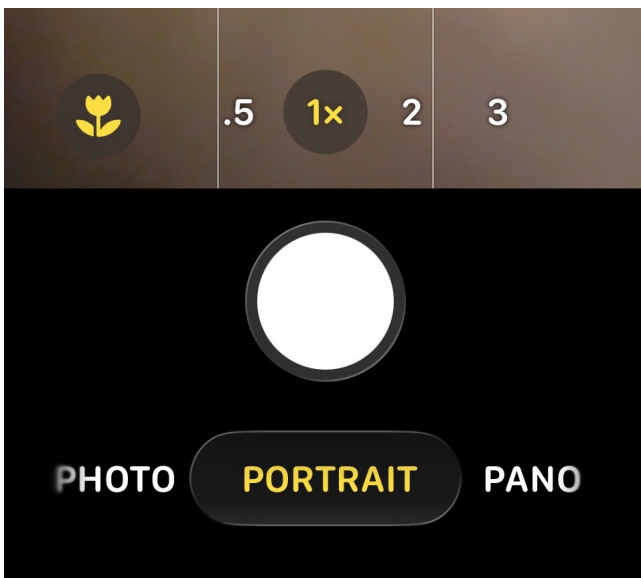


How to Access Portrait Camera Mode in iOS 26 on iPhone

Summary

Portrait mode is still available on iOS 26 for iPhone, but it is now accessed through a horizontal swipe gesture on the camera mode selector. This change in the Camera app's user interface has led to confusion among users, who believe Portrait mode has been removed. While the minimalist design aims to reduce clutter, it sacrifices discoverability of features like Portrait mode.

Mar 21, 2026



Camera app received a dramatic redesign with iOS 26, and many iPhone users have found that the new interface is confusing, leading them to believe that some prominent features of iPhone Camera have been removed. For example, many iPhone users running iOS 26 now think Portrait Mode camera has been removed or is no longer available on iPhone, because when they open Camera app on iPhone all they see are “Photo” and “Video” options to toggle between, and there do not appear to be any other camera modes available.

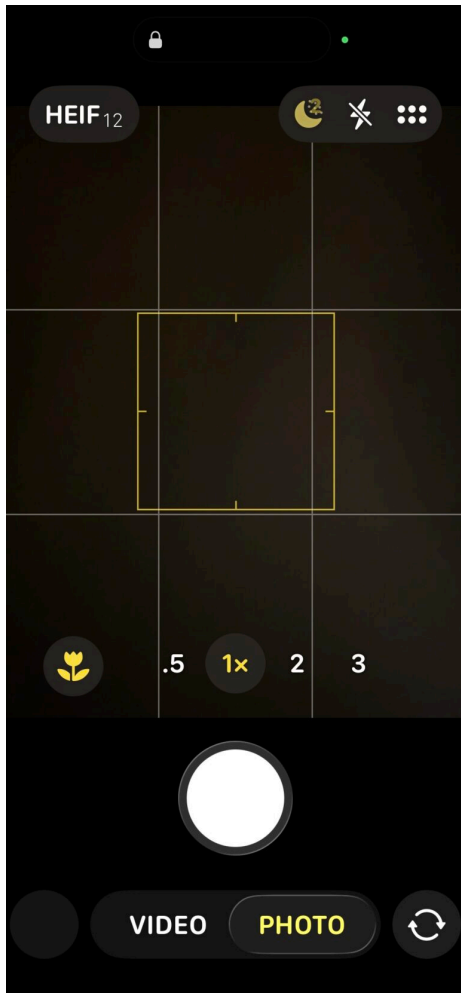
The logic goes something like this; Portrait mode is missing from the obvious camera options in iOS 26, so the Portrait camera feature must have been removed from iPhone, right? Well, no, that's wrong!

The confusion with Portrait camera mode apparently being missing in iOS 26 is understandable, and this is directly related to the dramatic user interface changes that came with Camera app for iPhone on iOS 26. But once you learn how camera mode access works in iOS 26, you'll find that **you still can access and use Portrait camera mode on iPhone with iOS 26**, along with other camera modes that many users think are missing, including slow motion, cinematic, time lapse, and more.

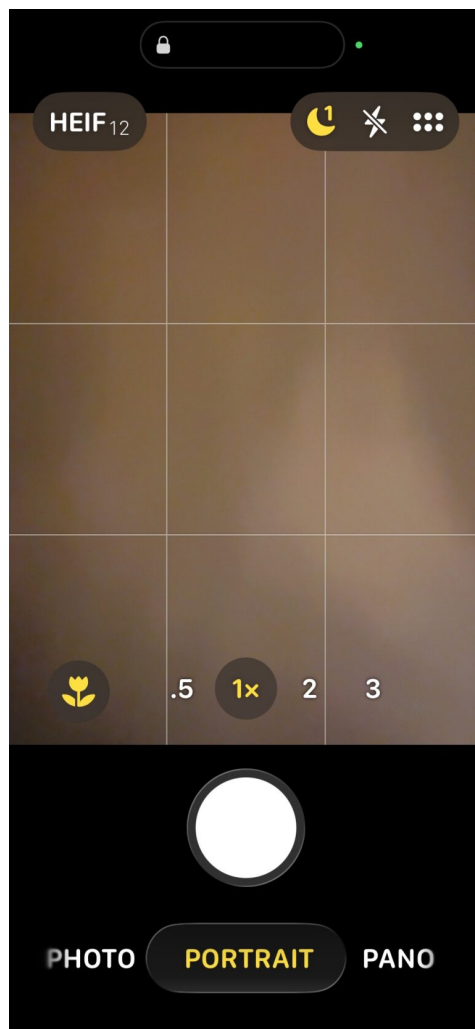
To be clear, Portrait Mode as a camera option still exists on iOS 26 on iPhone, it's just harder to find, and that's what we're going to show you how to use and access here.

