

# Comparison of the Most Popular Rangefinder Film Cameras

Most film photographers have a soft spot in their heart for rangefinders – it's likely your favorite photographer's favorite type of camera. [Jump straight to the list of cameras.](#)

The real heyday for rangefinders was the mid '50's – '70's, where most camera manufacturers released at least a few different models. But as camera technology was making leaps and bounds during this time, SLR and even point and shoot cameras started to become the new go-to for the average consumer.

Film rangefinders continued to be released, although they became less common and more targeted towards pro shooters. Even when digital cameras really started to gain traction, other types of cameras stopped being manufactured – not rangefinders. There's a camera on this list that was released, for the first time, in 2009.

So, you might be wondering – what's the big deal and why do so many pros choose this type of camera? While everyone has their own reasons, the most common benefits that attract photographers are:

- **Size / Ergonomics** – Have you ever wanted to bring your SLR with you but it felt like a burden? A rangefinder and a prime lens is small enough that you'll forget you're wearing it after a while. Plus, most models feel perfectly proportioned in your hands.
- **Sharp Photos** – Between the incredible selection of lenses and the ability to nail focus easier than with other types of cameras, rangefinders are known for producing super sharp images.
- **Focus Speed / Shooting Speed** – The unique experience of focusing with a rangefinder becomes like a sixth sense after a while. Without a mirror like an SLR, and with many models operating completely manually, the speed to take a photo is worlds faster than any other type of camera.
- **Viewfinder** – When you look through an SLR, you're not seeing what's in front of you, only what's in the frame of your shot. But on a rangefinder, you're just looking straight through the camera to see everything. Most models have frame lines (corresponding with different focal lengths) to show you what is within frame of your shot. You can even shoot with both eyes open!

**We've selected what we consider to be the 25 most popular film rangefinder cameras and gathered the basic specs to help you compare. Here's what's included:**

- **Year:** The year the camera was first released.
- **Format:** What type of film the camera uses For medium format, the image size is listed (i.e. 6×4.5, 6×6, or 6×7).

- **Film Speeds:** What film speeds the camera accepts (and meters for). Manual cameras with no meter are left blank.
- **Size:** The physical dimensions of the camera in millimeters (Length x Width x Depth). 25mm = 1 inch. For interchangeable lens cameras, measurements are for just the body.
- **Weight:** The camera's weight in grams. 454 grams = 1 pound. Once again, weight is for the camera body only, unless otherwise noted, or lens is fixed to body.
- **Battery:** What type of batteries and how many are required to operate the camera, including the meter (although some models can operate without batteries by not using the meter). Some battery types are now difficult to find, but an alternative is usually available.
- **Lens:** The type of lens mount for interchangeable lens cameras, or the focal length and aperture for fixed-lens cameras.
- **Shutter Speeds:** The range of shutter speeds available. B = Bulb.
- **Price Estimate:** An estimate of the price of the camera today (body only, unless fixed-lens). Prices are always fluctuating, but this is our best guess after studying the price trends on eBay and other used camera marketplaces.

\$ = \$200 or Under

\$\$ = \$200 – \$500

\$\$\$ = \$500 – \$1000

\$\$\$\$ = \$1000 – \$2000

\$\$\$\$\$ = \$2000 or Over

Jump to: [Canon](#) | [Contax](#) | [Fujifilm](#) | [Konica](#) | [Leica](#) | [Mamiya](#) | [Minolta](#) | [Nikon](#) | [Olympus](#) | [Voigtländer](#) | [Yashica](#) | [Zeiss](#)

## Canon 7

**Year:** 1961

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 6 – 400

**Size:** 140 x 81 x 31mm

**Weight:** 622g

**Battery:** None

**Lens:** Leica M39 Screw Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/1000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#)

You'll find a lot of similarities between the [Canon 7](#) and other rangefinders of the same time period – fully mechanical machines with no batteries and the use of the popular Leica screw mount. It's sturdy, durable, and built to last.

This was Canon's upgraded offering for professionals, following the success of the [Canon P](#) rangefinder, released six years prior.

Later models (the 7s and 7z) upgraded the light meter, which of course means that batteries are required. No matter which model you're looking at, it's quite common for used versions to have an inoperable light meter or for it to stop working after using the camera for a while.

