

INSIGHTS TO TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY **Part 1**

A look at 100 travel images with detailed descriptions, settings and the insight as to how and why they were taken.



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With grateful thanks to Brian and Samantha Hall who endure many long hours of proofing on these books.

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Foreword by the author

In this ebook I have decided to do something a bit different to the other Essential Guides that I have written over the last few months. One of the things that has always got a lot of interest whether it be when I am training, with galleries on the website or on facebook or even features in the newsletters, are the details and some of the background about how some of the images were taken.

So in part one of this ebook I have decided to pick out a 100 of my best travel images from all around the world and give you an insight as to the thought process that went into taking them. I will also explain the settings and equipment that was used and any other relevant information about them. Part two follows on and looks at some of the more obscure and unusual travel images and techniques, that would not fit in volume one.

I have also included in some instances some of the other shots taken at the time, and little hints and tips and advice about some of the features that I use on a regular basis.

I have been lucky enough to be able to travel all around the world, the only continent that has so far eluded me is Australia. So I have been able to select images from every different terrain, climatic and geographic region I have visited over the years.

The hardest part of this ebook was whittling down the hundreds of thousands of images I have in the picture library, to just the few featured. However I also plan some more of these books on more specific topics such as wildlife, close up and macro etc and so I'm sure that I will get to use some that I had to leave out in those future publications.

Enjoy the book and I hope it will inspire you to take wonderful images of your own.

Nina



In the French Pyrenees July 2012



In Paris May 2014



Diving in the Maldives February 2008

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Planning the trip for photography



The Everglades just before it started raining again....

Good times here may not be good times there.

It is important when planning your travels, to do a little bit of research. It's easier now than ever before because of the World Wide Web. Simply type in your destination and you will be faced with hundreds of pages of information that'll tell you everything you need to know.

It's important to do this research, to make sure that you're going to that location at the best possible time of year. In the UK we get very used to having four seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter. We sort of know what to expect in each season. When we travel abroad not all the destinations we go to are going to have these seasons. Some have seasons based on rainfall, some have seasons based on winds and others can vary from having 24 hours of daylight to 24 hours of darkness.

So we cannot assume that just because we're going in our summer time, that it's going to be perfect in the location we are going to, the same as it may be at home.

I would love to say I have always got it right. However I managed to not

do the research on a last minute trip I decided to do and it's easy to assume that much of America will be like we experience in the UK.

A large part of the trip was to be based in the Everglades, to photograph some of the wildlife that it is well known for. Basically what happened was I managed to catch the wet season as southern Florida is at the northern edge of the tropics and is subject to the tropical rain patterns.

In the wet season the Everglades become a mosquito infested swamp, there is no other way to describe it and in one day I had collected over 120 mosquito bites through what was allegedly mosquito repellent clothing. The real irony was that the wildlife mostly leaves the Everglades for the duration of the wet season with the exceptions of the alligators, crocodiles, snakes and of course the mosquitoes.

That experience has made me much more conscious of the need to research the weather patterns where you're going. However my Everglades trip was not quite as disastrous as one couple I heard off who went to Norway in the summer to photograph the northern lights. These are only seen in the Arctic parts of Norway where of course it is 24 hours of daylight throughout the four key summer months and so no northern lights would be seen.

The sort of things that you need to be considering include, the weather patterns and temperatures for the location you are going to. I would also tend to check the humidity as many people think much above 80% humidity is thoroughly unpleasant to be in, when it is very hot.

Hot temperatures are great when you're laying on the beach, however if you're carrying a camera bag which weighs 10 or 12 kg it's really not so much fun if the temperatures are very high.

If I'm going on a city trip I will often try and go in the cooler spring, autumn or winter months, as often the lighting is better and the locations can be much quieter. The hotels and the flights are also much cheaper at these times of year.

What to take - bags, flashes and tripods

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One of the things that I've been asked about possibly more than anything is what to take with you on a trip.

Of course this is going to vary according to the type of trip that you're going on. If you're going on safari to photograph the wildlife you are obviously going to have much bigger heavier lenses than if you went on a city trip. I'm actually concentrating on the things for a more general trip rather than a specific wildlife trip in this section.

On many of the trips I have led, I'm shooting commercially for the travel operator, in addition to leading the trip. Yet quite often I have one of the smallest camera bags on the trip, though not necessarily the lightest.

One of the first things to think about is what you are going to put the equipment in. Many photographers have one gadget bag that takes everything that they have. The problem with this is the tendency to take literally everything you own. The key thing you need to think about is what are you going to be photographing. Then think about what you need to capture those subjects and only take that with you.

