

HOW TO MAKE BETTER TRAVEL PHOTOS





INTRO

Our mission at Discovery Photo Tours is to guide our guests around some of the most stunning places in the world, so they can take the most incredible photos of their lives. To do this, we have the privilege of working with talented, experienced and visionary travel photographers operating at the top of their game, who understand what it takes to shoot magically good photos under any conditions.

What would your vacation photos look like if you had their help?

There are two ways to find out. Come on one of our tours (see below for a terrific opportunity to do that) and read the rest of this book, because we've taken some of the most powerful and useful advice from our experts, and we're sharing it all with you today, entirely for free.

There's no catch. This is the real deal - a collection of the tips and secrets that the pros use to take mind-blowingly beautiful photos in the field. All you have to do is read on. But first, here's a really amazing opportunity that's even better than this book.

Join us for the adventure of your life.

This isn't hype. Our tours really are life-changing.



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Sometimes things don't turn out the way you want them to. That doesn't mean you can't still make wonderful images. It all starts with being mindful and present in the moment!

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Find the deeper story in an image by taking time to research and learn about the places you'll be visiting. Doing this will instill a deep sense of respect for the places you visit and the images you'll make.

Ken Kaminesky

More photos are being taken today than ever before and we all want to improve our picture taking skills. Some of the most important photos we end up taking are the ones we capture while on vacation. This is our time to live, laugh, and explore new places with camera in hand. These are the life experiences that we

wish to look back upon for years to come and having the best photos possible make the memories even more vivid and fun. Here are my tips on how you can step up your photography game while on vacation

Enjoy!





Ask Permission

When photographing people (that you randomly come across), ask permission. Not only is it the polite thing to do but perhaps you'll even get someone to feel more comfortable with you and feel more at ease with you. Let's face it, if someone just started to take photos of you at your work or home or just walking down the street, you'd probably not like that very much. The same consideration should be given to anyone else.

The worst anyone can say is no to having their photo taken but if at first, they say no, try buttering them up with a compliment and smile. It is incredible what a laugh, smile, and kind word can do to change someone's mind.



Travel to beautiful places to take stunning photos

One of the best bits of advice can give is to seek out destinations and locations that are breathtakingly beautiful or unique. It is far more likely that you'll end up with a better photo if your subject matter looks awesome, to begin with. You don't have to be at one of the wonders of the world but you should seek out historic sites, buildings, parks, waterfalls, lakes,

mountains, animals, skylines, beaches, vehicles, people, and other fun subject matter that will be near or at your vacation destination be sure to try to do most of your photography early near sunrise or later in the day near sunset for the very prettiest light that will be hitting your subject matter.

Look up

As you walk around in forests, cities, or even inside buildings, look up. You'll often be amazed at what you see. It can be simple things that look cool from the ground level perspective or perhaps you'll see some kind of incredible details that you never saw before or thought about photographing. You'll see things like

cloud formations, airplanes, stars at night, beautiful architecture or even stunning paintings on ceilings.

Hey, the Sistine Chapel would never get much attention if people did not look up once in a while!



Use a Tripod

Use a small but sturdy tripod to help you take crisper, sharper photos with more depth of field. Before thinking you need a better camera or lens, consider getting a sturdy carbon fiber travel tripod. I never go anywhere without one. The tripod will help you frame better, take photos at slow shutter speeds in low light, and allow you to have the camera completely stable so as to avoid camera shake.

The tripod will open up new worlds for you in terms of the subject matter you will be now able to photograph. You'll now be able to photograph at night, dusk, and dawn with no trouble. Photography will become much more fun for you with this versatile tool in your kit.





Negative Space

Sometimes, less really is more. You don't always have to fill your frame with details especially if the details are distracting and not very appealing to the eye. Sometimes the star of the show is the simple little detail that will shine all on its own and by giving it some breathing room, it will look even more special than it really is.

