Comping Guide

Instagram

Instagram Basics

Comping on Instagram

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Instagram Basics

Instagram is a free app available for your iPhone, iPad or Android device, and has recently been bought by Facebook so is receiving wider exposure. Using the app, you can take square photos or videos, add effects and upload them to the app for your followers to see. You can also connect your Instagram account to Facebook and Twitter and share your photos and videos there. Lots of promoters are experimenting with Instagram competitions, and the app can be a lot of fun - here's our guide to getting started.

Instagram website

Although Instagram has a website at **www.instagram.com**, you can't join or upload photos/videos there - this must be done on your mobile device. You can, however, log in at **www.instagram.com** to comment and like photos and videos, view your home feed and edit your profile (excluding your photo). You can find your own Instagram web profile at **www.instagram.com/yourusername**
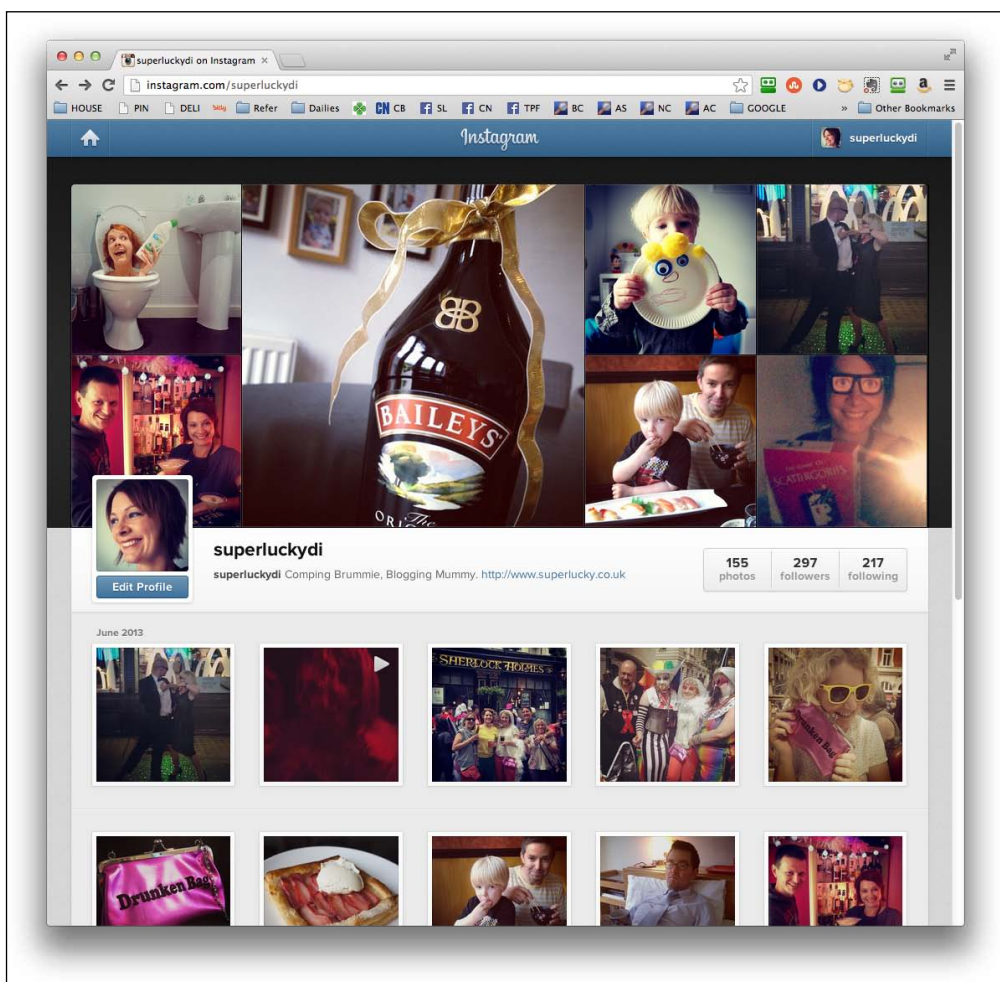
Signing up