So if you're considering the Canon 7, you should definitely be interested in shooting completely manually, or with a separate handheld meter.

## Canon Canonet QL17

**Year:** 1965

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 400

**Size:** 120 x 75 x 60mm

**Weight:** 620g

**Battery:** 1 x PX625

**Lens:** 40mm f/1.7

**Shutter Speeds:** 1/4 – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#)

Short for "Quick Loading", Canon's Canonet QL line of cameras are some of the best cheap 35mm rangefinders you can find today.

There were a bunch of different versions produced, all with slight changes. The most significant difference is that the first version had a 45mm lens and later copies switched to a 40mm.

Of all versions, the most popular is definitely the last iteration – the [Canonet QL17 GIII](#). This one has the 40mm f/1.7 lens, a sturdier rewind crank and a battery check. The lens is said to be improved from earlier copies, but the difference seems pretty minor.

## Canon Canonet QL19

**Year:** 1965

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 400

**Size:** 120 x 75 x 60mm

**Weight:** 620g

**Battery:** 1 x PX625

**Lens:** 45mm f/1.9

**Shutter Speeds:** 1/4 – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#)

Canon released the [Canonet QL19](#) as a more affordable alternative to the QL17. Even today, you can find this version for a bit cheaper than its predecessor.

For the most part, the cameras are the same with the biggest change being the switch to a 45mm f/1.9 lens. Once again, the GIII models are the last version and usually considered the best.

There was one more model released – the Canonet QL25 – which has the least notoriety of the bunch. Canon went for an even slower and cheaper lens to lower the cost of the camera. Mostly the same specs but featuring a 45mm f/2.5 lens.

## Canon P

**Year:** 1959

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 400

**Size:** 144 x 76 x 30mm

**Weight:** 790g w/ 50mm Lens

**Battery:** None

**Lens:** Leica M39 Screw Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/1000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** \$\$

You could easily make the case that Canon is best known for their SLR cameras. But 17 years before the inescapable AE-1 hit the market, the [Canon P](#) was released, offering a budget 35mm rangefinder to the world.

The P stands for “Populaire” as Canon marketed this model as the Leica M3 for average Joe’s. They both feature the same Leica M39 screw mount, which was the standard at the time.

If you’re interested in a fully manual rangefinder, this is one of the cheapest options available. In order to keep the price down, Canon opted to release a separate light meter that could mount to the top of the camera.

As with just about every other film camera, the all black versions usually sell for quite a bit more than the black and silver.

## Contax G1

**Year:** 1994

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 6 – 6400

**Size:** 133 x 76.5 x 35mm

**Weight:** 460g

**Battery:** 2 x CR2

**Lens:** Contax G Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 16s – 1/2000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** \$\$

Constantly living in the shadows of its older sibling, the Contax G1 is certainly an interesting camera. It’s almost like the love child of a point and shoot and a manual rangefinder.

Technically sporting a rangefinder focus system, this is a high-tech digital version that’s nothing like what you’d find on a Leica M series camera. The lens(es) have no focus ring, instead you

control the manual focus on the camera itself. It's clunky and kind of awkward – most users just stick with auto focus or zone focusing in manual.

The lens mount is unique to the two Contax G series cameras. The Carl Zeiss Planar lenses (28mm, 45mm, and 90mm are the standard versions) are the real stars of the show – they are often considered some of the greatest lenses ever made.

The biggest difference between the G1 and the G2 is the auto focus system. If you're comparing the two, there's no doubt that the G2's auto focus is a significant improvement in speed and accuracy.

That said, you can also pick up a [Contax G1](#) for a third or a quarter of the price of a G2. You'll still get fantastic photos from the Carl Zeiss lenses, but it just might not be quite as smooth as the later model.

## Contax G2

**Year:** 1996

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 6 – 6400

**Size:** 139 x 80 x 45mm

**Weight:** 560g

**Battery:** 2 x CR2

**Lens:** Contax G Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 16s – 1/4000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

A clear contender for one of the most popular models on this list, it's hard to resist the allure of the [Contax G2](#).

With the upgrade from the G1, the auto focus is super quick and accurate for a camera that was released 25 years ago. Once again, if you're looking for the classic, manually focused rangefinder experience, this ain't the camera for you.