A simple red flower in a field of green, an airplane in a blue sky, someone holding an umbrella walking by a white wall, a bright colored car on a black wet asphalt road photographed from above such as from a balcony, or in this case... a red canoe on a dock on a misty morning.

Lee Varis

The topic of vacation photography is really about “general” photography because vacation photos include just about every genre of photography: landscape, architecture, street, portraits, even still life! So my 5 “tips” relating to photography in general. In order to get great vacation photos, you have to be prepared to take photos—the first step towards that goal is to have a camera with you at all times!

For many people, this is as simple as having your smartphone with you. Just remember that you can take a picture with your phone. So if you forget to bring your camera on a particular outing, you can still take advantage of those photographic moments—pick up that phone and take the shot! The best photos will always be had with a camera dedicated to the purpose, so make sure that the camera is easy to carry with you!





Search out the light

We have all heard that the best time to capture images is during the first and last hours of the day into or from the “blue hour” before the sun rises and after the sun sets.

This is a guideline that can help you discover beautiful light, but it is not an absolute rule. You must train yourself to “see” light as the subject of the photograph.

Observe the light of a scene, direct the light if you can, and control the light with your technique—exposure

is a dynamic blend of shutter speed and f-stop, and you need to be sensitive to the effect of a slow or fast shutter speed, and a large or small aperture. Is depth of field more important? Or is camera shake going to be an issue?

Don't neglect the beauty of nighttime light! Get out with a tripod, and explore your scenes at night—there is much magic to discover.

The Big Picture

When confronted with the “Epic” think wide... a wide-angle lens captures more, but also conveys an impression of being “in the scene.”

If you feel like you don’t have a wide enough lens, think panorama—a multi-shot panorama can be done hand-held, and stitched together in Lightroom or Photoshop.

Photographers often forget about this technique when they are being overwhelmed by the majesty of a scene. A side note: try to place a human subject in the scene to establish a sense of scale for those really epic vistas.



Don't forget the details

Shoot close-ups of everything. An artistic still life can convey a huge amount of information about time & place. It has been said that photography is an art form of “subtraction.”

Find the essence of a particular place by subtracting all non-essential elements until you end up with minimal expression. Then start to back up, and see what you can add back without destroying the essence.

We are often captivated by the big picture, but spend some time exploring smaller scenes, and you will come away with real gems.





People, people, people

People are a big part of any vacation experience—take pictures of people!

Make people your subjects, not just props in a street scene. You can shoot candid, but try your hand at more formal portraits where your subject is looking

into the camera. Some of the best memories from our travel experiences are our experiences with the people of another culture.

Don't pass up the opportunity to capture images of the people!



Point of View

When you are considering taking a photo, first think about your “point of view.” Not every photo has to be taken at eye-level, take a moment and see if a low angle might work better!

If you happen to have a camera with an articulating LCD screen, you can adjust it so you can see the shot

with your hand up over your head, or down low on the ground. Try tilting the camera for a fresh, dynamic look.

Try something different after you’ve grabbed the obvious angle!

Bobbi Lane

Traveling to a new and exotic location can be fun and sometimes a little intimidating. There is so much to see and do, and people to meet, and food to eat, that we can get caught up in just making a quick snapshot. That's great for the memories, but with a few guidelines in mind, your photos can really evoke a sense of place and experience that will have more meaning for you over time. It's a really good idea that upon arrival, just go for a walk, stop, and watch what is happening around you. When you are still,

you can see more clearly the activities and pace of your destination. This taking a deep breath gives you a chance to have more insight and think a bit more about what you would like your photos to convey. A photo has no sense of smell, or hearing or touch or curiosity or wonder. Our photos are memories of our experiencing the world and they are worth paying attention to capturing the essence of a place, a person, or an event.



Sense of Scale

The world is filled with wondrous and marvelous buildings and landscapes. When we are in the moment, we see everything! We take “seeing” for granted and sometimes aren’t aware of the truth of what the camera sees as opposed to what we remember.

