

Traveling Cameras

Each autumn customers and other friends return to us and share their vacation photos. Some are very good, many not so much. Just by spending a few minutes of preparation can yield much better photos. We present some food for thought about coming home with better photos

(To use this guide, the colored bullets denote what type of digital camera this particular advice is for:

- =point and shoot
- =bridge type cameras
- =SLR, other interchangeable lens cameras and some higher end point & shoot cameras)

●●● Take one or more extra battery(ies). We've spent years trying to train batteries to only fail at the right times, but we admit to being abject failures at doing this. Consider packing a "GO!" charger, which can recharge your camera, camcorder, phone, tablet or other device which can be charged via USB.

●●● Memory cards are small, lightweight and inexpensive - especially when compared to film. Some people prefer huge capacity cards so they never run out of space while other folks like a few smaller cards so that if something happens to one of them all is not lost.

If you shoot video, however, you'll need the larger cards.

●●● Cameras are precision instruments and need to be kept clean, dry and free of impact. A case of some type is essential! If you have an SLR with accessory lenses, you'll need a gadget bag as well.

(Ladies - a purse is a good protective case for your camera AS LONG AS NOTHING ELSE IS IN YOUR PURSE AT THE TIME.) A crack in a LCD panel on the camera's back will make it beyond economical repair! A small, non-chemically treated micro-fiber cloth will probably be all you'll need to keep your camera clean. Also invest in a screen protector.

●● Leonardo DaVinci was a very talented artist. We can be quite certain that he never held his canvas in one hand and used a paintbrush in his other hand. He used a sturdy stand to hold the canvas. Even a flimsy easel will hold a canvas steady for longer than you can by hand. A photograph, likewise, will always be sharper when taken by a tripod mounted camera and remote release. Always! Using a tripod without a remote release is like driving a car without tires.

Tripods can be huge or small, tabletop or full height, aluminum or carbon fiber. They're all steadier than we are. Besides insuring sharper pictures, they are great traveling companions - they don't talk when you're trying to fall asleep, they can be used defensively without requiring a permit, they don't snore, and they don't eat much.

●●● A monopod is the perfect complement to your own 2 legs to simulate a tripod. It's rarely as sturdy, but is even easier to travel with. Many newer tripods are designed to shed a leg or use the center column as a monopod.

●●● Even in your wildest dreams you've probably never envisioned that dropping a camera would make it work better than it used to. Dropping cameras is the single leading cause of camera repairs. An out of warranty repair on a point and shoot camera can be more expensive than you originally paid for the camera.

A comfortable, secure neck strap is the best deterrent to a plummeting camera (and it keeps your hands free).

● Many newer model cameras feature batteries which recharge in the camera. It's a cost savings for the manufacturer, but a problem for everyone else. Charging inside the camera creates heat, which shortens the useful life of the battery and the camera.

● During the charging process, the camera is out of commission. There's no way to take pictures until the charging cycle is complete. You didn't buy the camera to sit there and watch the battery charge - you bought it to take pictures. Before traveling, buy the charger that used to come in the box along with the spare battery suggested earlier.

●● If you are fortunate enough to have a camera which can accept a polarizing filter, be sure to take it along! No other single filter can do so many things to improve your photos and its effects cannot be duplicated in Adobe Photoshop. It darkens skies; eliminates reflections; sees through water and tinted windows; enhances colors and more. Thank you, Dr. Edwin Land, for your wonderful invention.

●●● Regardless of what type of camera you have and regardless of how intense or casual your picture taking is, by now you've found yourself in a place too dark to see the controls on the camera. Solution: a small LED flashlight. Small, lightweight and inexpensive - yet extremely valuable when you've run out of light.

••• If you are traveling overseas, most other countries do not use the same electric current we use here at home. For the past few years, digital camera battery chargers have been variable voltage. Looking at the photo below, it indicates a working range of 100-240 volts at either 50 or 60 Hz (cycles). It automatically adjusts itself to match the input current. The adapter illustrated is for Europe and many other countries. Check out your destination at <http://www.kroppla.com/electric2.htm>.



PROVEN WAYS TO RUIN OR LOSE YOUR CAMERA, LENS, ACCESSORIES OR PICTURES

Here's a sampling of ways we've picked up over the past 40 years or so (none are made up, they all happened) ...

Bump it
Drop it
Hit it against the steps getting on a bus
Throw it
Let an animal get to it
Put it into a microwave oven
Run over it

Leave it on the roof of a car
Leave it on the deck of a boat
Get food on (into) it
Spill a drink on it
Take it to the beach
Drop from airplane or helicopter
Take it apart
Flaunt it
Lend it
Put it down (even without walking away)
Leave it in a cab, bus, or train
Take pictures while riding a motorcycle or bicycle
Submerge it
Keep it with candy in a hot place
Keep your memory card or battery in your pocket or purse along with loose change
Drop it from a ski lift
Extinguish a cigarette with it
Hand it to someone else to carry
Charge the battery without a charging cable by using 2 pieces of wire directly from the a/c wall outlet
Keep it in the glove compartment of a car
Carry it in a shirt pocket
Carry it in a back pocket
Push the zoom lens in to close it
Roll over onto it in bed
Remove the strap because it makes you sweat
Remove the strap because it itches
Take a picture of an oncoming train while standing on the tracks
or
Take a picture of an oncoming train while placing the camera on a rail
Play hockey with it
Immerse it in oatmeal
Pack anything having to do with your camera in checked baggage
Force a compact flash card into a camera in the wrong direction
Use a pen or a nail to tap on the camera's LCD panel
Surf with it
Windsail with it
Take photos on amusement park rides
Throw it on a campfire
Touch the mirror or sensor (with any

thing) inside an interchangeable lens camera
Let a baby play with it
Let a baby put it into his or her mouth
Throw it out with a diaper
Use a moist wipe to clean the lens
Mail or UPS it home in a padded envelope
Leave it in plain sight when you take a dip in the pool or when nature calls
Involve it in an automobile accident
Forget you have it and leave it behind
Bury it
Stab it
Hold it on your lap while on the toilet
Use it as a paperweight
Immerse the lithium battery
Dig in the sand with it.

(Certain point and shoot cameras are made to be dropped, submerged, frozen, stood on, run over, etc. NEVER assume yours is one of these. Check the funny little book(let) that came with the camera or actually read what voids the warranty.)

Sorry to say, none of the events were made up.

Have fun with your camera while traveling. When you return, come in. We'd love to look at your photos and share your memories.

More food for thought will be in our August issue.

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