With the advanced digital rangefinder system, a unique feature is that the viewfinder automatically adjusts to whichever lens you attach. Unlike traditional rangefinders that have numerous visible frame lines for different focal lengths, you'll use the entire viewfinder to compose your photo.

Prices have been steadily rising for a while and don't even bother looking for a black version unless you're ready to spend a month or two's worth of rent.

LCD bleed (in the frame counter on top of the camera) is a common issue these cameras face so keep an eye out for that if you're on the market.

## Fujifilm GA645

**Year:** 1995

**Format:** 6 x 4.5

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 1600

**Size:** 166 x 110 x 66mm

**Weight:** 815g

**Battery:** 2 x CR123A

**Lens:** 60mm f/4

**Shutter Speeds:** 2s – 1/700 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

The first medium format rangefinder on the list, the [Fujifilm GA645](#) is definitely a one of a kind camera. For starters, 6x4.5 images are not quite as beloved as 6x7, though some people like the format for it's economical edge while still producing larger negatives than 35mm.

A rather unique feature, for rangefinders and medium format cameras in general, is the built-in flash. While you still have the option to manually control the camera, a lot of people consider the GA645 a point and shoot on steroids. Fair enough.

The standard version features a 60mm lens (equivalent to a 35mm focal length) and is probably the most popular of the bunch. Other versions are the [GA645W](#) (W = wide) with a 45mm lens and the [GA645Zi](#) with a 55-90mm zoom lens.

Oddly enough, photos are taken in the opposite orientation of any other camera – when holding the camera with a standard grip, you get a vertical photo. You'll have to turn the camera sideways to take a horizontal photo. This quirk might be quite convenient if you find yourself shooting a lot of portraits or other vertical photos.

## Fujifilm GF670

**Year:** 2009

**Format:** 6 x 6 / 6 x 7

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 3200

**Size:** 178 x 109 x 64mm (Folded)

**Weight:** 1000g

**Battery:** 1 x CR2

**Lens:** 80mm f/3.5

**Shutter Speeds:** 4s – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

You may be surprised to learn that Fuji was still releasing brand new film cameras as late as 2009. As one of the last true analog models produced, the Fujifilm GF670 really went out with a bang.

Building on the legacy of the GA645, the GF670 was bigger and better in just about every way. For starters, photos are upgraded to the larger 6×7 format, producing huge negatives with unmatched detail.

The GA645 may be relatively compact, but it can't compete with the upgraded folding lens system incorporated into the GF670. Both aesthetically and functionally, this is truly a beautiful piece of equipment.

Another fantastic feature is the ability to switch between 6×7 and 6×6 format by switching a lever on the camera. Best of both worlds.

Once again, the [GF670W](#) is the same camera with a wider, 55mm lens. The standard version is usually preferred as it has a faster lens and with a more versatile focal length.

While the [Fujifilm GF670](#) was released in Japan, other markets saw the same camera branded as the Voigtländer Bessa III. The Fuji versions are much easier to find nowadays.

## Konica Auto S3

**Year:** 1973

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 800

**Size:** 112 x 80 x 60mm

**Weight:** 410g

**Battery:** 1 x PX675

**Lens:** 38mm f/1.8

**Shutter Speeds:** 1/8 – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#) – [\\$\\$](#)

Another option that blurs the line between rangefinder and point and shoot, the [Konica Auto S3](#) is an affordable camera in a pocket-sized package – it weighs less than just about every other camera on this list.

The Auto S3 also features a 38mm f/1.8 lens – one of the widest options for a fixed-lens, 35mm rangefinder.

While this is already one of the cheapest models on the list, there were a few versions sold under different names that you can find for even less.

The [Vivitar 35ES](#) and the [Revue 400SE](#) are essentially the same camera – some people claim the lens on the OG Konica is superior to the other models, but it'd be tough to spot the difference with a naked eye.

## Konica Hexar RF

**Year:** 1999

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 6 – 6400

**Size:** 139 x 80 x 35mm

**Weight:** 600g

**Battery:** 2 x CR2

**Lens:** Konica KM Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/4000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

Not to be confused with the Hexar *AF*, the [Konica Hexar RF](#) is a great camera with a classic rangefinder styling.