A photograph will only capture what you point it at, and it will not convey an impression of everything that happens to us, humans. When encountering

something that is grand, we may forget that the viewer can’t see that in a photo that has nothing to compare with which to compare. Include people in your images for scale and that helps put the location into proper perspective.





Silhouettes

Silhouettes are all about shape, as they are just an outline of the subject with very little or no light. These photos can be very dynamic since the composition is determined by the outline. It's pretty easy to get the silhouette by underexposing. It's a bit tougher to find the right background. In order for a silhouette

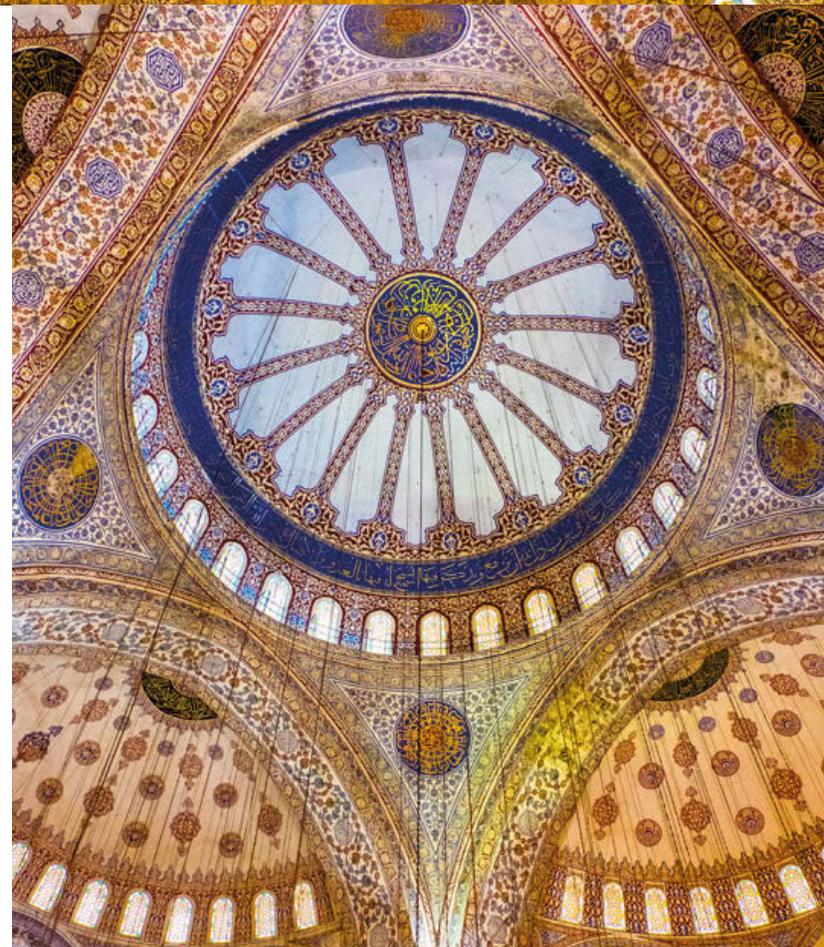
to work, what's behind the subject has to be much lighter in tonality. It's good to have a clear sky, but that may not always work out. If you do have a variety of tones in the background, it's important that all of them are light enough to clearly see the dark shape separated from it.



Horizontal vs Vertical

It's normal for us to hold the camera in a horizontal position. It's natural to us since our eyes are horizontal. It's easy to forget that you can shoot vertical photos! It's important to know that each format has a totally different feeling so depending upon your intent, it's a significant choice. It's obvious that we usually photograph people and buildings as a vertical because they "fit" better.

However, you can really change the dynamics and overall feeling by making a comparison. Horizontals are laying down and peaceful so they are good for landscapes and scenery, but verticals are active and alive and have more movement. Try shooting both ways and then deciding later!



