

Mini Guide

HOW TO TAKE BEAUTIFUL TRAVEL PHOTOS



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Welcome!

I'm so excited to provide you with this resource! In this mini guide you will find my tried and tested hacks for taking beautiful travel photos.

WHY SHOULD YOU LISTEN TO ME?

I've been a full-time travel photographer and blogger for almost 4 years now. My photos have been featured on the front cover of numerous travel magazines, on commercial photography displays, and in my travel book, *Roaming America*. I have created travel content for some of the world's largest brands and have learned a thing or two along the way!

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Types of travel photography

'Travel photography' is a fairly broad term. I would suggest referring to the categories below and deciding which area(s) you want to focus on when it comes to taking better travel photos. This will help you dial in what gear you need, certain shooting elements to focus on, editing techniques, and more.

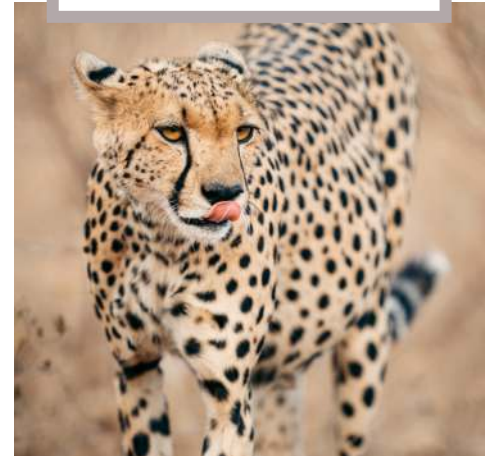
SELFIES



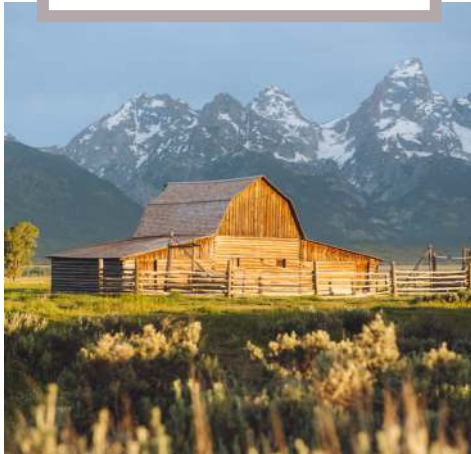
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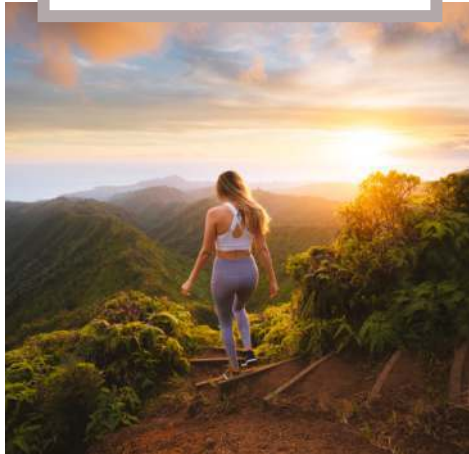
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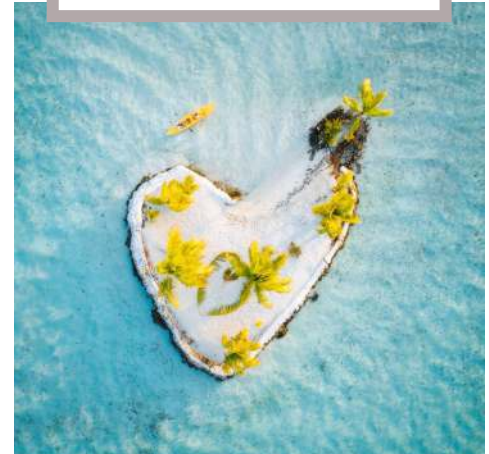
LANDSCAPE



ADVENTURE



AERIAL



+ FAMILY, CULTURE, FOOD, ARCHITECTURE AND MORE!



Invest in the right gear

You don't need to own the latest high-tech camera to take beautiful travel photos, but you will need something to start with (even if that is your phone!) Below you will find a list of some of my recommendations. You can also check out what I carry in my camera bag [here](#).