How to Access Portrait Camera on iPhone with iOS 26 (including iPhone 17, iPhone 17 Pro, iPhone 16, etc)

If you can't find Portrait camera mode on iOS 26, you're not alone. Here's what you need to do now:



1. Open the Camera app as usual, you will initially only see **Photo** and **Video** options available under the shutter button



2. Now swipe left or right on the “**Photo**” or “**Video**” camera mode selector – there is no indicator this is a horizontally swiping menu of choices but it is. Continue swiping left or right until you find the “**Portrait**” camera mode option

3. Once in Portrait Camera mode, tap the multi-box button in the top corner, or swipe up to access additional settings, including flash, aperture, timer, exposure, filter, and intensity

There you go, you now have access to Portrait camera mode again in iOS 26.

Was Portrait mode removed from iOS 26 on iPhone? Is Portrait mode not available on new iPhone models like iPhone 17 Pro?

Many users think that portrait mode has been removed from iOS 26 on iPhone.

Additionally, a fair number of people believe that Portrait mode camera was removed from new iPhone models, like the iPhone 17 series and iPhone 17 Pro.

Neither of these are the case, Portrait mode camera still exists on all iPhone models that run iOS 26, including the newest iPhone 17 series, but accessing Portrait mode has changed. Portrait mode is now hidden behind a non-obvious horizontal swipe menu, something that is very easy to miss or overlook.

Why is Portrait mode hidden on iOS 26 for iPhone?

Given the amount of attention the Portrait Mode camera features have received in the past from Apple, often as a core photography feature on iPhone camera, it's a bit of a mystery why they'd hide Portrait mode and make the other camera modes hard to find as well.

Why Apple made various camera modes so difficult to find and hidden is curious and many users find it to be confusing or bad user design and user experience, but much of the other [Liquid Glass design](#) decisions are questionable as well to users who [find Liquid Glass difficult to read and interact with](#). And while Liquid Glass is overall pretty good on iPhone and iPad, minus perhaps hiding features like Portrait mode anyway, it's a lot messier on the Mac.

It's important to remember that Apple has aggressively leaned into the trend of obfuscating the User Interface, and things that were once obvious and easy to find like obvious features, buttons, settings, toggles, and gestures, are often hidden or disguised, or less than obvious. This is all part of some minimalist user interface design objective, which trades function for form. These type of design decisions are often aggressively done at first, and then altered or even rolled back, as Apple receives feedback from users and customers about the design. Therefore, it's reasonable to expect that perhaps iOS 27 will make the iPhone Camera modes more obvious to access again, so there is less confusion amongst iPhone users.

To quote Steve Jobs, "design is how it works", which implies that design should be easy to understand and use, and that concept used to be the guiding principle behind nearly all of Apple design decisions. If the user can't figure out how something works... that's probably not good design... but what do I know? I'm just a multi-decade Apple user who regularly sees the confusion among friends, family, colleagues, and in our comments, emails, and elsewhere online like Apple's own support forums. If I'm aware of these types of complaints, surely Apple is too, which is

why it's again fairly likely that the design will evolve to be more user friendly with future iOS releases, like iOS 27.

Bottom Line: Portrait Mode isn't gone in iOS 26, it's just hidden

Apple may have streamlined the Camera app design and interface a little too aggressively, and while the new Camera UI reduces clutter and focuses on two of the most common actions, record video or take a photo, that unfortunately comes with a trade-off of having a learning curve for accessing other features. Specifically the confusion comes from the hidden Portrait and other camera mode settings, and instead people aren't guessing that they can swipe on things where there is no indicator they can swipe to access more features.

Portrait mode is now sort of hidden, and without the necessary swipe gesture on the camera modes, you won't see it in Camera app on iPhone.

Just remember, in Camera app, swipe left or swipe right on the mode selector to find Portrait mode as an option, and other camera options as well. Once you know how the gestures and swiping trick works, you'll find the interface is familiar again, just a bit less crowded and much more minimalist than before.

What do you think of the Camera app redesign in iOS 26? Did you think Portrait mode was removed in iOS 26 or on new iPhone models? Do you like the minimalist design and hidden features like this? Share your thoughts and opinions in the comments.