One of the strangest parts of this model is the “Konica KM Mount”, essentially a direct copy of the Leica M mount that only existed on this series of cameras.

As such, Konica released a line of M-Hexacon lenses to accompany the Hexar RF, offering 28mm, 35mm, 50mm, and 90mm versions. At the time of release, there was a lot of confusion about the compatibility with standard Leica M mount lenses. It’s still a little murky.

For the most part, you can expect that *most* M-mount lenses should work fine. People have reported that particular focal lengths or models don’t work as seamlessly as expected, although a lot of this is anecdotal and may have to do with the proper functionality of a camera that’s almost 25 years old.

If you’re looking at the Konica Hexar RF, especially if you already own some M-mount glass, we’d recommend looking into compatibility a bit further before pulling the trigger.

## Leica CL

**Year:** 1973

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 1600

**Size:** 121 x 76 x 32mm

**Weight:** 365g

**Battery:** 1 x PX-625

**Lens:** Leica M Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1/2s – 1/1000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$](#)

The other Leica models on this list are absolutely iconic, arguably the two best 35mm rangefinders ever produced. Not the case for the Leica CL, which (along with the Leica M5) suffers from serious red headed stepchild syndrome.

Leica entered a short lived partnership with Minolta to create the CL, a 35mm rangefinder that was smaller and cheaper than the M-series cameras (CL stands for “Compact Leica”). You may see different versions of this camera branded as the Leica CL, the Leitz CL, or years later, revived as the [Minolta CLE](#).

Two lenses were released with the CL – a 40mm f/2 (pictured) and a 90mm f/4. These lenses were made to mimic the compact form of the CL and they fit the camera beautifully, both in appearance and size.

Just like the Konica Hexar RF, this model does features a Leica M mount, but there are some compatibility issues with certain lenses. You'll want to check that out in more detail before deciding on the [Leica CL](#).

If you're lusting to get your hands on a Leica rangefinder this is definitely the way to enter the M-mount world without breaking the bank.

## Leica M3

**Year:** 1954

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** —

**Size:** 138 x 77 x 33.5mm

**Weight:** 580g

**Battery:** None

**Lens:** Leica M Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/1000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

Regarded just as highly today as when it was released almost 70 years ago, the [Leica M3](#) might be the most important camera ever created.

It's funny – at the time of release the M3 was kind of a technological wonder, representing the pinnacle of quality and performance. Today, it's beloved for pretty much the exact opposite reason.

Many photographers are attracted to battery free, completely manual rangefinders like the M3 because they want the simplest camera possible with the fewest components to break or malfunction. You ever kill a battery while you're in the middle of shooting and can't easily get a replacement? That'll ruin your day.

If you're new to shooting a film camera without a meter, it'll take some time to get used to. But once you [understand the basics of the sunny 16 rule](#) and put a few rolls of film through, you'll start to get the hang of things.

Before you know it, you'll be instinctively adjusting your M3 without even realizing it, leaving you to fully focus on your surroundings – that's when you've found..."true photographic zen" or whatever.

## Leica M6

**Year:** 1984

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 6 – 6400

**Size:** 138 x 77 x 40mm

**Weight:** 575g

**Battery:** 2 x LR44

**Lens:** Leica M Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/1000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

The introduction of the M3 may have had one of the biggest impacts on the photographic world, but it's hard to think of another rangefinder (produced by Leica, or otherwise) as beloved as the [M6](#).

The most significant upgrade with the M6 is the option to use a battery-powered meter. Fortunately, the camera is still functional without batteries, at all shutter speeds (unlike other M-series cameras that only offer a few specific shutter speeds without batteries).

A lot of photographers will tell you the same thing: if you want a Leica M film camera with a light meter, get the M6. If you want one without, get the M3. It's still worth looking into other M-series models, but there's no doubt that M6 is the most beloved 35mm rangefinder in the game.

You'll see versions referred to as the M6 Classic (produced from 1984-1998) or the M6 TTL ("through the lens", produced 1998-2002, and [recently re-released in 2022](#)). The TTL is usually the most sought after model and there are a few different versions with different viewfinder magnification.

There's far too much to cover in this short description, but you can find just about every detail of every version on [Ken Rockwell's site](#).

