

MINOLTA AUTOPAK 550

1969



Serial Nr.401755
Minolta Code 0402

Characteristics and functions

The Minolta Autopak 550 presented in 1969 is the update of the Minolta Autopak 500.

The device has a square-shaped body, made entirely of plastic and uses 126-type cassette films (12 or 20 exposures) that provide 28.5x28.5mm. format images. The shutter button is located along the front edge of the upper side and is formed by a parallelepiped in striped black plastic. The slider for unlocking the film compartment door is located along the right side, above the rectangular ring for inserting the wrist strap for transporting the Autopak 550.

The charging lever, in metal, works in a slot located on the far right, at the top of the rear side. Side occupied almost entirely by the large door of the film compartment

whose transparent window allows you to view the type of film introduced and observe the "frame counter" which is given by the printing of the numbers on the outer side of the black paper that covers the film. It is good to remember that after taking the last useful shot, the film must be advanced until the black paper completely covers the film, which has all settled on the right-hand side, receiving, of the cassette loader. For this purpose, on the transparent part you can read: "Wind film to stop". Between the winding lever and the viewfinder we find the inscriptions "Minolta Camera Co, LTD" "Japan" and the serial number engraved in a silver space.

The lens, Rokkor 38mm f/2.8 with 4 elements in 3 groups, is positioned in the cantilevered part of the nose. The minimum shooting distance is 1 meter.

The CDS exposure meter is located immediately above the lens in a small circular black plastic frame.

The adjustment of the sensitivity of the film used is automatic: the camera reads the ASA values directly from the film loader, by means of a mechanical selector compatible with reference marks placed on the loader.

The flash socket located to the left of the upper side allows you to use the new cubic flashes that provide 4 consecutive flashes and are enslaved by the use of batteries.

The Galilean-type viewfinder located to the left of the lens has a bright frame with parallax correction. Along the left side of the frame are the symbols (mountains, groups, half-length) for adjusting the shooting distance. A sliding signal is coupled to the distance knob, on the latter there are the three symbols (mountains, groups, bust) silk-screened in black on a silver field. This knob is positioned along the left side of the Autopack 550. A rectangular field is highlighted along the bright frame of the viewfinder with the lightning symbol in the center: this indicates the lightning coverage that is between 1 and 5 meters.

A red light positioned on the underside of the viewfinder indicates if the flash is needed. The signal is turned on by pressing the shutter button 1/4 of its stroke.

The camera has two fixed shutter speeds: 1/90s for shots in ambient light, 1/40s for shots with flash light in the presence of insufficient ambient light. If the ambient light is sufficient for a correct exposure, the flash-cube does not shoot even if mounted on the camera, the time remains at 1/90s and the aperture is controlled by the exposure meter. The time is switched to 1/40s only if the flash is actually needed.

With the flash inserted and the time set to 1/40s (insufficient ambient light) the diaphragm is controlled by the focus knob with the "Flashmatic" mechanism according to the Guide Number principle, always within the minimum and maximum possible distance with flash.

On the underside there is the large door to access the battery compartment. A cursor that slides from the "Close" to the "Open" position allows you to unlock the door itself, which must be lifted from the side where an arrow and the words "Lift Here" are silk-screened. Three batteries are required: to operate the flash 2 PX 825 and for the exposure meter 1 PX 625.

The weight of the camera is 330g excluding batteries.

Dimensions: length 118mm; width 71 depth 57mm.