

Fujifilm announces the new Instax Mini 12 instant camera

Fujifilm has announced the newest instant camera in its Instax Mini lineup: the Fujifilm Instax Mini 12. The Instax Mini 12 is a new iteration of the Instax Mini 11 – our current top instant camera pick – and will be available around mid-March for \$79.95.

Save for a few minor feature and design updates, the Instax Mini 11 and Instax Mini 12 look identical. However, the lens structure is the most notable change. You can now, for instance, twist the lens to enter the Close-Up Mode instead of pushing a button, much as you would a traditional point-and-shoot. I've only just started testing the camera, but based on my first impression, this makes zooming in just a little more fun and intuitive as a result.

You can also now power the instant camera on and off by simply twisting the lens to clearly labeled “on” and “off” settings. Previously, you had to click a button on the side to turn the camera on and pop the lens out and then push it back to turn the camera off. That's not exactly intuitive, and I imagine that, combined with the lack of clear “on” and “off” labels, may have made it a little harder for kids to use the Instax Mini 11.

Still, while I like the fact that it's now more intuitive to turn off the camera, I prefer using the Instax Mini 11's button to turn it on. That's because the Close-Up mode is close to the “on” and “off” settings. This makes it easy to accidentally turn the Instax Mini 12 off, which I did while trying to switch the lens to Close-Up Mode. It's possible, though, things will improve after I test the camera more and

adjust to the change.

Fujifilm's also made some changes to the flash that are worth pointing out. Though, unfortunately, you still can't turn the flash off, Fujifilm says the new automatic flash control should better optimize image quality in bright and low light environments. I'll have to do further testing to see if that claim holds true, but I hope it is since that was one of my main issues with its otherwise excellent predecessor.