

canon ae-1 manual vs program



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Size: 1946 KB

Type: PDF, ePub, eBook

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Book Descriptions:

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A good philosophy, and one that Canon kept in mind when designing the followup to their massively successful AE1 SLR. After five years of that machine's unprecedented sales success, Canon unveiled an evolutionary camera that respectfully harkened to their most important SLR, and even retained its name. I'm talking about the AE1 Program, and while I feel this is an oversimplification, many describe the AE1 Program as an AE1 with Program mode added on. That's not necessarily wrong, but I believe there's enough of a difference between the two machines that they each deserve careful consideration. The AE1 Program presents enough small changes to really distinguish itself from its older brother. And though the changes seem at first to be subtle, they're impactful enough that after just a few days of shooting it's easy to see that one of these cameras is clearly better than the other. But which is it Which Canon is the one to own. The evolutionary nature of the AE1 Program precludes the necessity of an exhaustive, individual review. For those wondering over the essence of the camera how it's built, how it handles and shoots, etc. head over to our review of its progenitor. Instead of retreading that wellworn earth, let's take a close look at where the cameras differ from one another, and where the new design strengthens or weakens the AE1P in comparison to the older machine. Aesthetically speaking, each of you will need to decide which camera looks best on your own. To me, the AE1 Program is simply a refined version of the AE1. It retains that camera's core construction and dimensions, while shedding some extraneous bevels and design flourishes. A good example of this can be seen when we examine each camera's nameplate. While the nameplate on the AE1 is a protruding, stepped plate, the AE1P's is simplified. Rather than the logo being stamped on a separate moulding, it's stamped directly into the pentaprism, foregoing any extra angles.<http://www.olikon.it/public/anutelNewsProdotti/dx4900-user-manual.xml>

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On balance, the AE1 Program seems somehow less retro than the AE1. Granted, it is newer by half a decade, but it's still a retro machine. Even so, it looks somehow more contemporary than it actually is. This may or may not hurt the camera in today's market where vintage appeal is so highly prized. But let's not confuse things. Sure, it looks less classic than the AE1, but there's no denying the AE1 Program still looks like a classic film camera; and that's a good thing. When holding each camera in the hand they both seem quite similar at first blush. But dig a bit deeper and we start to see that the numerous small evolutions add up to a massive difference in usability between the two. While the original AE1's ISO selector was finicky, annoying, and prone to breaking, the AE1P's is a comparative gift from the gods. No longer does one have to fiddle to push the film advance lever out of the way while pulling up on a tiny plungerstyle knurled ring surrounding the shutter speed selector. Adjusting the ISO on the AE1 Program is as simple as pressing a button and moving a lever. It's easy, and for those who've experienced the pain of the older AE1's method, it's amazing. Another welcome ergonomic improvement is found in the placement of the AE1 Program's shutter speed selector dial. This dial is mounted further inward toward the center of the top plate, whereas the AE1's dial is as close to the outer edge as possible. On the older machine, changing shutter speed can be an arthritisinducing irritant, while the newer camera's dial is perfectly positioned for effortless fingertip adjustments. But it doesn't stop at just levers and dials. The boys at Canon improved the very foundation of their most popular SLR's ergonomics by incorporating a mounting point for the Canon Action Grip. This grip, first introduced as an accessory available to A1 shooters, gives the AE1P a much improved grip over the gripless AE1.<http://copy2d.com/ftp/image/crumar-composer-manual.xml>

But not only does it make the camera more comfortable to hold, it also serves to protect the battery door, a part of the AE1 that's notorious for breaking, and annoying to repair. But not everything about the AE1P feels better than the AE1. The shutter lock lever that was so delightfully mechanically on the original AE1 has been replaced with a flimsy, plastic lever. This lever, a carryover from the A1, is prone to breaking even with normal use. It's just a cheaper part, and that's a shame. The AE1P's depthoffield preview control is similarly of lower quality compared with that of the AE1, and while I've not noticed a proclivity for breakage, it just doesn't feel as sturdy as that of the prior model. On the whole, the AE1 Program looks and feels better than its predecessor. But then again, the AE1 was never bad looking, and it worked pretty damn well, too. So is there any real reason to favor the AE1P over the AE1 In a word; yes. And the first reason becomes clear the moment we look through the viewfinder. The AE1 Program showcases Canon's brightest, and largest viewfinder ever installed on a manual focus Canon camera. It's essentially the same as the VF used on the professionalgrade F1. The standard package includes Canon's matte focusing screen with builtin split image rangefinder patch and microprism focusing band. Photogeek speak translation it's easier and faster to focus with the AE1 Program than it is with any other Canon SLR that came before. Further oneupping the original AE1, the AE1P allows the shooter to swap focusing screens to any one of eight optional screens. Want a gridpattern screen No problem. How about a crosshair or scale screen. No issues there. And furthermore, these screens are replaceable by the enduser while other cameras, the A1 included, require the job be done by factory technicians. And if that weren't enough, Canon further ups the ante with another big viewfinder innovation.

