

# One-time wonders



## How we test

Disposable cameras are cheap but the photos they contain can be priceless – so we test how durable they are

### Tipple test

One of the durability tests we put the cameras through simulates a debauched holiday or party. We dunk the cameras in a pint of beer and see whether they still take photos, and whether previous exposures can be developed. The waterproof cameras passed this test, as you'd expect, but regular models didn't fare so well. All failed to take salvageable shots after being drowned but, apart from the Picstop and Kodak Fun Flash models, some pictures taken beforehand could be developed successfully.

### Quality snaps

We assess image quality by shooting charts with geometric patterns to measure aspects such as lens distortion and colour reproduction. We also take real-life snaps and rate the cameras on how well they reproduce skin tones and capture the contrasting colours of flowers in a garden and details on buildings.



One of our durability tests simulates a debauched holiday or party

The digital revolution changed photography forever, but there's still a place for some throwaway fun with single-use film cameras

There are plenty of reasons you may want a single-use film camera. Perhaps you don't fancy letting the kids loose with your shiny new digital or maybe you want to give out cameras at a party. Single-use cameras also come into their own if you have just got to the airport and realised you forgot to pack your usual camera, or if your memory card is full. Some even let you try out taking photos underwater – useful if you don't want to fork out for an expensive waterproof case or a specialist camera.

To put single-use cameras to the test, we looked at 13 models, including two that can be used underwater. In general, the cameras from established brands, such as Fuji, Kodak and Boots, did better than the own-brand offerings from the likes of Tesco and Woolworths.

All the cameras were easy to use: simply look through the viewfinder, press a button to activate the flash if you need it, and remember to wind the film on for

your next shot. The big difference was the quality of the photos they produced – see the table, opposite, for the results.

### Camera comparison

With most mobile phones capable of taking pictures, we thought it was only right to compare the shots we took with our single-use cameras with a typical phone camera (see 'Phone versus camera', below, for more).

Overall, we found the prints from the cameras were better quality than those from the phone, albeit worse than from proper digital or film cameras. Of course, this is selling the mobile short – you can't instantly send your pictures to a friend's phone or take video clips with a single-use camera. Still, with our Best Buy priced at only £4.97 for 27 exposures, you can afford to have both. Expect to pay around £3 to have pictures developed if you're prepared to wait a few days, or double that for one-hour processing.

## Phone versus camera

Does the growing popularity of camera phones mean you can ditch the disposable? We investigate



We compared the photos from the cameras on test with those from a Nokia 5300 phone, which includes a 1.3 megapixel camera. Phones with better cameras are available but aren't yet typical of what most people own.

In our technical tests the camera phone was better. Focusing was clearer and there

was less distortion from the lens.

However, once we compared actual photos, the phone suffered. Its low-resolution camera couldn't capture the same level of detail as the disposable – it even gave an odd red tint to one of our test photos. Overall picture quality was rated at only one star – our best cameras managed three stars.



The shot taken with the phone has a red tinge

## Contacts

**Boots** 0845 070 8090 [www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com)  
**Kodak** 01442 261122 [www.kodak.co.uk](http://www.kodak.co.uk)  
**Confetti** 0870 840 6060 [www.confetti.co.uk](http://www.confetti.co.uk)  
**Fuji** 0870 084 1310 [www.fuji.co.uk](http://www.fuji.co.uk)  
**Picstop** 0870 055 5552 [www.picstop.co.uk](http://www.picstop.co.uk)  
**Tesco** 0800 505555 [www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com)  
**Woolworths** 01706 862789 [www.woolworths.co.uk](http://www.woolworths.co.uk)



## 1 FLASH

**57% Fuji Glam Cam****£4.97**

Its white front and bright stickers may not be to everyone's

taste, but the Fuji Glam Cam took the best photos of any of the single-use cameras we tested. As well as taking decent pictures of buildings and flowers, it handles skin tones very well, too – true to life and without the jaundiced look produced by some other models.