PHONE

- High quality phone camera such as the iPhone 11 Pro, OnePlus 7 Pro, Google Pixel 4, Samsung Galaxy S10 Plus.
- Mini phone tripod such as the GorillaPods by Joby (including the phone attachment).
- Optional: screw on phone lenses such as those by Moment or OOWA.
- Optional: waterproof case/cover for underwater photography, such as those by LifeProof.

CAMERA

- DSLR, mirrorless, or an action camera like those by GoPro.
- Kit lens or if possible a range of lenses, such as a wide angle (e.g. 16-35mm), middle range (24-70mm), and zoom (70-200mm; 100-400mm).
- Tripod that is sturdy and can hold the weight of your setup.
- Optional: waterproof camera housing (e.g. Aquatech) or waterproof camera (e.g. GoPro HERO6).

DRONE

Drones are a great investment if you want to capture a wider range of angles and scenes. Consider the DJI Mavic 2 Pro or Mavic Mini.



Shoot at the best time

The best photos are often taken during "golden hour", which is the time 15-45 minutes after sunrise and just before sunset. Another picturesque time is "blue hour", the time 15-45 minutes before sunrise and just after sunset. Keep in mind that these windows vary depending on the time of year. Download an app such as "Golden Hour" to help you judge this.

WHY SHOOT DURING GOLDEN OR BLUE HOUR?

Typically this is when you will experience the softest and most flattering light for photography. You will also have a higher chance of capturing colorful clouds and epic light.

Plus, there will be less people!

...and this means it will be easier to capture unique photos without other people in them. I love how quiet photo locations are during these hours, particularly at sunrise. Don't forget to pause and take it all in ;)

TIPS FOR SHOOTING IN HARSH LIGHT

It's not always possible to photograph a location during golden hour, and often you'll find yourself exploring destinations in the middle of the day. The downside of that is dealing with harsh light. Some tips for these scenarios:

- Shoot in manual mode to have more control over your settings.
- Try shooting with the sun off to the side or behind your subject.
- Play around and get creative with shadows. Shooting subjects in the shade is also a great option, especially if the scene's lighting is consistent.



Think about composition

How you set up an image is often the most important factor, and can definitely take the end product from average to amazing! You might be wondering what I mean by 'composition'? I'm referring to positioning the objects in the frame in a way so that the viewer is automatically drawn to the most interesting or significant area of the image.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

LEADING LINES

Think about how you could work with your surroundings to guide the viewers eyes to the main subject. E.g. the S-curve in the image to the right (the winding road) helps draw your eye to the van. Leading lines can be found in buildings, shadows, rivers, and more - open your eyes to what's around you!



DEPTH OF FIELD

Depth of field is the distance between the closest and farthest objects in a photo that appears acceptably sharp. Play around with your aperture and how close subjects are to the lens. Create softer foregrounds and backgrounds for a dreamy feel and to help draw the viewers attention to the desired subject.



Think about composition

MORE THINGS TO CONSIDER:

DISTRACTIONS

Always be on the lookout for ways you could simplify your image. E.g. in this palm tree photo (to the right), we quickly cleaned up some branches and twigs before snapping this image. I also edited out a few dark splotches of sand. This helps to keep the image about us and the scenery, not any messy debris.



COLORS

Understanding how colors work together and contrast each other will help you take your photography to the next level. I often consider how the colors of my outfit will complement certain scenes, or allow for me to stand out in a busy background. E.g. in the photo to the right, the red skirt helps draw your eyes to the subject in this Spanish alleyway full of distractions.



Looking for all these elements and mastering techniques will get easier in time (the more you get out there and practice!)



Add a human element

Adding a human element to an image helps to show scale and share a story about the adventure. It can entice the viewer to imagine standing in that person's shoes, experiencing the same magical moment.

THE BEST WAYS TO DO IT:

- Capture the person/people in a natural action, e.g. walking through a river, along a path, etc. This will look less staged and show a more realistic depiction of what was happening. This is also a great technique when your subject may be a little camera shy or nervous about posing for photos.
- Landscapes often look more dramatic when a person is added for scale. Consider keeping the person small to really show just how larger than life the scene was.
- Make sure you position the person against a backdrop in which they will stand out, and consider what they are wearing. Bright and colorful clothing often works best, but each situation is different.



