

FILM OR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY?



"Film is often the intelligent alternative"

When it comes to buying a new camera, many people think that digital is the obvious choice. So far this year, digital cameras are outselling film models. But in many cases, opting for film instead can be the right choice.

Film costs less and lasts longer. If you say that digital photography saves money, you just might be mistaken. "Photo film is not a thing of the past," explains Helmut Rupsch, head of an leading manufacturer of digital cameras and photographic film. For people who don't take a lot of pictures, film is still the cheapest way to go. Someone who finishes up the film from last Christmas during summer vacation and only takes about 80 photos a year will always save money with film. It's like the question of a cell phone versus a land line – it's often cheaper to make calls from home than from a mobile phone.

Film is inexpensive – and it lasts longer. No one knows how easy it will be to access digital camera storage media 30 years from now. But scientists have already demonstrated through accelerated aging processes that prints made from film today will still be around 100 years from now. Having fun vs. saving money. For someone who only uses an average of two and a half rolls of film per year, a digital camera is more expensive. It's not the film that makes the difference in price – it's the cost of the camera itself.

A standard viewfinder camera that uses film costs 125 Euros, while a digital camera with the same optical quality costs 350 Euros or more. An additional storage card for saving pictures costs another 50 Euros, and the battery charger adds 35 Euros. That means that an analogue camera saves you 310 Euros – enough for 17 rolls of film, including developing, and 612 prints, in 10 x 15 cm format. And that would last an average amateur until 2011. On the other hand, a digital camera shows the picture in the monitor right away, and for many people that fun factor is worth the extra cost.

Digital pictures from film booming too, when there's extra fun in the picture. Disposable cameras are fast sellers, with a photo industry association reporting 10 percent growth in this area in the first half of this year. For five to seven Euros, they take good pictures with or without a flash, even under water or on the beach. They come in bright colours, and they're especially trendy among kids and teenagers. And if you order a CD along with your prints, then you can have your pictures in digital form, too.