Contrasting Colors

We have a tendency to think just about subject matter when we shoot, but so many elements are involved: composition, lighting, subject, lens choice, shutter speed, depth of field, etc.

Color has a major impact on how we “see” a photograph, not just for the feeling, but also for the visual dynamics. There are advancing and receding colors which do just what they sound like- pop out or fade back. Advancing colors are the warm tones; red, orange and yellow, and they create the illusion

or coming forward. When you look at an image with those colors, these are the ones that your eye sees first. The receding colors are cool; blues, greens and purples, and they have the illusion of going away or fading into the background.

Quite often you see any kind of visual artist use the combination of colors to achieve this illusion. Images are really strong when they have both warm and cool tones used for effect, or in contrast.



Make 'Em Laugh!

One thing I've learned from all my travels are that humans, no matter what nationality, race or religion are pretty much the same everywhere! We all want to be a part of a community, have a family, be safe and healthy, do something useful, and, of course, be happy!

A smile is universal and laughter is the key to communication and understanding. I'm interested in everyone and I walk up to people in any country and ask to photograph them. I only speak English and not everyone that I meet does, but they understand when I am holding a camera and pointing to them and me,

and they see the smile on my face and in my voice, that I would like to make a portrait of them.

Most people agree, and quite often they assume a serious pose and expression. I will shoot a couple of those images, and then move my face from behind the camera and say "ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" Everyone cracks up laughing and you get a great shot! More important is that you can make a great experience for not just you and your photograph but to make a connection and something fun and memorable for the subject.





Reflections

This may seem obvious, but reflections make really pretty pictures! There is a general rule of physics that says “angle of incidence equals angle of reflectance.”

Don't worry, this is easy. Think of looking in a mirror. You stand directly in front and you see yourself. If you step to the side, what you see reflected in the mirror is what is at the same angle that you are looking at the mirror, on the other side.

Basically what this really means is explore your position to get a good reflection. Quite often this means getting low to the ground, but it all depends upon what you are shooting. If you have standing water or a peaceful lake and you have an outstanding set of clouds, you can make an image that is almost surreal and incredibly stunning.

Denise Silva

Denise's interest in photography started when her grandmother would share images from her travels to Egypt and Africa for safari. The evenings watching slideshows set the seed. Thirty-five years later those seeds took root and inspired Denise to embrace photography, more specifically travel photography, and Road Runner Photography Tours was born.

Denise has been recognized one of the Top 200 Women Photographers Who Inspire by Nature Photo Guides, is a featured artist in Breakthrough Photography's

Guide to Night Sky Photography and has had multiple articles published in Extraordinary Vision (EV) Magazine, as well as frequently contributing stories and articles to Fujifilm. Her passion is to share her knowledge of photography, while introducing people to the amazing landscapes, wildlife, and people all over the world.

Denise embraces the idea that everyday above ground is a good one, so get out and enjoy! Join her and her team for your next adventure!





Maximizing Your Travel Photography

What does maximizing your travel photography really mean? To me, primarily it means managing your expectations. When we are planning a trip, we normally do some research upfront and search the Internet to see images of the places we are going to visit. Based on what we find online, we set our hopes and expectations, and start to visualize the images we are going to produce. When we land, it is not unusual to find that what we saw on the Internet is not what we are seeing in person. Here is what I have learned:

- It will rain and snow when I don't want it to.
- There will be no clouds when I want clouds, or it will be foggy when I get up for sunrise.
- There will be wind when I want to do a long exposure.
- The light will not necessarily be ideal when I have the opportunity to be at a particular location.

First and foremost, I always remind myself that I am on an amazing trip, seeing amazing things, and it could always be worse. Do your best to not be disappointed, as that negativity feeds on itself and will be reflected in the images you take. Our images reflect us, so if we are angry, upset or disappointed, our images will carry that energy with them, it's not the type of message we are trying to convey.

How do I handle disappointment? Let's look at each scenario noted above.



