



# VACATION PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE

## Getting The Most From Your Picture Taking

Hello, and welcome to your vacation photography guide. You only have a limited time on vacation, so the last thing you want to be doing is spending too much time taking photos, right? In the next few pages you will learn just how easy it is to take picture perfect photos quickly and easily.

This is not a lesson in photography but rather a guide on how to make the best use of your digital camera while on vacation. How best to capture those special moments, and general photo tips that can be used with any type of camera irrespective of the brand you are using. Some tips can also be applied to film cameras.

To get the most out of this guide we recommended you already know the basic functions of your camera. You will not be bored or confused with photography lingo like aperture, shutter speed, white balance, bracketing etc. Just simple tips for taking great photos, quickly.

So grab your camera and lets get started.

### **First things first**

Make sure you have a large memory card and have an extra one just in case. The same goes for your battery. Use a good battery and always carry a fully charged spare. The last thing you want, is to miss the perfect sunset, a once in a life time adventure photo, or that priceless family portrait due to a flat battery or full memory card.

Consider buying a small travel Tripod. They cost as little as ten dollars.

Make sure your camera has a hand or neck strap to prevent dropping it while taking photos. And last but not least, always have a cover for your camera.



## **Set the Megapixels you want to use**

Nowadays, most cameras allow you to set the Megapixels. The higher the number the less photos you will be able to take before the memory card is full, inversely, the lower the number, the more photos you will be able to take.

If you only plan on printing the images as standard 4x6 photos, storing them on your computer or emailing them to friends, set your camera to two or three Megapixels. If you want to make large prints of your images, use a higher megapixel setting. Perhaps six, eight, ten or twelve Megapixels. If you try blowing up a photo that was taken on two Megapixels, it will appear distorted or pixilated, therefore make sure you have the right megapixel setting to begin with, for the right occasion.

When setting the Megapixels, also keep in mind, the higher the number the bigger the file. This means it will take longer for your camera to process the image and be ready to take the next shot, making quick photos one after another more difficult to take. Larger files will also take longer to upload to your computer, longer to email, and longer to go from one photo to the next when viewing them on your computer. As a rough guide, two to three megapixels is perfect for general use and 4x6 photos.



## **Keep the sun behind you**

Have you ever wondered why some photos are rich with color and some appear washed out. It is usually as simple as your position in relation to the sun. Having the sun behind you when taking the photo will give the sky a deeper blue for beautiful landscape photos. It will also make the other colors rich in color, with less shadow for a better overall photo.

If the sun is to the side of you, use your hand to block the sunlight from shining directly onto your camera lens. This will prevent unwanted light coming across your image washing out the colors on one side of your photo. Careful not to get your hand in the picture.

## Fill the screen

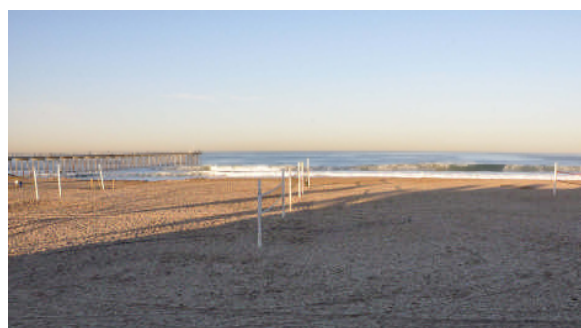
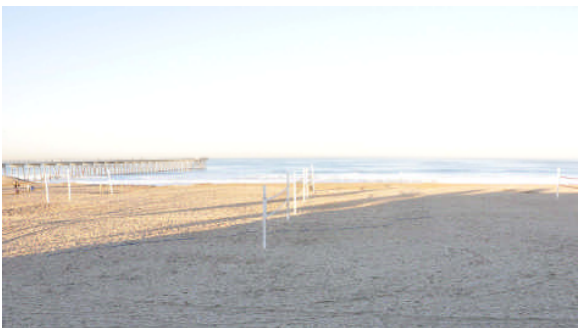
What ruins a photo is having too much empty space. Excess sky, water or ground makes for a boring photo. Zoom in and fill the view with what ever it is you are taking. Or include a tree on the side(s) of the image. This will help reduce the empty space and make for a nicer photo overall.



## Shade – all in or all out

Did you know wedding photographers prefer to shoot on an overcast day? The reason is there are less shadows to contend with. It's difficult to take a good picture when half of the shot is in the shade, and the other half is in the sun. If this is the case compose your shot so it's either all sun with the sun behind you, or all shade and use a flash.

If the shade issue is out of your control, momentarily point the camera to an area that is half sun and half shade. This should display good lighting in your view finder for both the shaded area and the sunny area. Then press the shoot button half way to lock the cameras focus and brightness in position. With your finger still on the button bring the camera back to your subject keeping the button pressed half way down. When you are ready, fully press the shoot button all the way down to take the shot. This will require a couple of minutes of practice to get the hang of it, but if you do it now, you will be ready for when you need it. This neat little trick is also handy for landscape photos when the distant mountains are darker than the foreground or visa versa.



## How to focus the foreground and the background together – Simply take a few steps back

Assume for a moment you want to take a photo of your spouse with the Eifel tower in the background. If you stand too close to your spouse the camera will focus on them and the Eifel Tower will be out of focus, or the camera will focus on the Eifel tower in the background but your spouse will be out of focus. Take a few steps back until everything becomes focused together for the perfect holiday snapshot. You can use this tip in many situations where you want to focus on something/someone close to you but still have the background in focus.