While both cameras display a lightmeter reading within the viewfinder, the AE1 Program uses a bright, illuminated LED to showcase information with the AE1 employing a comparatively archaic analog needle system. While both do the job, the LEDs in the AE1P are more responsive and easier to see in challenging lighting situations. These improvements to the VF pair with the ergonomic improvements to help create a shooting experience that's much more relaxed and streamlined when compared to the experience offered by the AE1. While the older camera can at times be clunky, finicky, and sluggish, the AE1P goes a long way toward speeding things up and smoothing things out. But wait, I've not even talked about the AE1 Program's finest improvement. What about the big innovation that gives it its name. Yes, the AE1 Program allows for shooting in Program mode. For those not in the know, switching to Program mode allows the camera to automatically select the shutter speed and aperture that will result in a perfectly exposed photo every time. What this means is that for a whole segment of wouldbe photographers who may be too intimidated to shoot film or manual cameras, there's no longer anything to worry about. Using the AE1 Program in Program mode, one is essentially holding an incredibly powerful and optically sophisticated pointandshoot camera. Just point, shoot, and make amazing photos. It's easy, and it works great too, since Canon's metering system is rarely confused. If new shooters do nothing more than read the manual and remember the dos and don'ts of making a decent shot, there's no reason the AE1P will ever produce anything other than great photos. When it comes to Program shooting there's no comparison. The AE1 simply does not offer Program mode. With that camera, shooters are stuck with shutterpriority or fullmanual mode. The AE1P offers all this, and more. The remainder of the two cameras' specsheets read like a photocopy.

Features and techspecs couldn't be more similar. Both cameras use Canon's ubiquitous FD mount, so lens selection is massive enough to satisfy any photographer. From wideangle to telephoto, Canon's lenses rarely disappoint. Find an AE1P with this lens and you've got yourself a seriously capable photographic tool that's ready to grow and expand with you. Before I wrap up, it should be noted that the AE1 Program's ancestral ties to the AE1 bring with it some reliability issues. Back with a vengeance is the weakness imparted through Canon's overreliance on late70s circuitry. Through rough usage, fragile ribbon cables and delicate solder seen here can easily give up the fight, leaving you with a superstylish paperweight. The newer camera suffers the same liabilities as

the AE1 when it comes to shutter speed limitations. Finally, the same lubricants used in the AE1's mirror assembly are used again in the AE1P. As such, AE1P buyers should remain wary of the infamous and dreaded "Canon Squeal". But, as with all cameras, buy a copy that's been properly stored and cared for and there's little to worry about where reliability is concerned. Alternately, buy one from our own FStop Cameras and enjoy an uncommon guarantee. The AE1 Program is another classic from Canon. More than just an AE1 with Program mode, it's a camera that offers more features, is better looking, and provides superior ergonomics compared with its older brother. Is it better than its forbear I think so. But I also know that for some people, the AE1 is the best camera in the world. Which of the two cameras you'll fall in love with will likely come down to the way you want to shoot. If you think you'll never use Program mode, perhaps the AE1 is best for you. If you plan on doing a lot of lowlight shooting and need a brighter VF, maybe opt for the Program. I can't make the decision for you, but both machines are so great that you'll inevitably love whichever one you pick. Want your own AE1 Program.