WHICH?  
BEST  
BUY

The flash wasn't the most impressive in coverage and uniformity but it did a good job in real-life situations.

The camera was easy to use one-handed and designed so that fingers are unlikely to obscure the lens or flash.

Widely available.

**WE LIKE** The flash can be cancelled if you activate it by mistake.

**Cheapest store** Tesco **Dimensions** (hxxwd) 5x11.5x3cm **Weight** 90g **Exposures** 27 **Film speed** 400 ISO

If you want to take pictures underwater, the Kodak Sport was the best camera we tested

## Worth considering

**KODAK SPORT (12) £9.99** If you fancy yourself as a bit of a Jacques Cousteau and want to take pictures underwater, the Kodak Sport was the best camera we tested. There's no flash but the camera has a fast film (800 ISO), so it works well in low-light conditions. Capable of diving to 15m, this Kodak takes decent photos in and out of water. It's better for close objects than vistas, but that's true of most of the cameras on test. Widely available. **WE LIKE** This model comes with a chunky film winding knob that's easy to operate above and underwater.



**Cheapest stores** Boots and Jessops **Dimensions** (hxxwd) 8x12x4.5cm **Weight** 145g **Exposures** 27 **Film speed** 800 ISO



## Facts & scores

Some extra interesting info to help you pick the single-use camera that is best for you

### Minimal exposure

The Kodak Ultra Compact was the smallest camera on test, at just 6x10x3cm.

### Green overtones

Picstop is one of the few manufacturers that doesn't reuse camera bodies once the photos have been developed. However, many photo processors, including Boots, will recycle the cameras.

MODEL		SPECIFICATION			WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE			SCORE %
		PRICE (£)	FILM SPEED (ISO)	EXPOSURES	FLASH	PICTURE QUALITY	EASE OF USE	
FLASH								
1	FUJI Glam Cam	4.97	400	27	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	57
2	FUJI Sea Blue	7.99 <sup>a</sup>	400	27	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	53
3	FUJI Fun Blue Quicksnap	4.99	400	27	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	52
4	KODAK Ultra Compact	9.99	800	27	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	51
5	BOOTS Essentials KKC	5.99	400	27	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	48
6	BOOTS Silver Single Camera	8.99	400	27	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	48
7	KODAK Fun Flash	8.99 <sup>b</sup>	800	27	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	43
8	CONFETTI Silver Single Camera	4.99	400	24	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	39
9	TESCO Single Use Camera with Flash	3.24	400	27	★★★★★	★	★★★★	29
10	WOOLWORTHS Single Use Camera with Flash	4.99 <sup>b</sup>	200	27	★★★★	★	★★★★	20
11	PICSTOP Budget Disposable Camera with Flash	2.05	200	27	★★★★	★	★★★★	18
WATERPROOF								
12	KODAK Sport <sup>c</sup>	9.99	800	27		★★★★	★★★★	40
13	TESCO Waterproof Single Use <sup>d</sup>	4.96	400	27		★★	★★	23

<sup>a</sup> Pack of two <sup>b</sup> Buy one get one free

<sup>c</sup> Manufacturer's figure for maximum depth is 15m

<sup>d</sup> Manufacturer's figure for maximum depth is 3m

### USING THE TABLE

We tested 13 single-use cameras from various brands. The more stars the better.

### Specification

**Price** For Best Buys we give the cheapest, widely available high-street prices as we went to press.

Prices for other models are a guide. If a model is available only online, prices are in *italics*. **Film speed** The higher this number, the faster the film and the more sensitive it is to light. Faster film can lead to overexposure in bright conditions but is better for action shots and dim light.

### Test performance

**Flash** How good the flash is, if applicable. **Picture quality** An overall rating for picture quality.

**Ease of use** We assess how easy it is to use the cameras one-handed and when wearing glasses. We also check whether the lens and flash are designed

so that it's not too easy to accidentally cover them up with your fingers.

### Score

Ignores price and is based on:

Picture quality	60%
Ease of use	20%
Technical performance	20%