Instagram is testing its own take on Snap Maps

Instagram has starting testing a new feature that looks a whole lot like Snap Maps.

This allows Instagram users to post text and video updates to a map based on where they were taken. The map is shared with friends, whose updates can all appear alongside each other. It is, pretty much, just Snap Maps, which was originally launched in 2017.

The difference for now seems to be that Instagram may have much more limited privacy settings. Users have to choose a "specific group of people" to share their location with, such as "Close Friends or only followers they follow back," Christine Pai, a Meta spokesperson, told *The Verge*. Snapchat allows public posts to Snap Maps.

Instagram's feature is currently only available as a "small test" in a few markets, Pai said. The tool is opt-in and includes controls over location sharing. "As always, we are building this feature with safety in mind," Pai said. She didn't immediately respond to follow up questions about whether fully public sharing would be offered or how long the posts would stay up for.

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The maps feature was first spotted in development back in February under the name "Friend Map." Then this week, some images of the feature in use began trickling out into public.

Pai didn’t say where the feature is currently being tested.

Instagram had a photo feature back in 2012 that placed all of your images on a map, but the feature was entirely private — it couldn’t be shared with friends and only included your own images. It was a fun way to look over your photo collection, but the company shut it down four years later, citing low usage.

If it rolls out widely, the maps feature would be a throwback to something Instagram has always done well: ripping off ideas from its competitors. Stories came from Snapchat, Reels from TikTok, and — if we’re calling this an Instagram feature — Threads from Twitter. Now, it’s time to loop back to Snapchat.

https://www.theverge.com/2024/8/9/24217027/instagram-snap-map-style-feature-testing