By purchasing anything using these links, Casual Photophile may receive a small commission at no additional charge to you. This helps Casual Photophile produce the content we produce. He's spent years researching, collecting, and shooting classic and collectible cameras. In addition to his work here, he's also the founder of the online camera shop Fstopcameras.com. All stories by James Tocchio 22 comments Jim Grey September 17, 2015 at 130 pm Enormously useful review. I never knew these two cameras were so different. I bought an AE1 Program and figured I had the whole AE1 thing covered. We talked about the limitations of the shutter in the post. Someday they'll invent the perfect camera. Nice shots of the cameras in your post here. About 10 years ago I bought a secondhand example and I now use it on a fairly regular basis. Still a great camera when used with good lenses and film. Great piece and a great piece of kit. There seem to be lots of discussions about that one. As for the Aperture Priority possibilities of the AE1 Program, it can only be down if you intend to shoot the lens wide open. Here's the deal. If you set the camera to the settings you've described and take a shot, the camera isn't smart enough to know that you've set the lens aperture to anything besides wide open, since the camera meters with a TTL wideopen aperture. When you press the shutter release, the aperture stops down as you know, but the camera doesn't anticipate this and meter accordingly. So yes, the shutter speed will vary on the available light, but it won't factor in the stopped down aperture. Where is this going. So, James, I know you've done the F6 but the F100 is so affordable and you know you really want to do that review, right. Glad to hear you're diving in. I'm dropping my first roll off tomorrow. Keep up the good work.

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Program model is just another mode to use the camera. As already mentioned, the light meter reading in the AE1P is an LED readout which is especially helpful in darker situations where you might not be able to see the recommended exposure the needle provides on the AE1. The battery cover is better protected on the AE1P as mentioned as well. Both weigh about the same, the differences are not noticeable.

Both are manual focus. I would recommend you ask yourself what works best for you. If you want to use it as a learning tool, then I'm assuming you want to shoot full manual. If so, then you won't go wrong with either camera. In my opinion, part of the beauty of shooting with an older camera is the fact that you make all the adjustments yourself as opposed to letting the camera do everything for you. The prices on eBay for the AE1P are a little more expensive when compared to the AE1.

Whichever one you get, make sure that it has been CLA'd cleaned, lubricated, adjusted and had the seals replaced. This is most always a must on these older cameras. I've bought all my A series Canons on eBay and have had both good and bad purchases. I hope this helps, ask away if you have other questions. I had AE1, great camera, a milestone in photographic industrial history, the first microprocessor operated one, but AE1 Program for me is second best in the FD mount cameras after only the first series of F1. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources.

Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. It was introduced in 1981 as the successor to the Canon AE1, five years after that camera's introduction. The major difference was the addition of the Program AE mode first seen in the A1. This mode sets both the shutter speed and aperture automatically—albeit with a slight bias towards the shutter speed setting. The user focuses the camera and then presses the shutter button. For those desiring more control, the AE1's shutter priority auto exposure and full manual modes are still available. It also supports the A1's Motor Drive MA; this requires another electrical contact on the base plate. The AE1's Power Winder A, and a new, faster Power Winder A2, are also supported. The viewfinder uses LEDs to show information to the user.

Unlike the A1, though, which specifies that screens should only be changed by the factory or by experienced service technicians, those on the AE1 Program can be changed by the user. In the years since the AE1 Program was introduced, this shutter design has also proven to be more maintenance-intensive than modern vertical-travel metal blade designs. The camera's electronics and electromagnets are powered by one 4SR44, PX28A, A544, K28A, V34PX, 4LR44, or L544 alkaline batteries. In its day, however, the AE1 Program's automated features and simple controls helped introduce many new consumers to the SLR camera. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Pursue creatively. Live life with intention. About Destinations Asia Cambodia Japan Taiwan Europe Iceland Prague North America Washington State South America Cartagena Photography and Video Photography Film Photography Videography Work With Us Come Say Hi. The camera was launched in 1981 as the new and improved version of the Canon AE1 and came with a fully automatic program mode that made photography easy for everyone. Prices have been increasing, so if you find one in your price range, get it now. Things to Consider Before Buying a Film Camera Film photography is slightly different from digital photography and there are a few things you should consider before getting your first film camera. I've learned these lessons after countless hours of research so hopefully, this information will help you get started as quickly as possible and save you some money too. Most importantly, you will have to find a Canon AE1 Program that is in working condition. The Canon AE1 Program is notorious for its foam seals deteriorating over time causing light leak problems, so it's important to be extra diligent when buying this camera. You will have to consider how you're going to develop and scan your film. You can either do it yourself or send it to a lab. I'll get into the pros and cons of each below.

