

## Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

# COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE: PREPARING FOR YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

### How To: Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

Are you ready to take your landscape photography skills to the next level? Attending a landscape photography workshop can be an incredibly rewarding experience, providing you with the opportunity to learn from experts, explore stunning locations, and immerse yourself in the beauty of nature. However, proper preparation is key to ensuring a successful and enjoyable workshop.

This comprehensive guide on preparing for your photography workshop will walk you through the essential steps, from protecting your gear to setting clear learning objectives. Let's dive in! Your workshop will have been carefully planned for locations and optimal timing to give you the best chance of an educational, fun and rewarding experience.

Now it's your turn to prepare your side of the experience to ensure you also make the most of the workshop.



*Preparing For Your Photography Workshop*

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### Part One - Pre-Trip Preparation

#### 1. Insurance: Protecting Your Gear and You

Before embarking on your photography workshop or trip, consider obtaining insurance to protect your gear and experiences. Accidents and unforeseen circumstances can happen, and having insurance coverage can provide peace of mind.

- Look for policies offering camera equipment coverage, liability, and trip cancellations. Discuss your insurance needs with a reputable provider to ensure you are adequately protected.
- In addition, it's essential to have emergency contact information readily available. Write down emergency contact names and numbers and include any critical medical conditions. Place this information in a sealed "emergency" envelope inside your camera bag. This simple step can be a lifesaver in case of an emergency.

#### 2. Fitness: Assess Your Capabilities

Before diving into the world of landscape photography workshops, it's crucial to assess your fitness capabilities. The physical demands of workshops can vary, from easy walks on even terrain to more challenging hikes in rugged landscapes. To ensure that you can fully participate and enjoy the experience, it's essential to be honest with yourself about your current physical abilities. This will help you determine if you need to train or make any necessary preparations before the workshop.

While instructors are available to answer your questions and offer guidance, it ultimately falls on you to ensure that you are up to the challenges of the workshop.

**All our workshops are rated for fitness and are shown on the workshop details page on the website:**

1. **Fitness level Required - Easy:** This trip is rated as easy, meaning that most people should comfortably be able to deal with the short walks (10-15mins) and occasional steps or gradients involved and on your feet for the duration of the workshop.
2. **Fitness level Required - Easy - Moderate:** This trip is rated as easy to moderate, meaning that most people with average fitness should comfortably be able to deal with the short walks (15-30mins) and occasional steps or gradients involved.
3. **Fitness level Required – Moderate:** This trip is rated as moderate, meaning that most people with average fitness should be able to deal with up to 30min walks and regular steps and gradients involved.
4. **Fitness level Required - Moderate – Hard:** This trip is rated as moderate to hard, meaning that most people with average fitness should be able to deal with longer walks (30-40mins) and frequent steps and gradients involved.
5. **Fitness level Required - Hard:** This trip is rated as hard, meaning that most people with average fitness should be able to deal with longer walks (30-60mins) and frequent steps and gradients involved.

## Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

### 3. Travel: Determine the Travel Arrangements

As part of your photography workshop preparation, confirming the travel arrangements with your instructor or workshop organiser is essential.

- **Find out if transportation is provided** to the capture locations or if you need to arrange your own. If you are responsible for transportation, ensure that your vehicle is suitable for narrow lanes, limited parking, and sometimes off-road locations, in case they are part of the itinerary. You can make the necessary arrangements and eliminate potential logistical challenges by clarifying these details.

### 4. Preparation: Arriving Ready for Success

Arriving at your photography workshop or trip prepared and in the right mindset is crucial for a productive learning experience. Here are a few tips to help you arrive ready for success:

- **Plan Your Travel Time:** Plan your travel time to avoid unnecessary stress. Aim to arrive at least 15-20 minutes early, allowing yourself ample time to settle in and mentally transition from your journey to the learning environment.
- **Familiarise Yourself with the Itinerary:** Review the workshop itinerary to understand the schedule and locations you will visit. This will help you mentally prepare and ensure you have the equipment and supplies for each location.
- **Check Your Gear:** Conduct a thorough gear check before leaving for the workshop. Ensure that your camera, lenses, batteries, memory cards, and other essential equipment are in working order and ready to be used.
- **Pack Accordingly:** Depending on the workshop location and duration, you may need to pack additional items such as rain gear, extra layers of clothing, or specialised equipment. Be sure to check any specific packing recommendations provided by your instructor.
- **Bring an Open Mind:** Approach the workshop with an open mind and a willingness to learn. Be receptive to feedback and guidance from your instructor and fellow participants. Embrace the opportunity to expand your knowledge and skills.

### 5. Camera Settings: Know how I'll teach you the why.

Losing precious time in the field due to struggles with camera settings can be detrimental to your photography journey. Missing out on crucial shots and being preoccupied with figuring out how to adjust your camera settings can hinder your progress. That's why it's essential to have a solid grasp of various functions and know how to change them even if you don't know why and when at this stage. During our workshops, you will be given assistance and training on why and when to use these functions.