## Mamiya 6

**Year:** 1989

**Format:** 6 x 6

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 1600

**Size:** 155 x 109 x 69mm (Folded)

**Weight:** 900g

**Battery:** 2 x SR44

**Lens:** 3 Lenses Available

**Shutter Speeds:** 4s – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

People tend to feel strongly, one way or the other, about square photos captured on 6×6 medium format film cameras like the Mamiya 6. If you lean more towards “love ‘em”, it’s hard to find a more advanced option than Mamiya’s line of medium format rangefinders.

Already quite compact compared to most other medium format cameras, the [Mamiya 6](#) features three options of lenses, each collapsing about 1.5” into the camera’s body.

When comparing the Mamiya 6 and its older sibling (featured below), there are definitely differences between the two, but if you were deciding on one model, it really comes down to which photo format you prefer.

These are some of the priciest cameras on the list, so you want to be sure you’re really committed to shooting square photos before pulling the trigger.

It’s also worth noting that this camera is different from the “Mamiya Six” or the “Mamiya 6 Automat” which was a folding, mechanical rangefinder with no light meter.

## **Mamiya 7**

**Year:** 1995

**Format:** 6 x 7

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 1600

**Size:** 159 x 112 x 123mm

**Weight:** 920g

**Battery:** 1 x 2CR1/3

**Lens:** 6 Lenses Available

**Shutter Speeds:** 4s – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

The [Mamiya 7](#) is the absolute holiest of grails for many film photographers. It takes wildly sharp images and is worlds lighter and easier to handle than most other 6×7 cameras. With its advanced, automatic features, some people jokingly consider this the world's biggest point and shoot.

You'll have twice as many options of lenses over the Mamiya 6, including an extra wide lens. A unique option is an additional insert that can be used to shoot panoramic images on 35mm film.

You'll see two versions, the Mamiya 7 and the Mamiya 7 II. While there are small differences (the II can take double exposures and comes in different colors than the original), they are, in a practical sense, pretty much the same camera.

Some people prefer the II just because it is newer, and theoretically, less likely to have issues pop up as quickly. We wouldn't necessarily agree with that line of logic, especially with the II's usually costing a bit more.

## Minolta CLE

**Year:** 1980

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 1600

**Size:** 124.5 x 77.5 x 32mm

**Weight:** 380g

**Battery:** 2 x LR44

**Lens:** Leica M Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/1000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$](#)

As mentioned above, the Leica CL was released with a severely lackluster reception – to this day, it's one of the biggest flops in the company's history. Production didn't last long and the partnership with Minolta was scrapped.

Which made it even more surprising when a new version of the camera was released 7 years later, branded as the [Minolta CLE](#).

With the re-launch came a set of three Minolta Rokor lenses (pictured above), although the CLE is compatible with standard M-mount lenses. (As always, make sure to triple check compatibility when looking at a non-Leica body that features the M-mount.)

Leica shamefully buried the CL – even giving a later digital camera the exact same name – but the Minolta version has gone on to receive some level of cult status, for good reason.

The Minolta CLE is one of the only M-mount cameras to feature an aperture-priority mode and TTL (through the lens) metering, which wouldn't become common on Leica rangefinders for many years.

This may be one of the few cases where the general consensus seems to favor the Minolta version over the Leica, and definitely the only case where you'll pay more for the Minolta.

## Minolta Hi-Matic 7

**Year:** 1963

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 800

**Size:** 140 x 82 x 73mm

**Weight:** 770g

**Battery:** 1 x PX-625

**Lens:** 45mm f/1.8

**Shutter Speeds:** 1/4s – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#)

And now, back to our regularly scheduled programming, where Minolta cameras can be found for a few hundred dollars or less.

The Hi-Matic was a longstanding line of rangefinders produced by Minolta in the '60's. There were many variations, starting with the [Hi-Matic 7](#), each release improving slightly on the previous.

After the original Minolta Hi-Matic 7 came the 7s, which included the addition of a hot shoe and a new metering system.

Next was the Minolta Hi-Matic 9, featuring an upgraded, 45mm f/1.7 lens and two additional shutter speeds (1/2 second and 1 second).

The Hi-Matic C is the odd one of the bunch, ditching the rangefinder focus system and changing to a 40mm focal length (still f/1.7). The "C" stands for "compact".