Lastly, you'll need to find a local lab or online store where you can buy film. It's always good to support your local lab whenever possible, but sometimes it's more convenient and cheaper to buy

through online stores. Camera Condition and Light Leaks The light seals on the Canon AE1 Program are known to deteriorate over time, which will cause light leak issues. I ran into this issue first hand and actually didn't know my Canon had a light leak issue until I shot and developed two rolls of film, so don't be like me. Learning from my own experience, there are a few things you can do to make sure you get a camera in good working condition Buy from a reputable film photography store whether that's your local lab or an online store. Cameras sold from these retailers are usually the most expensive, but they will likely have replaced the back light seals and have tested it to make sure it's in working condition. If buying from eBay, ask the seller if the camera has been film tested or if it has had it's light seals replaced. If you find one for cheap and you're unsure, you can run a test roll of film through it to check. If there are light leak issues, you can either replace the light seals yourself or send it to a Canon Repair Expert like this one for repairs. If your camera has a light leak issue, here is what the pictures may look like. Developing and Scanning Film When you're first starting out, my recommendation is to send your film to a professional lab to develop and scan. You will save a lot of time, get the best results, and can figure out if film photography is right for you. Eventually, you should definitely try to develop and scan your own film. There is an initial upfront cost for all the developing and scanning equipment, but after you have everything setup, you can save a lot of money in the long run. It's also much easier than I ever thought possible and if I can do it, you can definitely do it too.

Buying Film Buying film and trying to figure out which film stocks fit best with your photography style is one of the most fun parts of film photography. If you can, try to shoot with as many different film stocks as you can as each one has its own unique characteristics and color profile. Great selection, fair prices, and they are always happy to answer any questions. Freestyle Photographic Supply A huge supply of different film stocks. No free shipping. Adorama Free shipping options are available. Another good choice for a wide selection of film stock at a fair price. Amazon Amazon is kind of hit or miss, but you can find some pretty good deals sometimes. Plus, free shipping if you're a Prime member. The Canon AE1 Program It's easy to see why the Canon AE1 Program is still one of the most popular 35mm film cameras. The camera is jampacked with features, it's very easy to use and you get access to Canon's incredible line of FD lenses. There are some slight differences between the other popular Canon A series cameras, so let's go over those first, and then we'll get into the features. Canon AE1 Program vs Canon AE1 vs Canon A1 It's good to know the differences between the other more popular Canon A series cameras because you'll probably come across them when you're researching for your Canon AE1 Program. The Canon AE1 is the predecessor of the Canon AE1 Program so it shares the most similarities. The Canon A1 is geared more towards the professional photographer so it has some advanced features not found on the Canon AE1 Program or Canon AE1. Here are the main differences between these cameras that you should consider The builtin light meter on both the Canon AE1 Program and Canon A1 is a LED readout versus the matchneedle indicator on the Canon AE1. You get the action grip battery cover on both the Canon AE1 Program and Canon A1.

Both the Canon AE1 Program and Canon A1 feature a fully automatic mode and shutter speed priority mode while the Canon AE1 only has shutter priority. The Canon A1 also features aperture priority while the Canon AE1 Program does not have aperture priority. Camera Features Automatic Modes One of the most innovative features of this camera, especially when it was first introduced is its automatic shooting modes when used with Canon FD lenses. The camera features a fully automatic program mode and shutter speed priority mode. In fully automatic mode, the camera will choose both the shutter speed and aperture settings based on the exposure reading. To use the camera in automatic mode, all you have to do is set your lens aperture to "A" and your shutter speed to "Program". In shutter speed priority mode, the camera will select the best aperture based on the shutter speed you have selected. To use your camera in shutter speed priority mode, all you have to do is set your lens aperture to "A" and select your shutter speed. BuiltIn Light Meter The camera

has a built-in through the lens TTL centerweighted light meter that is very easy to use. The camera and the light meter run off of a common 6V battery like this one and you initiate the light meter reading by halfpressing the shutter. In manual mode, the camera's light meter works off of shutter speed priority. So, when you halfpress the shutter to get the light meter reading, the camera will indicate what aperture it believes will give you the proper exposure based on the shutter speed you have chosen. I have found the light meter to be very accurate, but it could also depend on the condition of the Canon AE1 Program that you pick up. An easy way to doublecheck the light meter reading is through a phone light meter app like this one. Battery Check Indicator There is a nice little battery check indicator next to the rewind lever on this camera which will let you know when your battery power is getting low.