- Download the app in the App Store (on an iPhone/iPad), or in Google Play (for an Android device).
- Tap the Instagram icon to open it, and register with a username and password - it's a good idea to use your Twitter username if it's available, so it's easy to sync captions, tags and tweets.
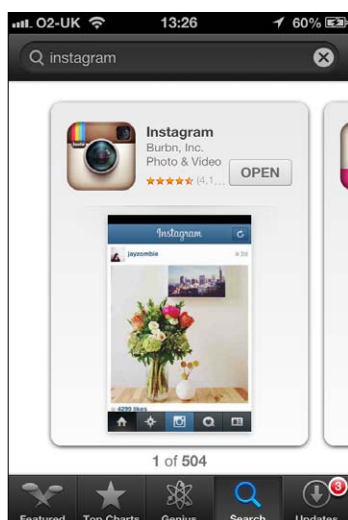

Profile page

- On your profile page you can upload a photo by tapping the 'silhouette' of the person. Then choose where to import your photo from - this can be from your phone gallery, Facebook or Twitter.
- In the 'Edit your profile' page, you can edit your biography and private information. DO NOT set your posts to private if you're a comper - promoters won't see them!
- Access your profile page at any time from the main menu by tapping the icon at the bottom right of the screen.
- Tap [ ] to see photos that other people have tagged of you.

Options Menu

At the top right of the profile page, tap the cog icon for the **Options** page.

- Find your Facebook friends and Follow them
- Get access to help and support pages
- Scroll down for Notifications and Sharing settings
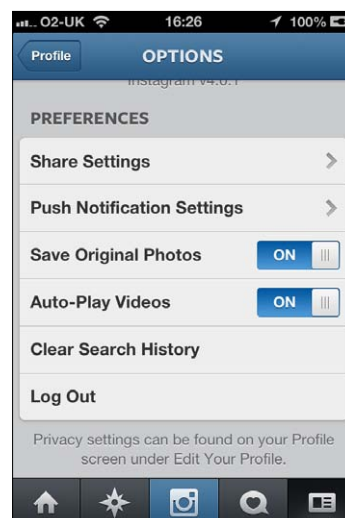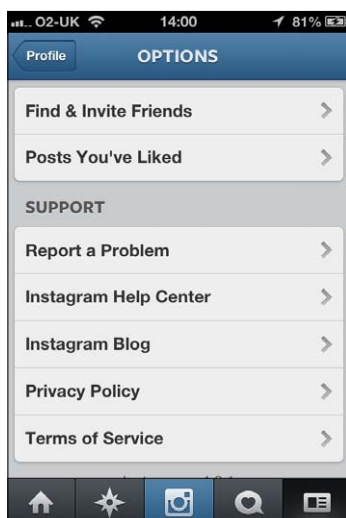
Home page

Tap the House icon for your Home page - like Facebook, Twitter or Pinterest, it will show a feed of people that you follow, with photos/videos, captions and comments. You can swipe to see more photos, and comment or Like the ones on your feed, as well as share them to Facebook or Twitter.


Search

Tap the compass icon to search, either for users or hashtags - click the right arrow to see results. On the results screen you can opt to view thumbnails, or tap the lines icon to see the large images plus captions.

A hashtag is a word or phrase (no spaces allowed!) beginning with # and is a way for people to track photos on the same theme.
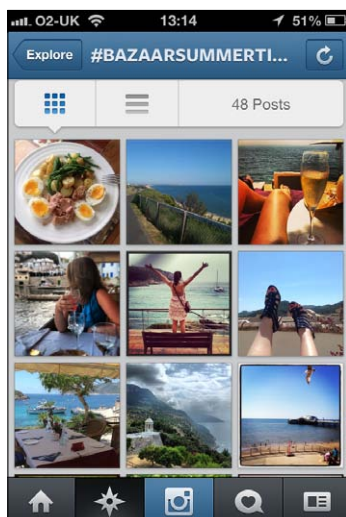
Notifications/news