Rain

Get out and shoot in the rain! Look for reflections and splashes. Create abstract images on rain-streaked windows. Look for interesting scenes that demonstrate the unique characteristics of a rainy day.

Remember to protect yourself and your gear if it is raining heavily. There are many solutions for protecting your gear, from expensive covers to simple garbage bags with a hole cut out for the lens. Using your lens hood will help as well. Also, I also carry a wicking towel, so that I can dry both the body and lens between shots. If it happens to be very cold out

(think shooting in Alaska in freezing temperatures), you should also carry a dry sack to be used when coming in to a warm building from cold or freezing weather – it will stop your camera from fogging up. If you don't use one, when you go back out into the weather, the foggy will turn to frost inside your lens or camera body and potentially do enough damage to ruin a trip. Dry sacks can be found online and many come with stuff sacks that are no bigger than the palm of your hand. I always have one in my camera bag.

Clouds

Clouds can be a positive or a negative, depending on what you were hoping to capture. Personally, I will always prefer to have clouds in the sky, even if that means grey skies and muted light rather than no clouds. Clouds generally demonstrate dramatic weather events, so definitely get out and shoot. Remember, weather, particularly storms, are on the move. Patience is usually all it takes to get a dramatic image in stormy weather. This image was taken in Paine del Torre, Chile, a location known for its majestic

mountains. On this particular morning, you would never know that a mountain even existed, as the mountain range was totally fogged in. We decided to hang out in a restaurant for a bit, hoping for a break in the clouds. It was only a matter of time before the mountain started to reveal itself in beautiful mottled light and I chose to render the image in black and white, which brings out the texture of the patches of snow and the clouds.



Remember bad weather brings a wealth of photographic opportunities with it. Don't let rain or cloudy skies get you down!

Blue skies or boring skies are more challenging (in my opinion). In my images, I want every part of my image to have character, so a bald blue or an endless grey sky that doesn't have a storm driving it doesn't motivate me. But there are times that that is exactly what nature has provided to me. When this happens, there are a few approaches I employ to still create interesting images.

One approach is to get creative in post-processing and add clouds! When capturing the following image, I was so focused on capturing the shot from the side of a highway (so quick and stealth), I didn't notice

all the telephone wires. When I sat down to process the image, I was disappointed with both the sky and the wires, so I jumped into Adobe Photoshop, and composited another sky from that same area. A much better resulting image.

I always recommend capturing sky shots from wherever you travel or whenever you see a great sky: you can use it to your advantage later if you need to 'create' a better image than the one you actually shot. But it's important to remember that when you substitute skies, the sky has to make sense: consider light direction and brightness and think about location, because it doesn't make sense to put wispy clouds in a shot from a region known for puffy white clouds.





If Photoshop and compositing images isn't your thing, then try emphasizing something other than sky. In the image below, taken on the beach in Cape May, New Jersey, sunrise was uneventful, as there were no clouds to catch the light. So instead I focused on the pier pilings, the wave action and the beautiful reflection created by the slow-moving water.

Change your composition to remove the sky from the image. No one would ever know that this next image was taken on a bright sunny day with nothing but blue sky. I chose to focus on the river, the water, and the sunlight hitting the trees in the background by creating a composition that took the sky out of play.



Wind

Wind can be challenging because it can create camera shake. If you're shooting on a tripod, create some weight on it by hanging your camera bag from the tripod hook, and hold tightly to the tripod legs. Also, never leave your gear unattended on a windy day. One good gust of wind and your gear could be crashing to the ground or over the edge of a cliff. Just make sure you are always within reach and aware of your surroundings. In truly windy weather, you may need to increase your ISO to increase your shutter speed to find an exposure that will suit your needs. For example, while taking this next image in Iceland, the wind was howling across the beach with gusts of 35 meters per second, blowing black sand everywhere. Standing still was a challenge.

