingly. You won't be winning Wildlife Photographer of the Year, but you might snap some fun images you can look back on in years to come.