Tap the heart/speech bubble to see your own notifications.
Tap **Following** to see updates from the people you follow.
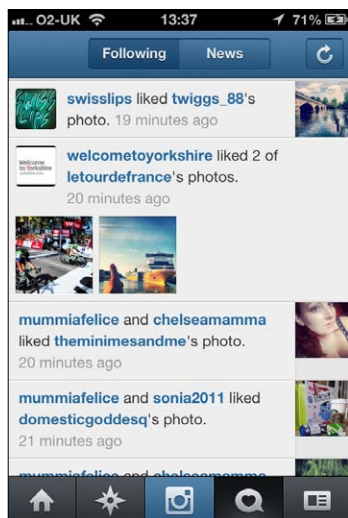
Commenting and tagging

To mention a friend or company in a caption or comment, put @ before their username - they will get a notification

Following

To follow someone, click the blue Follow button on their profile page.

Taking a photo

- From the main screen, click the blue camera icon.
- Across the top, you can tap to show a grid (to guide your photo composition), spin the camera view (to take a photo of yourself) or change flash settings.
- Tap the screen to focus
- Tap the blue shutter button to take your photo.

Adding effects

When you've captured your photo, across the bottom of the screen you can choose from a variety of filters to add effects - swipe to see more. Tap to see a preview of each filter. When you're happy, tap **Next**.
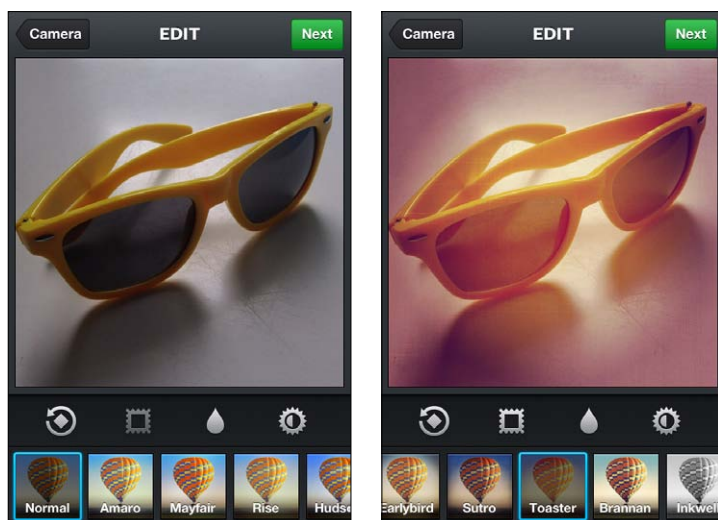
Immediately underneath your photo, you have several options:

Rotate photo

Add/remove border (only works with certain filters)

Tilt-shift

Lux

Tilt-shift

The tilt-shift effect blurs around your chosen subject, making the subject look small and like a toy. Tilt-shift works best on busy images taken from a high vantage point.

- Tap the drop icon and choose linear or radial tilt shift.
- Drag or tap the double lines (linear) or circle (radial) to the desired section of the photo. Anything you see in the white section will blur once you take your finger off the screen.
- To remove the tilt-shift effect tap the drop icon until it turns grey again.
- You can read more about using tilt-shift at
  www.maclife.com/article/howtos/how_use_tiltshift_instagram

Lux

Lux makes your photos more vibrant and brings out details. Tap the Lux icon to activate it.

Note: The Lux feature is not available on all Android devices.

Editing an existing photo

- You can use Instagram to add effects and share any photo already in your device's gallery.
- After clicking the camera button, you'll see the latest gallery photo underneath the main camera - tap this to see all the photos in your gallery and choose the one you want to use.
- When importing from the gallery, you have the option to scale and crop before you're taken to the effects screen. Use your fingers to zoom in or out and move the photo around.
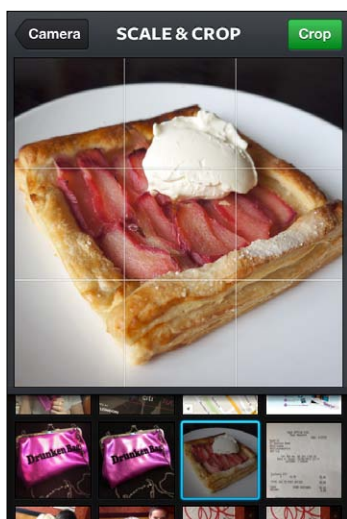
Taking a video

You can take up to 15 seconds of video footage to share on Instagram.