For this shot, I positioned myself to block as much of the wind from the camera as I could and increased my shutter speed to help facilitate the image. This is still one of my favorite images because it reminds me of a spaceship! The golden metallic glow of the sunrise on the iceberg is a direct result of the sun reflecting in the black sand stuck on the ice. This wouldn't have occurred had it not been for the crazy wind and my willingness to get out there and work through it. This image also suffers for a lack of sky, as the sunrise simply didn't pop. For that reason, I focused on the iceberg and not the beach scene.

Light is Less than Optimal

All light is good light, so get creative. If the light is bright with deep shadow, try black and white photography, try spot metering for drama or look for shapes, patterns, and textures that can be amplified by the light.

Remember, you are on a trip to a new place, having new experiences, and that is always an opportunity so make the most of it. When all else fails, I go out for a meal and enjoy other aspects of the trip while

planning the next day's attempts, because in every trip there will be those moments when the weather and the light do exactly what you hoped for. When it comes together, it is truly special. The conditions you are given define what your experience will be like. Capture it with as much respect as you would an epic sunset and your images will tell the tale of your incredible trip!



Mio Monasch

I got my first camera as a six year old from my grandfather, a reporter and lifetime sailor. He took me sailing, to see the Orcas in the San Juan Islands. After an afternoon spent screaming with delight at the sight of each dorsal fin and wide-eyed wonder at the power of each breach, I discovered that I had forgotten to put film in the camera. Off to a good start.

Returning to Seattle in 2013, I began to reconnect with wilderness and as I did, I quickly felt inspired to pick up a camera and make my best attempts towards documenting my experiences.

As an art form, photography is humbling. The daily perspectives and lessons are immense. From seeking

details in the ordinary to attempting to understand the fortunes this planet creates, I often feel that photography creates a challenge that can never be fully accomplished; and to me, this is the source of the ultimate magic.

I have been fortunate to work with an array of brands and agencies around the world and continue immersing myself in telling stories focused on impact.

At the end of the day, my goal is to help anyone reimagine their perspective on this planet; to appreciate any single element of their day with newfound wonder.”





Travel with Respect: Research, Location, Honor

Photographing anything, in my opinion, should come from a perspective of wonder, love, and thus research, honor, and respect. To me, the finest photographs capture a special moment, whether that be a natural moment of wonder, like a sunset; a moment of life, like an emotion or a detail; or something found in daily life that we often pass right by without appreciation.

The current world seems to be driven by high level imagery, and far too often, we as photographers get beyond carried away in the constant chase to capture the next image that will break the internet. At what cost?

In photography, we have the unique opportunity to document that which is special to us; that

moment or detail that we wish to honor by creating something timeless. I believe that each image should be accompanied by and captured with an amount of respect; that each photograph taken should rightfully honor the subject with what is necessary and truly respectful.

There is a strategy, I believe, to capturing the best shot of the spaces and the world without negative impacts and with respect. My reverence for landscape and adventure/lifestyle photography will often be focused through this lens.

Research

Before we go anywhere, research and preparation are key, especially when travel is involved. Beyond the obvious things like making sure we have memory cards, a charged battery, and that oft misplaced tripod mounting plate all packed into the bag, I recommend running through a variety of considerations, including the actual location, weather forecasts, consulting Google Earth for an understanding of natural light, and preparing a shot list. It's also important to consider some emotional planning; what do we want to capture, what story is desired, how and when can this can be accomplished, what are the backup plans, and how will we enjoy our time, regardless of what happens while there?

In most regions, being outdoors can bring varying and rapidly changing weather scenarios. It is important to check the weather forecast, understand how as weather changes through an environment, we might be able to shoot differently, and before we leave, have a plan for what happens when nothing we planned or researched actually happens. Sometimes that means it rains on a forecasted sunny day, and while this might not work for an intended photograph, these moments can provide the opportunity to enjoy the unexpected, take photographs of droplets on a leaf, instead of the sunset we had meticulously planned to see on a beautiful mountain range.

