

Tips for travel photography

by Lynda Buske

Due to the interests of this group, I tend to pass on photography information that is technical in nature, either adjustments within the camera or post processing on your PC. However, now that we can travel at least within our own province, I decided to write about my first love – vacation photography! Setting aside the odd stellar single image I may get while on holidays, my primary aim of a good set of travel photos is to tell a story and perhaps even inspire my audience to visit the same locale someday. When I'm shooting, I purposely think about what travel brochure pics look like. They want to tell enough of the story in a few images to entice you to buy a ticket.

The following are a few guidelines that are good starting points that frequently work well:

Tip 1: Use the rule of thirds for good composition when placing objects of interest. There may actually be a grid on your camera to help you achieve this but if not, you will probably be able to find this grid when you are back home and cropping your pics. Place objects of interest at the intersection points, not the centre (top picture).

Tip 2: Use foreground liberally to add context or framing for a three-dimensional effect. Make the viewer feel like they are stepping into your photo and enjoying the scene from your perspective. For me, a travel photo that can tell a small story just by itself is ideal. This is particularly useful in open areas of sky and water like beaches, lakes and sunsets. The odd pic with negative space is fine but for the most part, try to limit big empty spaces in your picture (second picture).

Tip 3: Don't avoid people. People add richness and often size context. While you may not want huge crowds, get to a place early or be the last one on the bus so you can selectively add people for human interest. With most of the western world dressing in a similar fashion, it is often difficult (especially from behind) to tell a tourist from a local. Your best bet, if you want the illusion of a local, is to look for young people who aren't carrying cameras (third picture).

Tip 4: Include a variety of photo types. Even if landscapes are your specialty, include some action shots, food, people, landscape, closeup details, flowers, birds, boats, buildings, etc. Shoot from lower down or from higher up or from behind a tree or fence to add variety (bottom picture).

Tip 5: Review your pics in a shady area before leaving a tourist site. Zoom in close to make sure focus is in the right spot and there hasn't been too much camera motion. I get back to the bus 10 mins early so if I have messed up a photo, there is a chance I can run out and quickly reshoot it.