- From the main screen, click the video camera icon.
- Press and hold the red camera icon to start recording - you can stop and start to add different clips to your video (and can tap the delete button twice to remove the latest clip).
- Lift your finger off the button to stop recording - the blue bar shows how much of the 15 seconds you have used.
- Tap **Next** to add a filter - tap the screen to get a Play button so you can watch a preview of your video with effects added.
- Tap **Next** again to choose a cover frame (this will show on the Instagram feed).
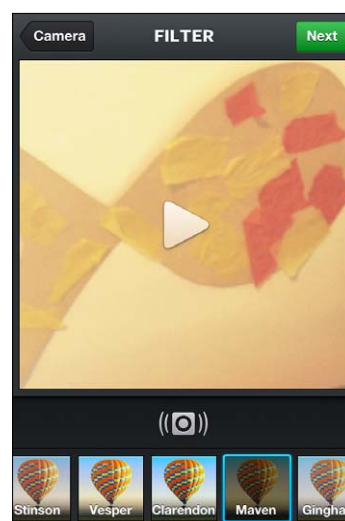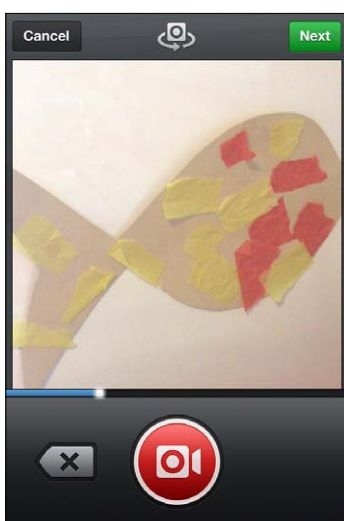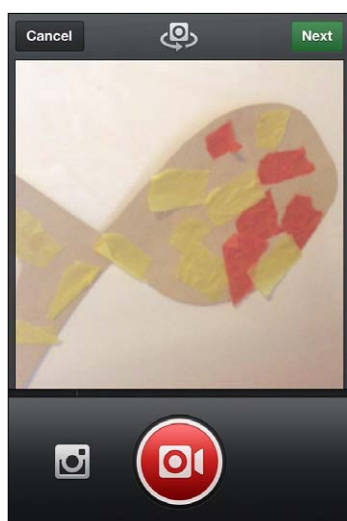
Sharing your photo or video

After adding your effects, you'll be taken to a screen where you can add information before sharing

- **Add a caption** - you can @ mention fellow users, or use a hashtag here.
- **Add people** - tag your Instagram friends in the photo
- **Add to Photo Map** - this uses Foursquare to pinpoint the location of your photo, or you can name the location yourself
- **Share** - here you can tap to select where your photo will be shared, in addition to Instagram. If you choose an option, it turns blue.
- When sending to **Twitter**, the @ symbol will be removed from the tweet if the Twitter user with that name isn't the same person as the Instagram user you've tagged
- **Facebook** photos will automatically share to your friends - you can change the privacy afterwards within Facebook.