Finding the best of both worlds, the Minolta Hi-Matic E kept the 40mm lens from the prior version, but returned to a rangefinder focus system.

This isn't even the full list of versions produced, just the models you're most likely to see. A later version called the Hi-Matic AF (and subsequently, the AF2) are also quite popular, but would be considered point and shoot cameras instead of rangefinders.

## Nikon S3

**Year:** 1958

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** —

**Size:** 136 x 81 x 43mm

**Weight:** 590g

**Battery:** None

**Lens:** Nikon S Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/1000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$](#)

As one of the oldest 35mm rangefinders featured, the [Nikon S3](#) is a fully mechanical camera that doesn't require any batteries to function. Obviously, this means no light meter, which can be seen as a pro or a con, depending on who you're talking to.

At the time of release in 1958, the Leica M-mount was on it's way to becoming the standard for rangefinders. While many other camera manufacturers produced models taking advantage of this popular lens mount, Nikon outfitted their rangefinder film cameras with their own "S-mount".

There was certainly some great glass that featured the S-mount, but a lot of photographers gravitate towards M-mount cameras because of the endless options for lenses.

It's also worth noting that Nikon produced a lot of similar rangefinders – eight different models in the span of 12 years!

The earliest versions (the Nikon 1, M, and S) all featured odd photo formats that became uncommon by the mid '50's. The next four versions (the Nikon S2, SP, S3, and S4) all produced standard, 24x36mm photos.

There are definitely differences between these four versions, but the "best" model really comes down to preference. We included the S3 as it falls somewhere in the middle of features and functionality – this was also the model that Nikon chose to re-release in 2000, known as the ["Nikon S3 2000"](#) or the "S3 Millennium Model".

## Olympus 35SP

**Year:** 1969

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 800

**Size:** 129 x 76 x 61mm

**Weight:** 600g

**Battery:** 1 x PX-625

**Lens:** 42mm f/1.7

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#) – [\\$\\$](#)

With a unique focal length of 42mm and a compact body, the [Olympus 35 SP](#) is a fantastic introduction into the world of film rangefinders.

Offering the best of both worlds, you'll have your choice between auto exposure or setting everything manually. Especially for photographers coming from newer, more advanced cameras, this option will make the transition a lot smoother.

While there were quite a few versions of the Olympus 35, the SP is the most common and usually regarded as the best model. The “SP” stands for “spot meter”, which was a significant improvement over earlier variations. Olympus released a few models after the SP, although most of the changes were only cosmetic.

[The world's most prolific camera reviewer](#) has gone on record calling this model “the best fixed-lens rangefinder of all time,” and while that title will vary by user, there is plenty to love with the Olympus 35 SP.

## Olympus XA

**Year:** 1979

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 800

**Size:** 102 x 64.5 x 40mm

**Weight:** 225g

**Battery:** 2 x SR44

**Lens:** 35mm f/2.8

**Shutter Speeds:** 10s – 1/500

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#)

Not only is the Olympus XA smaller than any other camera on this list, it’s smaller than almost every camera on our [list of best point and shoot film cameras](#).

Now the line between rangefinder and P&S can get a little blurry with some of these models, but we included the XA on this list because it does focus using a rangefinder system. Call it whatever you want, it’s still a great option for a cheap film camera.

We don’t want to make it seem like size is the only thing the XA has going for it, but it bears repeating. Now, are you going to get the same results as you would with a Leica M6? Definitely not. But – is it 10x easier to bring with you wherever you’re going? Definitely.

With its sharp, 35mm lens, built-in flash and weight running less than half a pound, the [Olympus XA](#) is the perfect everyday snapshot camera.

## Voigtländer Bessa-R

**Year:** 2000

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 3200

**Size:** 135.5 x 78.5 x 33.5mm

**Weight:** 395g

**Battery:** 2 x LR44

**Lens:** Leica M39 Screw Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/2000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$](#)

The Voigtländer Bessa series of cameras is quite the odd system. The Bessa-R was released in the year 2000, yet it featured a Leica Screw Mount, which debuted over 90 years ago.

Even the styling of the camera looks more similar to a Leica M3 (released in 1954) than any of the other newer models on this list.

