



Top Tips for Taking your Camera on Holiday

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The golden rule for any holiday packing is to leave anything you don't really, really, really need at home – and that goes for photographic gear as well, so strip your kit back to the essentials for the types of photo you want to take. And, after all, if it's a family holiday you're probably not going to have the opportunity to take as many pictures as you would on a photo vacation. A zoom is often your best bet on holiday, saving you from having to change lenses and giving you scope across a wide range of focal lengths, while if you plan to do a fair amount of indoor photography in places like cathedrals or stately homes where tripods might not be allowed, a fast lens with a wide maximum aperture (e.g. f/2.8) will be a good bet.



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If you're going somewhere bright and sunny, you might end up doing battle with overhead sun, which results in flat light and harsh shadows, so accessories for dealing with this aren't something to skimp on. While you'll generally get better results shooting nearer to dawn or dusk, if you've got no option but to shoot at the height of the day due to your schedule, a lens hood will boost colour saturation and decrease the risk of flare. A polarising filter will also reduce glare and boost colour saturation, as well as cutting down on distracting reflections. A small, pop-up reflector can be handy, and will take up very little space in your kit bag.

Check your airline hand baggage allowance and if you're likely to bust it with your kit, you'll have to jettison a couple more items or get creative with lenses in pockets and cameras round your neck... If you need a tripod, put the body in your suitcase – most will fit diagonally across – and preferably carry the head in your hand luggage (as it's often the most awkward and expensive part of a tripod to replace should your hold luggage go astray or be damaged in transit). A monopod is a smaller, lightweight alternative if you're tight on space and weight. It pays not to scrimp with spare memory cards, lens cloths, batteries/your battery charger – luckily, these are things that don't take up much room!

And when you do arrive...

Be street-smart

Whether holidaying abroad or staycationing, be on your guard against theft. Never leave your kit unattended, and keep your camera bag closed securely. Make sure your insurance is up to date, and check that it covers you abroad, not just for theft but for accidental damage, as not all travel insurance will cover camera gear. If you're wearing your camera round your neck, go for the smallest, most unobtrusive-looking lens (not only is it less likely to attract unwanted attention, it's also better for your neck and back). Keep zooms locked in their short focal length position, which not only makes them look less enticing, but also protects them against knocks. While you may want to travel to your destination with your kit in a camera backpack, when you're out and about a 'messenger' style bag might be less conspicuous.

Take care on the beach

Sand and salt water are the enemies with beach photography, so take great care with your camera. If you're using a DSLR, always replace the lens cap as soon as you've finished shooting, and consider keeping a daylight or UV filter on the lens for additional protection. Have a cleaning brush and cloths handy for removing unwanted grains of sand, or corrosive salt water, and avoid changing lenses, cards and batteries on the beach – the less you expose your camera's delicate innards to this harsh, gritty environment, the less opportunity there is for sand to get in and cause damage. Some Nikon cameras, including the COOLPIX AW130 and S33, and the Nikon 1 AW1, are weather-resistant and waterproof, making them ideal for beach photography for the whole family.

Keep it clean

While suntan lotion and insect repellent are vital for keeping you safe in the sun, your camera certainly won't appreciate coming into contact with these oily, sticky chemicals. So wash your hands after using them, don't store them in the same bag as your camera (if that is unavoidable, keep them in a tightly sealed plastic bag), and if anything does get onto your camera, wipe it off immediately. And while we're on the subject of keeping things clean, watch out for dust – the last thing you want is specks on your image sensor, unless you really do enjoy spending hours on the computer getting rid of them... Many Nikon DSLRs feature automatic sensor-cleaning which will help mitigate this problem, but the best approach is to avoid dust as much as possible in the first place – which means changing lenses as little as possible in a dusty atmosphere, and keeping your kit in a tightly closed bag when you're not using it. It's a good idea to treat your sensor to a regular professional clean to keep it in tip-top condition, too.

Avoid condensation

This can be a major problem when moving from an air-conditioned room or car into a hot, humid atmosphere. Silica-gel packs in your kit bag will help combat condensation, or you could try to avoid a build-up in the first place by allowing your camera to slowly warm up to the ambient temperature.

Have a great holiday!