When you're done, tap the green Share button to send your photo to Instagram

- If you upload a photo to Instagram and then later realise you wanted to share, tag or delete it, simply find it on your profile page and click the three dots underneath to bring up a menu of options.
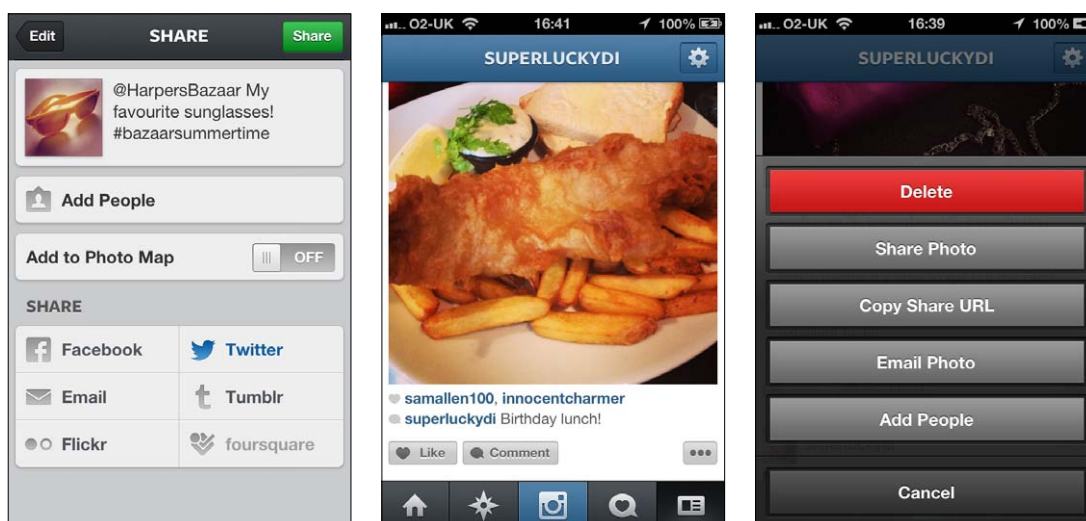
Using other apps

There are a huge number of apps you can use to make your Instagram photos stand out, and some of them are free. **PicFrame** is 69p and offers you a range of options to put one or more of your photos in a collage, and add text, patterned background, rounded corners and effects. When done, you can share it via Instagram. Here's an example screengrab from the PicFrame App, where we've combined two photos, rounded corners and added a text label and patterned background.

More help

There's plenty of advice at **http://help.instagram.com/** and tips at **http://blog.instagram.com/**

Comping on Instagram

There are a few different styles of comps on Instagram. Winners may be judged, chosen at random or decided by the number of Likes/comments.

Types of Instagram competitions

Upload a photo or video

- Most competitions where you have to upload a photo or video are judged, but for some the winners are chosen at random from all valid entries. You'll usually be asked to use a competition hashtag and mention the promoter in your caption (see example below).

Like or comment on a photo

- A promoter may simply require you to **Follow** them and then Like or comment on a specific competition image. It could be a winner chosen at random, or the first to comment that wins (see example below).
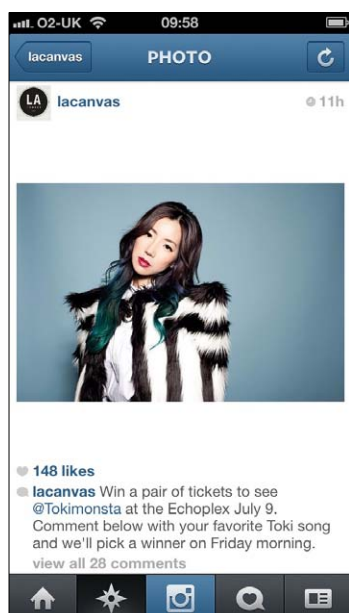
Share a photo