The above photograph was taken on a sunrise, with zero plan. After a trip to an often heavily trafficked

campsite in the backcountry, our plan was to arrive by mid-day, hike up by mid-afternoon, setup camp, review our shot list and test different focal lengths to ensure that we were prepared for sunset as the forecast promised a clear day and the angle of a sunset on the peaks behind our campsite is perfect during the time of year we were camping. All of this was a plan, each element seemed easy. Until none of it happened. Thankfully, we had the focus on the experience first, and the photographs second. After delays, traffic, slower hiking, and troubles finding an accessible campsite, we ended up watching the sun set as we finished making camp. Seems like a bummer huh? We focused on the next day, pushed our morning back by an hour and, after packing up early, we simply took in the sunrise before hiking back down. This resulted in the photograph which, while being outside of anything original planned, became something with a more personal connection and emotion than anything that could have been accomplished by following through on a perfect plan.

While all elements of planning are important, before we leave the house to ensure we have a successful, and enjoyable experience, it is important to remember that these plans don't always go perfectly, and that with a focus on emotional planning and commitment to experience, often times this can salvage everything when things get off-plan.





Location Planning

Location scouting in photography is everything, and there are endless ways to go about it, some less time consuming than others. While this seems obvious, a simple internet image search provides good visuals for what to expect, and there is often so much more to review! Beyond simply visiting a location prior to the actual day of adventure, I recommend using trail maps, blogs, and additional resources such as ranger stations, and visitor centers. Ask questions at local businesses such as an outdoor retailer or even the local bar; especially if you're in an adventurous part of the world that may be filled with other travelers, explorers, and photographers. Think about all areas that you want to cover. What type of photography gear do I need, what lenses are imperative to carry, which ones should I leave at home? Do I need my tripod? What is the trail condition? What water availability exists, or do I need to carry my own? How long will our journey take, accounting for multiple stops to

take it all in along the way if we want to arrive at a certain area to catch the prime lighting? What types of permits are needed, what things should we look for, what have other individuals enjoyed and taken the time to share about this place?

For the above photograph, online information was extremely limited. Ranger information was limited. All that could be planned was either by word of mouth, or Google Earth. I searched using the coordinates of the lake, and then looked at the projections for how the light would move across the peaks during sunrise. Simply from this tool, I knew the location would work. And so we set out. I couldn't tell if the angles would be right for the photographs I wanted, or easily accessible once we reached the lake, but, with the use of a simple tool, I knew there was something special to be explored.

Honoring the Space

Each space is different. Each space has a unique way of holding light and providing us with unique experiences. Few things in photography make me happier than being able to take it all in, prior to even taking my camera out of the bag. Listen, observe, find the moments the movement, the details that you enjoy and want to appreciate.

When traveling, especially in the fragile outdoors, there are quite a few things to observe and uphold in order to fully honor a location. Understand LNT (Leave No Trace) guidelines in nature, learn about your environmental impact when camping, understand wildlife guidelines, realize that there are many ways to still create incredible imagery without causing negative effects to your surroundings. Learn how the tools you have at hand, paired with an understanding of honor and respect to a location, can still allow you to create images of wonder, whether that be through different composition, editing, and use of your tools.

This is especially important when in fragile wilderness environments or areas that are home to wildlife, both

for our safety as visitors and for their future ability to remain wild. At the park where this photograph was taken, there was an easily accessible list of rules and guidelines to be mindful of when photographing the foxes. This isn't always the case, so it's important to seek these details as a part of the planning process, prior to visiting any environment. Just a few hundred feet from where this photograph was taken, signs were readily visible, as well as throughout the park, reminding visitors to never approach a fox within 75 feet, to never feed the animals, and that, as foxes can't read, it was the responsibility of humans to slowly back up, if ever approached by the animals. Having the correct gear as a part of my planning, made the image possible, as I had a long range lens, a teleconverter, tripod to mount the heavy setup, and understood that even if the subject looked small through the viewfinder, I would be able to crop in. The image you see is about just 30% of the original image size, due to cropping, and because of planning I was able to know that I my disruption to the young lives of my subjects was kept at minimum.