- Transitioning from multipoint or zonal **focus areas** to a single point, both in the viewfinder and live view screen.
- Utilising **Aperture and Shutter Priority modes** effectively while making necessary adjustments such as exposure compensation.
- Mastering the art of **selecting the appropriate aperture, shutter speed, and ISO** for optimal results.
- Taking advantage of features like **live view histogram or exposure metering** (if available) for precise exposure control.

## Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

- Enhancing composition by utilising **electronic level/virtual horizon** along with gridlines in live view mode.
- Analysing **image playback using histograms** for accurate assessment during post-processing stages.
- Adapting **white balance** presets or creating custom white balance configurations depending on lighting conditions.
- Employing **self-timers** (2, 5, or 10 seconds) as an effective tool against camera shake during long exposures or self-portraits.
- Setting **auto-bracketing** functionality (AEB) for taking multiple exposures (3 or 5) at different stop intervals – ideal for high dynamic range situations.
- Exploiting features like **live view zoom-in** capability for achieving pinpoint focus accuracy.

### 6. Research: Visualisation is Key

One of the most powerful tools in a photographer's arsenal is the ability to visualise the shots they hope to capture. During your photography workshop preparation, take the time to plan the area and envision the images you want to create.

- Landscape photography captures the natural environment's essence and evokes the viewer's emotions. To achieve this, three crucial components are required:
  - **identifying an exceptional location,**
  - **being present during optimal conditions,**
  - **and patiently waiting for the perfect moment when the lighting and surroundings align harmoniously.**
- By visualising your shots ahead of time, you can better prepare yourself to capture those breathtaking images.

### 7. Open-Minded: Be Open to New Experiences

Stepping outside your comfort zone is often the catalyst for incredible growth and the creation of your best work.

- **Embracing new experiences** during landscape photography workshops can push you beyond your creative boundaries and help you discover new techniques and perspectives.
- While it may be daunting at first, **getting comfortable with trying new things** will open up a world of possibilities and potential for remarkable photographs.
- As you delve into your photography workshop preparation, **embrace the unfamiliar and be open** to the transformative power of new experiences.

### 8. Prepare: Your Learning Objectives

To make the most of your photography workshop, thinking and preparing for your photography workshop outcomes are essential: Have clear learning objectives.

- **What specific skills or techniques do you want to improve?**
- **What aspects of landscape photography do you want to explore further?** By identifying your learning objectives, you can focus your attention and make the most of the educational opportunities provided during the workshop.
- **Please write down your objectives and bring them to the workshop,** ready to discuss and seek guidance from your instructor. This will help you stay focused and ensure you come away from the experience with tangible improvements in your photography skills.

## Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

### 9. On the day: Continuously Evolving as a Photographer

Attending a photography workshop or trip is just the beginning of your journey as a photographer. It's essential to recognise that learning and growth are lifelong pursuits. Having taken time meticulously planning and preparing for your photography workshop, it's important to maximise your time on the event with a mixture of problem-solving yourself and also using the workshop resources: Here are a few ways to continue evolving and expanding your skills beyond the workshop:

- **Ask your workshop tutor for advice:** Seek help with camera settings, equipment, techniques and composition.
  - **Seek Feedback:** Ask your workshop tutor for feedback on images taken, share your work with others, and seek ideas from trusted mentors or peers. Constructive criticism can help you identify areas for improvement and refine your skills.
  - **Experiment and Innovate:** Don't be afraid to experiment with different styles, techniques, and equipment. Embrace innovation and find your unique voice as a photographer.
  - **Stay close:** to the group and workshop leader so you can easily exchange ideas, seek help and gain input.
  - **Adapt to new challenges:** Problem-solving, whether technical or creative, is part of your enjoyment and evolution as a photographer.
  - **Spend enough time on a subject:** and frame to work out how to solve the puzzle and share your thinking with the workshop leader for other suggestions.
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## Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

### Part Two - Have the Right Equipment and Gear.

Preparing for your photography workshop means knowing you have the right camera equipment and other gear to enable you to concentrate and get the most from your workshop. Part two of this comprehensive guide to preparing for your landscape photography workshop answers some of the most frequent scenarios, and questions asked.

#### 10. Essential Equipment: Required for Workshops.

This is not an exhaustive or must-have list of items to attend and participate in our landscape photography workshops. However, you will find that most seasoned landscape photographers will all have the majority of these items. If you are new to landscape photography and still acquiring equipment, don't fret just yet; usually, many items can be hired, loaned or just demonstrated on the workshop. Ask your workshop organiser if in doubt. I have included links where appropriate for you to purchase or hire items.