When you push down on the battery check indicator button, it will beep 6 or more times per second if you have a good amount of battery life left and will beep about 3 times or less if your battery is running low. According to the instruction manual, your battery should last about 1 year with normal use. Bright and Clear Viewfinder with Split Microprism To help you nail focus, the camera features an extremely easy to use split micro prism inside its bright viewfinder. When your subject is out of focus you will clearly see it split into two. As you turn your focusing ring, you will see the split micro prism coming together. Your subject is in focus once the top and bottom levels of the split micro prism match up. You do also have the option to change to one of the 7 different focusing screens Canon has made for this camera if you don't like the split micro prism it comes with. The next section covers each focusing screen in more detail. Interchangeable Focusing Screens source canon ae1 program manual There are 7 different focusing screens you can customize your camera with, but you will have to check on eBay to see what is available. Good for general photography. Access to Canon FD Lenses One of the best parts about this camera is that it uses Canon FD lenses, so there is a huge variety of high quality, wellpriced lenses that work with this camera. You will usually see two different Canon FD Lenses on the market. The older Canon FD lenses with a silver breechlock mount and the newer Canon FD lenses with a bayonetstyle mount that is labeled as "nFD" The seller will usually put this information in the listing, but if they don't, the easiest way to tell the two apart is by the silver breechlock on the older Canon FD lenses. Here are some of my favorite lenses for the Canon AE1 Program. ISO ASA Range The ISO range is from 12 to 3,200 which is a good enough range if you ever want to push or overexpose most standard film stocks by at least 3 stops.

If you ever want to go past ISO 3,200, you can always use a phone app or external light meter to get your light meter readings. BuiltIn SelfTimer The camera includes a 10second selftimer which is nice if you're taking a long exposure or if you want to do selfportraits. All you have to do to use the selftimer is flip the main camera switch to "S" and hit the shutter button. When you press the shutter button, you will hear the camera start to beep. When the timer gets close to firing the shutter, the beeps will get faster. Just remember that to use it, you will have to have advanced the film first. Camera Lock Mode The main camera switch also features a camera lock mode. When in camera lock mode, the shutter will not fire and the meter is turned off. It's definitely a nice feature to have after you're done shooting and you want to make sure the camera doesn't accidentally go off. You can still advance the film when you have locked the camera, but you won't be able to fire the shutter button. Depth of Field DOF Preview This is another very cool feature to have. The depth of field preview allows you to see what your depth of field in your composition looks like depending on the aperture you have selected. The reason this is useful is that what you see in your viewfinder is typically not what the photo is going to look like. With an optical viewfinder like the one in this camera, the viewfinder image that you see is with a wideopen aperture. The aperture only stops down to the aperture you have selected when you take the photo. The depth of field DOF preview button is on the right side of the lens when you're facing the camera. To use it, you flip the latch up and then push it towards your lens. This will stop down your aperture. In order for the depth of field DOF preview to work with the current aperture you have set, you need to advance your film first. If

you don't advance your film, the depth of field DOF preview will show your previous aperture.

Auto Exposure Lock Button The autoexposure lock is a useful feature if you will ever be shooting in one of the automatic modes as it will allow you to set exposure on a specific part of your composition. It is located on the right side of the camera above the depth of field DOF preview button. It is the black button without the silver ring. To use the autoexposure lock, you point your camera at the area of the image that you want to expose for, press the auto exposure lock button to store the exposure information into your camera, recompose your image while keeping the button pressed and take the photo.

Exposure Preview Button The exposure preview button sits below the auto exposure lock button and is the black button with the silver ring. The exposure preview will show you what aperture the camera thinks will give you the best exposure. It functions in the same way as halfpressing your shutter, but it is nice to have another button to preview exposure with.

Memo Holder There is a memo holder on the back of the camera where you can write down and store information. One of my favorite ways to use it is to tear off the flap of the film box and keep it in the memo holder as a reminder of the film that is in the camera.

Action Grip Battery Cover The action grip battery cover comes standard on the Canon AE1 Program, so make sure the one you're looking at has one before buying it. The action grip covers the battery compartment and creates a much more ergonomic fit when you're handling the camera. Many of the components on this camera are made of plastic which gives it a more plasticky feel than other cameras like the Pentax K1000 Made in Japan. Once you're out of battery, you cannot advance the film, take photos, or use the light meter. Some cameras like the Pentax K1000 are fully mechanical, so you can take photos and advance the film without battery power.