

Through The Lens

*A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts.
After the click of your camera, you're only half done!*

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Shooting near water

by Lynda Buske

I'm sure many of us will spend time near Canada's lakes, rivers or maybe even oceans this summer and of course there will be many photogenic scenes. Our eyes tend to take in and process the great expanse of a waterside scene but unfortunately, our cameras do not. Photos in these locales often end up with too much sky, sand and/or water to be interesting compositions and pleasing to the eye.

Here are five useful tips:

- 1) Keep your image straight. It is really noticeable when a photo with a water horizon (which forms a distinct line) is crooked.
- 2) Find some foreground to break up the vastness of sand, water or sky without diminishing the impact or dramatic effect. This could be done with animate (people, birds) or inanimate (driftwood, chair) objects. It can also create a layering effect by having foreground, middle ground and background.



- 3) Shoot left or right at water's edge rather than straight out towards the water. There may be an interesting curve to the beach which gives it a pleasing shape while not detracting from the beauty of the water.



- 4) Add objects of interest when shooting a sunrise or sunset at water's edge. This could be a person, boat, bench, or even some dune grasses. This prevents your image from simply being an expanse of orange or red tones. If it is a single object of interest, keep in mind the rule of thirds. (<https://opcug.ca/Photography/TipsForTravelPhotography.pdf>) Another tip is to arrive at least 20 minutes before the sun comes up or stay twenty minutes after the sun goes down. Often, this is when the colours in the sky are most intense.



- 5) Experiment with longer exposure times to soften the movement of water at the ocean side or when photographing waterfalls. This can make a pleasing dreamy effect. For these types of shots, it is best to use a tripod (or a rock or hood of a car) so you can set your shutter speed between a 1/3 sec and one second in duration without any movement in the still parts of the photo such as rocks or trees. These need to stay sharp.

