



How to take brilliant photos of Fireworks

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We're well into firework season, so try our tips for capturing the atmosphere and making your photography go with a bang!



IMAGE BY NEIL FREEMAN | NIKON SCHOOL

Organised displays are your best bet for spectacular effects. It's worthwhile doing a recce beforehand to identify interesting backdrops and angles. Don't forget the foreground, either – shooting solely against a black sky can make fireworks look a bit flat so try framing your shot with trees, buildings or even the crowd in the foreground to inject some depth.

You're going to need a longish exposure – a couple of seconds – so you'll get the best results with your camera mounted on a tripod, using a remote release to minimise the risk of vibration. In terms of DX lenses, a wideangle lens like the [AF-P DX NIKKOR 10-20mm f/4.5-5.6G VR](#) is ideal, although if you're a bit farther away than you would like, a telephoto zoom such as the [AF-P NIKKOR 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6E ED VR](#) can save the day. If you've got a full-frame D-SLR, then wide-angle lenses like the [AF-S NIKKOR 24–70mm f/2.8E ED VR](#) or the [AF-S NIKKOR 16-35mm f/4G ED VR](#) are both good choices.

There are a number of different approaches to photographing fireworks, all of which produce good results, one way is to set your lens aperture to f/8 and put your camera to manual mode using a low ISO (such as 64 or 100) and a remote release to trigger the shutter. This assumes you are working with a tripod

Check your composition when the first few fireworks launch and readjust your composition as necessary. Once this is done, continue to wait for the sound or light trail left by a fireworks launching and then trigger your shutter release. You can either lock your shutter open for say 30 seconds and let a series of fireworks record in one image, or alternatively, set a shorter shutter speed of 1 - 2 seconds and shoot individual frames of the fireworks exploding. These individual frames can be combined later in post processing to form a single composite image with all the fireworks if you wanted.

It is possible to shoot Fireworks with a DSLR handheld, the main difference being that you would be using a much Higher ISO such as 6400, 12800 or even higher. This will give you a fast enough shutter speed to freeze the fireworks as they explode. It may also be of benefit to switch you camera to spot metering to get the exposure correct.

Quick tips

- Shoot NEF (RAW) files in manual mode (if it's an option) to get the best quality results.
- If you're recording video of the fireworks, choose the auto mode for simplicity of shooting.
- Displays get smoky, which makes for hazy shots – avoid it by standing with the wind behind you and getting your shots in early before the smoke has had chance to build up.
- Long-exposure noise reduction is a useful Nikon DSLR feature that cancels out any noise that occurs due to heat building up in the camera's sensor during a long exposure.