

I don't know about you, but we can certainly use a vacation! The "R&R" is much needed, and we can enjoy making pictures while we relax. So, let's talk about travel photography.

Some of you will be traveling by car, or bus, or by plane or cruise ship. The farther away you travel, the more susceptible your film is to security check damage. Regardless of what they tell you at the airport, the radiation from the security machines does expose your film. What the signs should say is "the radiation emitted from our security machines will not legally affect photographic or X-ray film". This would be technically correct as far as the laws of our government, but not as far as the laws of physics. In our stores, we have examples of airport radiation damage. As bombs get more and more sophisticated, security techniques also do, with our poor film the loser.

We have noticed more damage coming from overseas flights than domestic flights. Not all security equipment is maintained and calibrated as they should be, and some airports are apparently more lackadaisical than others. In Seoul, South Korea, we have had our luggage and carry on X-rayed upon arrival, as well as departure. The same is true of embarkation points for cruise ships. Their regulations are the same as airports. Here are some links to other sources of information about security and film.

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/980608/8sya.htm>

<http://www.simacorp.com/xrayinfo.htm>

<http://www.the-global-registry.com/film.cfm>

<http://www.f-stop.org>

I tend to be very conservative about my pictures. I will not place them in checked luggage even in a lead container. Perhaps I'm paranoid, but these images are not replaceable. I NEVER fly with film of any speed without an X-ray repellent bag.

What film to take? Another interesting question. I usually take a mixture of 100 and 200 speed slide films, and 200, 400 and 800 speed print films. All the recent technology in film is at the higher, more sensitive end, and these films are greatly improved over last year's. Don't be afraid to try them. This year I plan to take a digital camera for the first time. I will take a few mid sized memory cards instead of just one large one. I don't want the equivalent of a 500-exposure roll of film. Speaking of film exposures, I've told you that Kodak has done away with most 36-exposure rolls, and is forcing us to 24s or another brand. I prefer 24 exposure

rolls for prints, because I can have the speed I want in the camera, instead of finishing up a roll in a mismatch of lighting and film sensitivity.

Here are some tips regarding travel photography that I've had to learn through the years:

Never go out shooting without a flash. It is so handy outdoors for fill in flash, stop action photography (where it can freeze the effects of the wind in situations like flower photos) as well as when shooting subjects with the sun at their backs.

Concentrate on keeping the horizon level and out of the center of your pictures.

Take a picture with the date imprinted each day (so that years from now you'll know where you were, etc.) and then turn the date feature off.

If you have an SLR camera, take a polarizing filter with you. It can make an average picture exciting, and a good shot even better. If you're not sure what this filter does, stop in and we can show you examples.

If you're going to a beach, or in a small boat, take a single use camera with you. The beach will destroy your good camera, and NO warranty will cover sand and salt damage.

Decide in advance whether you want to take a picture of your loved one(s) in front of a great scene, or whether you want the scene with your loved one(s) in it. These are two very different pictures. Capture the one you want.

Take extra batteries. Take more than you think you'll need. They are like fuses – they go dead at the worst times and places, and are too inexpensive not to have spares handy.

Have something identifiable on your equipment, a piece of colored ribbon, a bright camera strap, a colored sticker or the like so that you can easily identify what is yours.

Avoid black cases! I know many of you like them, but they will cook your film, cook your camera, look the same as everyone else's, and be impossible to follow in a crowd if it is "borrowed" by an unknown party.

Speaking of cases, don't carry your passport in your camera case. Why take the chance of losing both at one time. Also, have an extra set of passport pictures taken before you leave. Should your passport disappear, this can shave days off getting a replacement from the U.S. Embassy.

Remember that you can rotate your camera. If your subject is something that goes up and down (like a palm tree, or a person standing), take a vertical picture. You'll get better composition as well as being able to get closer to your subject and the larger image size that accompanies that distance.

Have your film processed promptly upon your return. Don't skimp on quality here. You've spent a lot of hard earned money on this vacation. This is not the time or the place to try to save a couple of dollars. You didn't take the pictures with inferior processing in mind.

Please remember to have a good time, and that picture taking is fun.
Travel with peace of mind – bring your camera equipment in for a free check up before you leave.

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www.photosummit.com