

TOP 10 BEGINNER & INTERMEDIATE DIGITAL CAMERAS

| | | Beginner digital cameras | Mega-pixel rating | Max resolution | Optical Digital zoom | Movie Sound | File format | Storage media type Battery/rechargeable | High/low resolution shots | Dimensions (wxdxh) Weight | Software includes |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|  | 1 Olympus MJU 300 0800 072 0070 www.olympus.com LAST MONTH 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £288 • 1-year warranty • First review Jul 03 | 3.2Mp | 2,048 x1,536 | 3x 4x | yes yes | JPG | 16MB xD card 1 x lithium/yes | 6/94 | 99x34x56mm 165g | Camedia Master 4.1 |
| <p>The MJU 300 offers a great combination of style and substance at an attractive price and it couldn't be easier to get to grips with. Shot quality is impressive for such a compact model – especially outdoor pictures. If you want a sturdy digital camera to accompany you on your travels then this is ideal.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 2 Kodak LS633 0870 243 0270 www.kodak.co.uk NEW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £248 • 1-year warranty • First review Sept 03 | 3.1Mp | 2,041 x1,533 | 3x 3.3x | yes yes | JPG, Exif 2.2 | 16MB internal memory 1 x lithium/yes | 17/50 | 114x55x31mm 210g | Kodak EasyShare |
| <p>The Kodak's unique 2.2in Oled display can be viewed in any conditions – including direct sunlight – and from almost any angle; its crisp image makes setting up photos a dream. A compact and chic model that captures sharp, detailed shots, the LS633 is ideal for newcomers to digital photography.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 3 Benq DC4500 01442 301 000 www.benq.co.uk NEW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £255 • 1-year warranty • First review Sept 03 | 4.1Mp | 2,848 x2,136 | 3x 3x | yes no | JPG, TIF | 16MB CompactFlash 4 x NiMH/yes | 13/181 | 109x48x81mm 321g | Photo Impression |
| <p>The DC4500 is no head turner, but when it comes to quality snapping it has all the right credentials. Its packed with features and in our tests the use of HIT interpolation technology produced images free of unnatural colour while full of crisp detail. All this at such a great price – an absolute bargain.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 4 Fujifilm FinePix F401 Zoom 020 7586 1477 www.fujifilm.co.uk LAST MONTH 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £255 • 1-year warranty • First review Jan 03 | 2.1Mp | 2,304 x1,728 | 3x 3.6x | yes yes | JPG, AVI | 16MB SmartMedia 1 x lithium/yes | 9/122 | 85x28x69mm 185g | FinePix Viewer, Video Impression |
| <p>The compact, stylish F401 offers superb functionality and good picture quality, while the generous software bundle includes QuickTime and Video Impression. Its 2.1Mp pixel range is upped to 4Mp thanks to Super CCD technology. This is without the aid of interpolation so photos aren't suffused with unnatural colours.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 5 Ricoh Caplio RR30 020 8261 4031 www.ricohpmc.com LAST MONTH 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £231 • 1-year warranty • First review Jan 03 | 3.2Mp | 2,048 x1,536 | 3x 3.4x | yes no | JPG, TIF, AVI | 8MB internal flash 2 x AA alkaline/no | 5/52 | 114x55x33mm 160g | Ricoh Gate L |
| <p>The RR30 has a loud motor but the quick-access buttons and features make up for it. Offering plenty of megapixels for your money, shots are incredibly detailed. It's just a shame that the TIF option only works in mono. Two non-rechargeable AA cells come with the Caplio, but it supports rechargeable lithium ones.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | Intermediate digital cameras | Mega-pixel rating | Max resolution | Optical Digital zoom | Max aperture range | File format | Storage media type Battery/rechargeable | High/low res shots | Dimensions (wxdxh) Weight | Software includes |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | 1 Samsung DigiMax V4 0845 922 3232 www.samsungcamera.co.uk LAST MONTH 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £330 • 1-year warranty • First review Jul 03 | 4Mp | 2,272x1,704 | 3x 4x | f2.8-f5 | JPG, TIF | 32MB Secure Digital 1 x lithium/no | 12/675 | 106x38x55mm 210g | MGI PhotoSuite 3.0 SE |