Angles and Perspective

When arriving on location, I often realize that my original shot list may not be entirely possible if I believe in truly honoring a space. Often the cliff edge or the edge of a lake I plan to position my subject on is inaccessible without damaging fragile plant growth. When this happens, it all comes down to perspective; sometimes this means using a different lens or reviewing the subject and scene from different angles to achieve my desired backdrop. Other times this means altering the foreground, using plants, a building, or elements of my subject as foreground.

Play with different depths of field, because when a certain element of the originally desired image becomes undesirable because of a lack of access, we can hide these undesirable elements behind our subject or a foreground object to allow the viewer to focus on what was important to us about the image. And when all else fails, understanding your post processing workflow can be paramount when in the field, because when we understand what we can remove in post

processing, we further understand what elements we need to remove when shooting, versus what elements can still exist in the original image.

For the above image, my original plan was to shoot the pink sunrise glow on the mountain shown in the background, with a tent with a human subject within it, in my foreground. In my head, and through my planning process, I anticipated doing so with a long-range lens, from a medium distance from the tent, to build a strong scale of the mountain. When I arrived at the top, I realized that due to a cliff right behind my tent, I wouldn't be able to get as far away as I wanted in order to build my desired effect. To make things more challenging, clouds moved in overnight, blocking any direct sunlight, during sunrise, on the mountain itself. As my goal was to show elements of the tent, with a human subject in front of this mountain, I made the decision to try and tell the story, with a wide angle lens instead, from inside the tent itself.



Travel for Solace

With all of our planning, it can be very easy to forget why so many of us travel in the first place. It should be enjoyable. It should teach us something and give us some sort of perspective we are searching for to bring home to our normal lives. We're often chasing relaxation, wonder, and the opportunity to learn further from the world around us, whether that be in landscape or lifestyle photography, we want to take the time to observe, to listen and to fully be able to make creative decisions that tell the story of what is special to us. When I travel with others, I love remembering to take time to myself, to separate from the group and watch my travel companions taking things in. To capture these moments of solace is to tell the story of travel, of why we go through so many pains to explore far corners of the world, to find the moments and experiences we'll be remember forever. It's also important to remember in these moments:

whether a photograph of these experiences exists or not, if we're out living and learning, we're gaining something valuable. Many times plans go awry and the above photograph is no different. A night spent on hard rock ground, with unrelenting frigid winds tearing our tents around us was a brutal experience for most of us, though we were able to laugh about it as it happened. And as we separated to find our own perspectives at sunrise, I looked back to see this photograph in real life. A moment of stillness and warmth, thanks to a new day. At the end of it all, the thought and energy towards location planning, gear checking, focusing on the craft of how one composes and perfects an image, all of it just seems to melt away in the moments when we remember why we travel in the first place, and somehow, those are the moments where the meaningful photographs just seem to take themselves.



Adventure Awaits!

Exceeding expectations is our mission at Discovery Photo Tours. It's right there in the name: if you're given exactly what you expect, it's not a discovery, surely?

We work hard to ensure everything is exceptional, from activities that give you a deeper understanding of the place you're photographing, delicious international cuisine, to access to spectacular locations at exactly the right time. We've spent years nurturing relationships with the experts in the destinations we travel to and scouting the most jaw-droppingly photogenic sights. Our expert local guides are passionate about their country's heritage and eager to share the best of it with you.

We make sure everything comes together to create a seamlessly awesome experience, filled with incredible moments that will remain in your heart and soul forever.



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Photo © Daniel R. Westergren | FUJIFILM X-T3 Digital Camera with FUJINON XF16-55mmF2.8 R LM WR at 1/250sec at f/2.8, ISO 400
Daniel R. Westergren is a Fujifilm compensated professional photographer.

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