Sometimes you'll be asked to share an existing photo on your own Instagram feed

- First, screengrab the original competition photo from the promoter's feed. To take a screenshot on an iPhone or iPad, hold down the power button and press the home key at the same time. Android phones have different shortcuts so you may need to Google yours.
- Re-upload the screengrab from your photo gallery to Instagram - crop it to a square around the original photo, and use the competition hashtag before sharing. You'll usually have to tag the promoter too - make a note of the right hashtags and usernames in a notebook so you don't get them wrong when typing in!
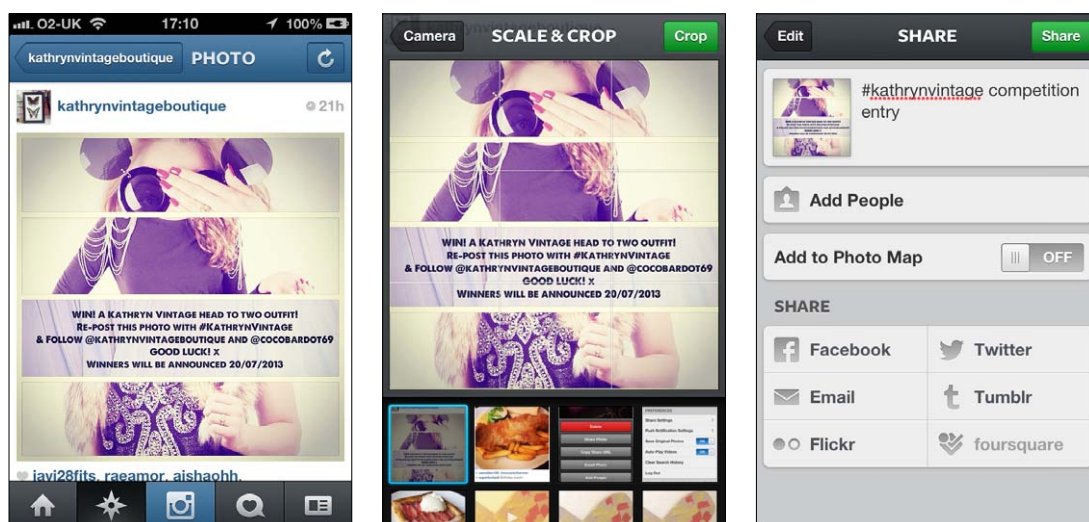
Notifying winners

There's no message function on Instagram, so promoters may use several methods of contact.

- **Mentioning** you in a comment on the competition photo, or on your own entry – they will usually leave a contact email address or ask you to message them on Facebook or Twitter. Make sure you regularly check your notifications.
- **Twitter Direct Message** - Some promoters ask you to share your entry on Twitter. In this case they're more likely to contact winners via a Twitter DM so make sure you're following them on Twitter as well as on Instagram! It's a good idea to have the same username on Instagram and Twitter, as the promoter will find it easier to get in touch.

If a winner isn't announced, try commenting politely on the competition photo to ask if a winner has been contacted - or find the promoter on Twitter and tweet them to ask. Most companies share their Instagram comps on Facebook too, so you could find the Facebook post and comment on that to ask for the winner's name.

Terms & Conditions

Competition details are sometimes included in the image or description, and some promoters link to full T&Cs on an external website. Check for a closing date and read rules carefully before you enter - it's also worth checking to see how the winner is chosen: you don't want to waste time taking a fabulous original photo if the winner is picked at random! If unsure, post a comment to ask for more details on the original competition photo (on Instagram or Facebook) and tag the promoter's name - or tweet them!

How to find Instagram comps

- **Follow lots of compers** and log in regularly to see what they're posting and what hashtags they use
- **Search at www.theprizefinder.com** for 'Instagram'
- **Search Google** - try 'Instagram competition' or 'Win Instagram' and restrict to UK sites in the last month.
- **Search Twitter** for 'Instagram competition'

Tips

- **Search on the hashtag** to see all the entries so you can come up with something original and different
- Upload new photos rather than just add the competition hashtag to photos that are already on your Instagram account - this gives the impression you couldn't be bothered to take a new photo for that competition
- Most Instagram competitions allow **unlimited entries**, so make the most of it!
- If sending to Twitter, make sure you **keep your Instagram caption short** so it's all included in your tweet
- After you've uploaded your photo, click the hashtag to check that it appears in the feed. Sometimes it doesn't work properly, in which case delete your original upload and try again.
- Use Instagram effects to improve photos that you want to tweet, email or share on Facebook. To avoid sharing your photo, activate 'flight mode' on your phone - click Share and you'll get an Failed message in Instagram, but the filtered photo will be saved in your gallery for you to post or email elsewhere.
- Take the photo on a good digital camera first, then copy it or email it to your phone - it will be a better quality shot.
- Use old photos too - Instagram adds retro filters to photos, so if you start with a photo that's a bit faded it doesn't matter. You can scan it - but it can still work even if you use your phone to take a snap of an old printed photo too!