How an extra lens can transform your iPhone’s photos

A few years ago, the hit Sundance film *Tangerine* was shot entirely on an iPhone 5S to surprisingly good results. And last year, Steven Soderbergh did the same the same thing while making *Unsane*, with his only camera being an iPhone 7 Plus.

While a lot more than camera gear goes into making those movies look the way they do, the fact that professional filmmakers are using cameras that many of us keep in our pockets is a pretty encouraging sign when it comes to what we should be able to produce.

I wanted to test out just what you can do to improve your phone’s photo- and video-taking abilities, so I tried out a few different things: some add-on lenses, a microphone, and a stabilizer. You can see the results in the video above.

One thing I was particularly interested in was add-on lenses, which fit on top of your phone’s existing lens to provide a different field of view and potentially even better image quality. The best known of these come from Moment, but Moment’s lenses are expensive — they’re around $90 to $100. So I also tried out some cheaper lenses from no-name companies on Amazon.

It turns out, you really do get what you pay for. Here’s some of the differences:

Left: Ztylus Switch 6 fisheye lens / Right: Moment 2nd gen superfish lens (photos taken a few hours apart)

Macro shot of tree notch. Left: Amir clip-on lens / Right: Moment 2nd gen macro lens

Left: Ztylus Switch 6 tele / Right: Moment 2nd gen tele

So yeah, if you're serious about getting more out of your phone's camera, those photos should make it obvious that it's worth paying more — in all cases, Moment's lenses were brighter, sharper, and nicer to look at. That said, if you're just curious about what add-on lenses can do and want to explore some fun effects, I don't think you'd be too upset with the cheap lenses, so long as you don't spend much more than $10. The three-lens kit that I got was only $12, and I probably got $12 of fun out of it. I just wouldn't shoot anything too important with them.

https://www.theverge.com/circuitbreaker/2018/3/31/17181642/moment-lens-iphone-android-photography