- **Sturdy Tripod** – strong and light. Some workshop tours can provide loans of tripods for the duration of the workshop. Check with your workshop organiser. - [My Recommendations](#)
- **Tripod Head Camera/Lens Plates** – You'll need tripod plates for all your cameras and telephoto lenses (with collars) and the tools required to install and remove them. [Amazon](#)
- **Wired Remote Release Trigger** – avoids using self-timer function but is essential for Bulb Mode when doing long exposures. They are inexpensive and **a worthwhile purchase**. [Amazon](#)
- **Batteries** – bring plenty of batteries for your cameras and chargers as well. I recommend **at least two batteries a day** if your trip involves being out for 8hrs or more, and if you are based at locations with limited electric power, you will want to get a power bank to recharge your batteries and bring your charger with you.
- **Lenses** – for most landscape workshops, a wide-angle zoom (16-35, 17-35, 17-40), a general-purpose zoom lens (like 24-70 or 24-105), and a medium telephoto zoom (like 70-200) are perfect. There is also the option to [hire a lens](#) or lenses for your trip from various providers these days.
- **Filters** – a circular polarizer (for cutting reflections) and a few ND filters (for long exposures) are helpful. For **ND filters**, bring a 3- or 6-stop, and a 10-stop. My workshop tours include a limited set of loan of filters for you to try. My Recommended Filters are [Lee](#) and [Kase](#).
- **Memory Cards** – have at least two of these in case of malfunction or for multi-day trips where you can't download images to a storage device! [My recommended Cards](#)
- **Lens Cleaning Cloth** – dry cloths and wet wipes. (Lots of them) [My recommendations](#)
- **Camera Rain Cover** – inexpensive ones available from [Amazon](#) / or just use large polythene sandwich/freezer bags.
- **Backpack** – bring a comfortable camera backpack for carrying all your gear. My current bag is the [Wandr, roll-top](#) so can I can stuff extra clothing and gear into it.
- **Kneeling Mat** – Ideal for kneeling in wet/muddy conditions for low shots but also useful for a seat cushion to take a rest. [Amazon](#)
- **Camera Manual** – get the PDF version and store it on your smartphone.

## Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

- **Boots/Shoes** – wear sturdy hiking boots or hiking shoes appropriate for the tour that are broken in – this is not the time for a new pair of shoes.
- **Water Bottle** – essential to have water and reduce our plastics use.
- **Laptop/Tablet** – We will use Lightroom Classic for post-production and image reviews on a multi-day trip. This is not a pre-requisite, but it's good to view the images you have taken that day on a larger screen and get some feedback.

### 11. Clothing: Weather Apparel

Proper clothing on an outdoor workshop is crucial to help maintain your focus and comfort.

- It is advisable to **avoid excessive packing**, but it is always wise to anticipate colder, windier, and wetter weather conditions than expected.
- Should you consider an **additional layer**? Absolutely. Being prepared for unforeseen circumstances is essential. Have lightweight tops that are small enough to fit in your bag and put on if needed without sacrificing valuable space for other items.
- Ensure that your **boots** are properly fitted and have been broken in. Waterproof boots are highly recommended. A comfortable pair of walking shoes will also suffice.
- **Sunscreen and bug repellent** should not be overlooked; when you need them, you do need them!
- A wide-brimmed **hat** can be advantageous as it allows for better visibility of your camera's LCD screen.
- For pre-sunrise and night photography, a **headlamp** is indispensable.
- Rain **jackets, beanie hats, neck gaiter (scarf), and gloves** should definitely be packed; there will come a time when these items are necessary.
- Waterproof boots or **overshoes** should not be forgotten either; they become crucial when the situation calls for them!

### 12. Preparing your gear: Organize and pack efficiently

Take the time to organise and pack your equipment efficiently. Usually, it's best to split between two bags. Your day pack, camera, lenses etc. and your overnight pack, clothing, chargers, toiletries etc.

- Take the time to review the recommended gear list for your specific tour, consult with the workshop organiser, and ask any questions you may have. This will help ensure that you neither over-pack nor under-pack
- When packing your gear, ensure your go-to lens is easily accessible and ready to use. Consider keeping it attached to the camera body for quick and convenient access.
- Additionally, take a moment to clean both your lenses and sensors. If you are a Canon/Nikon professional services member, it might be worth considering a maintenance/cleaning check before embarking on your trip.
- Double-check that you have all the necessary cords, adapters, and other accessories needed during the tour. To maximise efficiency while out in the field or back at the hotel/residence, distribute these items between your camera bag and overnight bag.
- Opt for soft-sided luggage when packing. It tends to fit better in vehicles compared to complex plastic cases.

If in any doubt, always check with your workshop organizer. Have a great workshop! 😊

# Preparing for Your Photography Workshop

## Your Notes:

**My Objective: Is to Improve Your Photography**

**“A good teacher gives you a gift for the rest of your life.”**

That doesn't mean “trophy” images – it's the means to create images you like.

**I aim to.**

**Provide you with an educational, fun, safe, well organised experience.**

1. Help you **improve your camera craft** – settings and use of functions.
2. Help you **use your equipment more effectively** – lenses, tripods, filters etc.
3. Help you **improve your creative thinking** and composition.
4. Help you **develop an approach** to improving your landscape photography.

| Camera            | Equipment           | Creativity      |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Aperture, SS, ISO | Tripod              | Observation     |
| Focusing          | Lenses              | Light           |
| Metering          | Remote Release      | Framing         |
| Histogram         | Filters - Polariser | Narrative       |
| Bracketing        | Filters - NDs       | Execution       |
| White Balance     | Filters - Grads     | Experimentation |