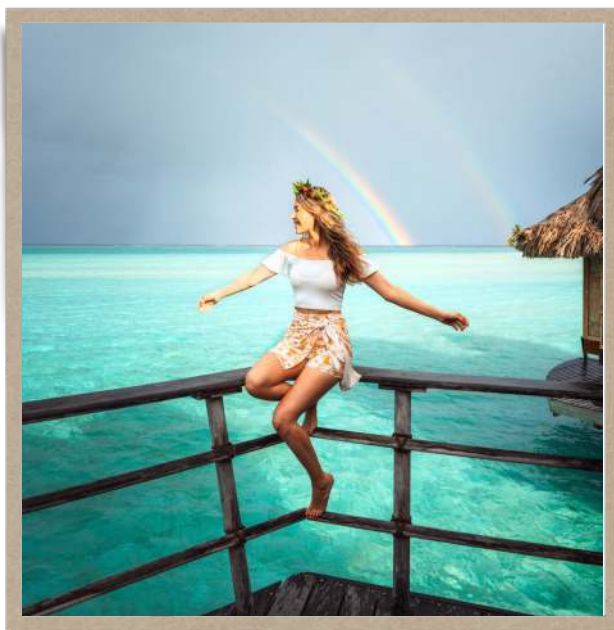
Take amazing selfies

"Selfies" often get a bad rap, mostly due to tourists using selfies sticks and people rudely taking over a spot so others can't capture their own images. There are better ways to take epic selfies...

MY SELFIE SECRETS:



- Use a tripod for your camera or phone. Some popular brands are Manfrotto (DSLR, mirrorless) and Joby (phone, compact camera). GoPro sticks & tripods are also very effective if you use one of their action cameras.
- Use some sort of self timer, in-built intervalometer, or remote control shutter release. Most cameras and phones have countdown self timers and many cameras can now connect to smart phone apps for the purpose of using them like a remote.
- Set up your desired image and then simply run into shot or use your remote to capture the moment!
- Can't get your hands on a tripod? Don't be embarrassed to politely ask someone else to take your photo (show them how to use your camera first and be careful of thieves).



More on the blog:

- *Take epic solo selfies*
- *How to take couple selfies*



Tell a story

Storytelling is an integral part of human culture and can be shared through words, video, or simply a still image. Consider that you have the ability to capture and freeze a unique moment in time, all because you chose to pick up your camera or phone. We have all heard the saying 'a picture is worth a thousand words'... an amazing photo should evoke feelings in the viewer, whether that be of awe, happiness, sadness, or simply wanderlust.

STORYTELLING ELEMENTS:

- Consider body language and facial expression to convey a certain feeling and help narrate the story.
- Get to the level of your subject. In particular, photographing children and wildlife from their level often portrays more emotion and feeling than taking the same image from above.
- Contemplate sharing a story set (multiple images from the same place or experience).
- Adding a caption to your image will also help convey the story and provide context for your reviews.
- Consider focusing on what you as the photographer are feeling in that moment, e.g. are you elated? Maybe focus on bright/colorful scenes. Sad? consider capturing the moodiness of a landscape



Improve your photo editing

Applying some basic editing to your images will make a world of difference. There are many different ways and programs used in photo editing, but I am listing the basics and my go-to's below.

PRE-EDITING CONSIDERATIONS

If you are planning to capture images on your camera, be sure to have your settings on RAW rather than JPG. This will allow you to edit your images with much more range and precision.

SUGGESTED SOFTWARE:

PHONE IMAGES

- Adobe Lightroom
- Snapseed
- VSCO
- Instagram

CAMERA IMAGES

- Adobe Lightroom
- Adobe Photoshop
- Capture One

WHICH AREAS TO FOCUS ON:

- Exposure
- Contrast
- White balance
- Saturation/Vibrance
- Color hues
- Applying a vignette
- Clone stamping out any major distractions
- Cropping the image

More resources focused on editing to be released soon!



Practice and have fun!

Photography is an ongoing learning experience. Even the most professional shooters are constantly learning new ways to capture scenes and their preferred editing techniques. Don't lose heart if it doesn't all come together straight away!

... practice really does make perfect!



TRY THESE BEFORE YOUR NEXT TRIP:

- Practice shooting at a local attraction/tourist spot. Try different compositions and push yourself to take a few selfies.
- Challenge yourself to explore a local destination with the intent of telling a story. Put together 10 images that demonstrate what you were feeling in that moment. Share the story set with your friends and family and ask for feedback.

Be sure to enjoy the process, because travel should be lived IN the moment not just when you review the images...





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