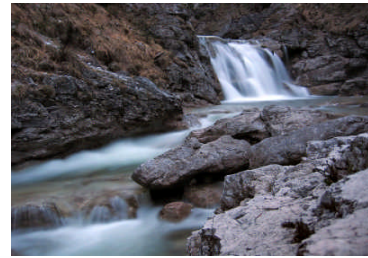
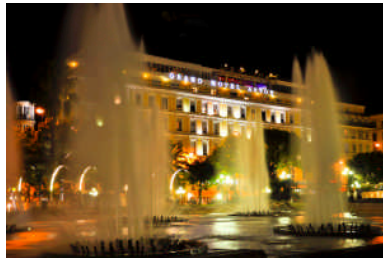
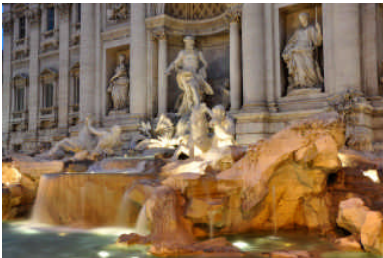
## Use the flash during daytime for extra pop!

Although you may not need it, using the flash during bright sunny conditions can add dimension to your image and really make your foreground stand out from the background, especially when the sun is behind the subject. Note: Using the flash will run down your battery faster.



## Waterfalls/Fountains

Obtaining the nice cotton wool effect of flowing water you see in professional photographs is difficult using automatic point and shoot cameras, however not impossible at the right time of day. Wait until dusk, night time or low light conditions, and use the built-in night scene or possibly the fireworks function. **Note:** A tripod or something solid to rest the camera on is necessary otherwise the shot will be blurry. For extra stillness set the self-timer before taking the shot.



## Distance of flash

If you are wondering why far away subjects in your photos are too dark at night, it's because your flash is not powerful enough to light them up. Either move closer, use the night scene option (with a tripod or solid surface), or if you know how to adjust the ISO setting on your camera bump it up to around 400 – 600. **Note:** If you go any higher your image will appear grainy. Just because your camera goes up to ISO1600 or beyond, doesn't mean you should use it.

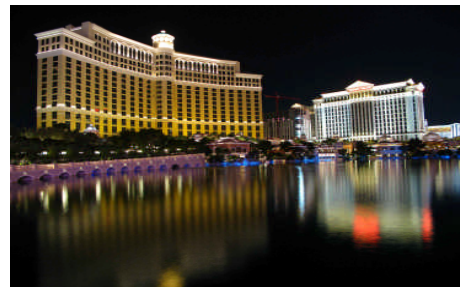
## Try using the burst function



If you are the type of person that takes more photos *out* of focus than *in* focus, more than likely the camera is moving when you press the shoot button. If your camera has a burst function, using it will take several pictures one after another. Simply keep your finger on the shoot button while the camera takes the photos one after the other. The first shot may still be out of focus but the next ones should be in focus. If you have enough space on your memory card, use this function regularly and you will increase your chances of getting *in* focus shots every time.

## Night Shots

Similar to waterfalls and fountains, obtaining beautiful night photos is just a tripod away. Pick your subject, select the night mode, and set your camera on a tripod. For added stillness set the self-timer to 2 or 3 seconds before pressing the button.

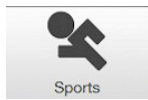


## Shooting through glass – viewing platforms or sightseeing buses

How many times have you tried to take a photo through glass just to have the flash of your camera reflect off the glass and ruin the photo?

Instead, place the camera right up to the glass and make sure the flash is off. If you are indoors the sensor on your camera will usually activate your flash automatically. If this happens, simply put your finger over the flash to block the light reflecting off the glass and into your lens. If you are on a moving bus be mindful of bumps when your camera is against the glass window.

## Moving targets



If you are in a moving vehicle, or the subject is moving, such as an animal or child, use the sports mode on your camera, and if possible also use the burst mode as mentioned earlier.



## Rule of Thirds

Although slightly technical, a brief explanation of the rule of thirds may be of benefit to you in capturing beautiful landscape shots. The main premise behind this rule is to create a well balanced and more appealing photo than simply having the subject in the middle of the photo.

Line up the horizon with the top or bottom third of the image as seen in these two photographs.



This prevents the horizon from dividing the shot in two, and allows you to fill the screen with something else above or below the horizon.

Similarly, you can align subjects with the left or right vertical line of your image, as also seen in the two photographs above. The first photograph was taken with the horizon on the bottom third of the screen and the palm trees on the left vertical line. The second photograph has the horizon on the top third of the screen and the girl on the right vertical line. Try different points and angles until you find one that looks the best. Having the subject off center makes the photo more appealing to the eye and gives a more balanced shot. Spend a couple of minutes practicing this now. If your camera has a Grid function, use it to help align the horizontal and vertical lines with the subjects.

### **Be prepared**

Know your camera so you can go through the functions and quickly pick the right setting for the conditions at the time.

Also think in advance if you're going to use the sports mode or burst mode and be mindful of your choices. If you are on a moving sightseeing bus, chances are you will need sports mode and possibly burst mode, so have your camera ready in advance.

We hope this brief introductory in to photography will serve you well for many vacations to come. And remember, postcards are now online so visit us at [www.ThePerfectPostcard.com](http://www.ThePerfectPostcard.com) and Just Pick, Click & Send.



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