

Rainy Day Photos

by Lynda Buske

Now that spring has arrived, we will no doubt experience plenty of rainy days. Many of us pray for fair weather when travelling or hosting outdoor events with friends and family. Certainly, it puts everyone in a better mood but shooting into the sun has people backlit and having the sun behind has people squinting. Finding a shady spot, in an attractive setting, with even light is not always easy. Overcast skies or light rain can be a photographer's dream. This is primarily because the light is so even but as well, it gives you infinite options for positioning people or choosing multiple viewpoints for a landscape.

For general nature photography, I love a rainy day. It brings out the colours of vegetation and birds don't look like silhouettes when I get them back onto my computer. You don't have to worry about shadows or high contrast and you can shoot from any angle. For the effect of silky water (see below), you need a long exposure time, something that is easier to accomplish on a cloudy or rainy day. In Iceland, we encountered many sunny days with lots of reflected light from the massive waterfalls. It was pleasant for walking but I had little success achieving long exposures, even with the smallest aperture of my DSLR and a 4-stop neutral density filter! I would have preferred a sunless day.

Rain also gives you larger drops on plants or spider webs than dew does and it lasts longer before evaporating. With a fast shutter speed, you can even capture the raindrops as they fall. Keep your eye open for opportunities that arise after rainfall like reflections of famous buildings or statues in nearby puddles. Get a shot none of your fair-weather friends has!

A very light rain should not damage your camera, although it is smart to carry a microfiber cloth in your camera bag plus a lens cloth (or two) to wipe your lens. I also use those free hotel shower caps to cover my lens. If it starts to rain heavily, I tuck my camera into my bag or under my coat after every shot.

So bring on the April showers...I'll be ready!

[Pics below and next page]