Prior to the Bessa-R was the Bessa-L, a model that leaned even heavier into simplicity, not even featuring a viewfinder (although you could attach one to the camera's shoe mount).

While some aspects of the [Bessa-R](#) are more bare bones, you still get modern amenities like a built-in light meter and the ability to shoot film speeds all the way up to 3200 ASA. Another benefit is that there are a lot of Leica Screw Mount lenses that can be purchased for much cheaper than M Mount options.

## Voigtländer Bessa-R2

**Year:** 2002

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 3200

**Size:** 136 x 81 x 35mm

**Weight:** 425g

**Battery:** 2 x LR44

**Lens:** Leica M Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/2000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

If the original “R” could be considered Voigtländer’s version of the M3, then the [Bessa R2](#) is their closest model to the Leica M6.

While a lot of important features stayed the same from the Bessa-R to the R2 (like the viewfinder, shutter, and light meter) there were also some significant changes. Most importantly, the Bessa-R2 utilizes the more versatile Leica M mount.

The exterior construction was also upgraded to a sturdier, metal body versus the plastic used for the original Bessa-R. As seen in the photo above, Voigtländer offered the R2 in a unique olive green color, as well as a black paint.

Later versions like the R2A and R3A introduced aperture priority, automatic exposure and there were even some limited editions made with unique lens mounts.

Voigtländer continued pushing the series forward and released the R4A and R4M that featured the widest frame lines of any rangefinder camera (adding 21mm and 25mm).

If you were trying to decide on which Bessa model is right for you, it’ll depend on what lens mount you prefer, how wide of a focal length you like to shoot, and how important you find automatic exposure mode.

## Yashica Electro 35 GSN

**Year:** 1966

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 1000

**Size:** 152 x 92 x 76mm

**Weight:** 750g

**Battery:** 1 x PX32

**Lens:** 45mm f/1.7

**Shutter Speeds:** 30s – 1/500 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$](#)

Let's get this out of the way: Yes, this is the camera that Peter Parker uses in the Andrew Garfield version of Spiderman. And yes, there's a good chance that you'll also turn into a spider if you use the Yashica Electro 35.

The full series of Yashica Electro cameras was one of the most popular lines of the '60's and '70's. We've heard around 8 million copies were sold between all of the different models.

For comparison, Leica claims that between 1984 and 2002, they produced 175,000 copies of the M6, not even 3% as many as the Yashica Electro.

Between the different versions, the [Electro 35 GSN](#) is definitely the favorite. Earlier editions didn't have a hot shoe, and the first three models only accepted film speeds of 12-500ASA.

Something interesting about the Electro 35, especially being released in 1966, is that it is an almost entirely automatic camera, offering aperture priority shooting. You can hardly even control the camera manually, only choose between a few specific shutter speeds if you want to select the speed yourself.

[Check Current Price of the Yashica Electro 35 GSN](#)

## Zeiss Ikon

**Year:** 2005

**Format:** 35mm

**Film Speeds:** 25 – 3200

**Size:** 138 x 78 x 32mm

**Weight:** 476g

**Battery:** 2 x LR44

**Lens:** Leica M Mount

**Shutter Speeds:** 1s – 1/2000 + B

**PRICE ESTIMATE:** [\\$\\$\\$\\$](#)

We're used to seeing Zeiss' name on some of the most legendary lenses ever produced, but their entry into the world of rangefinder cameras is also quite the marvel.

The [Zeiss Ikon](#) is one of the newest models on this list, released less than two decades ago. The original Ikon (also referred to as the Ikon ZM) was followed by the [Ikon SW](#) (super wide)

which removed the viewfinder to cut prices, as it was intended for photographers who shot lenses wider than 28mm which would already require a shoe-mounted viewfinder.

The shape of this camera is a lot boxier, with harsher lines than a lot of the older rangefinders on this list. While it still has a sturdy feeling, it's definitely a bit lighter than some of its closest competitors.

Featuring the super popular Leica M mount, the Zeiss Ikon is an electronically controlled camera that has the option to automatically meter. The downside, of course, is that unlike a mechanical camera like the Leica M6, the Ikon will not function without batteries. While auto exposure is an option, you can still shoot in manual mode.

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Do you have a favorite rangefinder from the list? Did we leave out any models that you love?