| <p>The DigiMax excels in all the right places, offering great shots, ease of use, value for money and a host of features. It isn't hugely responsive and some of the colours are muted, but detail is extremely sharp. You can even tweak focusing with the best manual control option we've seen on a compact digicam.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 2 HP Photosmart 850 0870 747 4747 www.hp.com LAST MONTH 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £399 • 1-year warranty • First review Spr 03 | 4.1Mp | 2,384x1,734 | 8x 7x | f2.8-f11 | JPG, MPG | 16MB Secure Digital 4 x AA alkaline/yes | 5/71 | 120x120x85mm 388g | HP Photo & Imaging |
| <p>A great mid-range camera that takes both good-quality still images and movie footage. The Photosmart has a nice balance of intelligent automatic controls and user-override features. HP hasn't tried to be flash with the functions or the number of controls it provides, ensuring the 850 has broad user appeal.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 3 Canon Digital Ixus 400 0870 514 3723 www.canon.co.uk LAST MONTH 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £425 • 1-year warranty • First review Aug 03 | 4Mp | 2,272 x1,704 | 3x 3.6x | f2.8-f4.9 | JPG, MPG | 32MB CompactFlash Type II 1 x lithium/yes | 14/338 | 87x57x27mm 227g | Zoom-Browser EX |
| <p>This sleek, efficient and easy-to-use pocket snapper takes sharp, colourful shots. You're paying over the odds for styling – it's no bigger than a packet of cigarettes – and the 400 lacks plenty of manual tweaks, but if you want one of the best automatic compact cameras around then the Ixus 400 is it.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 4 Canon PowerShot S45 0870 514 3723 www.canon.co.uk LAST MONTH 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £407 • 1-year warranty • First review Jan 03 | 4Mp | 2,272 x1,704 | 3x 3.6x | f2.8-f4.9 | JPG, MPG | 32MB CompactFlash Type II 1 x lithium/yes | 27/195 | 112x58x42mm 260g | Zoom-Browser EX |
| <p>The feature-rich S45 offers good specifications, an impressive array of manual configurations and a generous software bundle – but has a price tag to match. It may not have the style clout displayed by other contenders but its metal finish and svelte dimensions make it a sturdy and compact model.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 5 Kodak LS443 Zoom 0870 243 0270 www.kodak.co.uk RE-ENTRY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £329 • 1-year warranty • First review Jan 03 | 4Mp | 2,448 x1,632 | 3x 3.3x | f2.8-f9.6 | JPG | 8MB internal memory 2 x AA alkaline/no | 5/52 | 114x55x33mm 260g | Kodak EasyShare |
| <p>The LS443 follows Kodak's rules of ease-of-use and value-for-money while offering good image quality. Manual configurations are limited but you can alter the ISO setting, metering and exposure. With only 8MB the LS443 lacks storage, but there's space for a Secure Digital or Multimedia Card.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |

Buying advice: digital cameras

The amount of megapixels on a Beginner digital camera varies. The lowest you should expect is 2Mp unless you're paying under £150. If you're spending between £300 and £700, expect a model with a minimum of 3Mp. Many Beginner digital cameras take care of all aspects of photography, so all you have to worry about is pointing and shooting. It's

possible to track down a device that offers manual configurations, but you're likely to get a model with settings for a range of photographic conditions. Intermediate cameras should at least offer you control over exposure, ISO sensitivity, white balance and metering options.

It doesn't really matter what type of storage you get as long as the camera is bundled with plenty of it. Sadly, though, this is rarely the case. Beginner digital

cameras come with 8MB to 16MB as standard and even most Intermediate models have 16MB, with 32MB at the top end of the market.

If you don't get a good peripherals bundle then pay out for the optional extras – rechargeable batteries are vital. Lithium-ion cells are the best but most expensive, so you could settle for nickel ones. Shop around for a 4x optical zoom and consider any digital zoom capabilities a bonus.