Over the years I've started to take the minimalist equipment approach. So I take literally what I need and that's it. On longer trips I often have to take a wider range of lenses which in turn requires a larger gadget bag.

The one I have, also has a slot in it for the laptop I need with me. This means it's quite large and heavy. I don't plan to carry that around all the time with me. So I also take, either a small ruck sack or more commonly a large bumbag such as the one illustrated top right. This allows me to put the second lens, spare battery, spare memory card in a much smaller bag to carry with me. This bag travels out initially in the hold baggage. Then the equipment needed is then decanted into it as needed.

The other thing that I very rarely take with me these days is a tripod. Most cameras go up to a high enough ISO to be able to handhold all the shots I am going to be taking So it's a couple of kilos less to have to fit and go into the hold baggage.

I also very rarely bother to take a flash unit with me, using the built in flash where necessary to provide fill in flash to any portraits I shoot.

What to take - camera and lenses

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I'm lucky enough to have a choice of cameras to choose from. However this does make the equipment selection more complicated, as the first thing I need to choose is which camera to take.

There are two main things that will decide this. Firstly how serious the photography is that I'm doing. Secondly the light levels that I'm going to be shooting in.

If I'm shooting commercially or there is going to be a lot of low light shooting, then my camera choice will be the EOS 5D Mark III. This is a full frame model and offers a very wide ISO range. One of the drawback to this model is it only takes the EF range lenses. This means that the lenses for it are significantly larger and heavier than to some of the other cameras that I own.

If I'm not going to be shooting in lowlight, and I want a small compact outfit Then it will normally be either the EOS 70D or EOS 100D that I choose. Both of these are the smaller 1.6x crop or sometimes called APS - C type sensors. Therefore they are able to take either the EF or the smaller lighter EF-S lenses. The lens I am most likely to choose would be the EF-S 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 IS STM lens. This is a great lens and very versatile and for a city trip, really the only lens you're likely to need.

If I'm also going to be taking a telephoto zoom, the other lens which is very versatile is the EF-S 15-85mm f3.5-5.6 IS USM lens. This has the

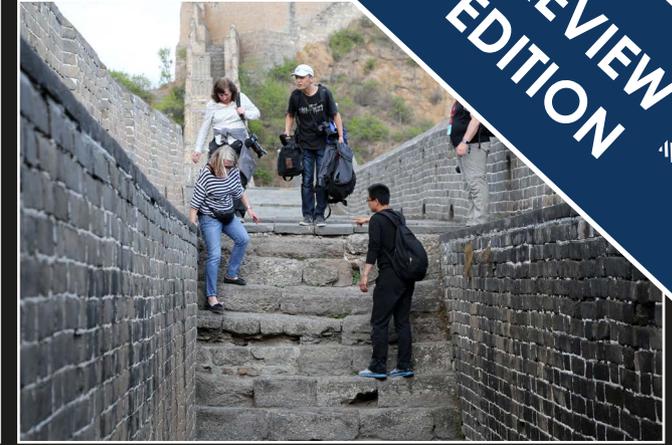
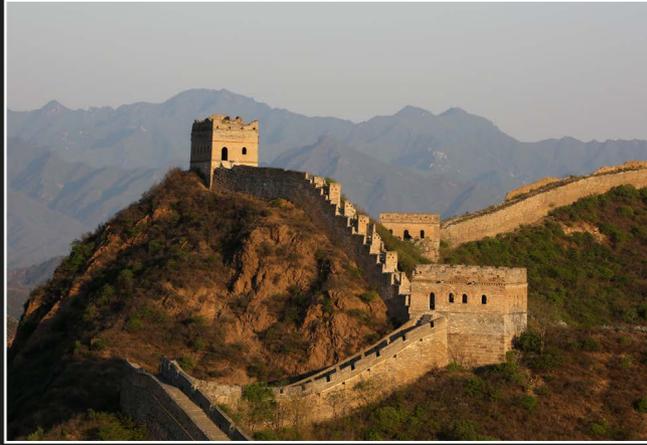
advantage of going a little bit wider than the other, but doesn't go as far into the telephoto range, which is a little lacking if you want to just have one lens.

The most common telephoto lens for travel photography being the range of 70 to 300mm. Canon makes five different models and any of them would work well for travel photography. The other combination that would work well for a general trip would be the standard kit lens, the EF-S 18-55mm paired up with the EF-S 55-250mm lens, both of which are now available as STM models which offer quick and silent focusing with non rotational front elements for ease of using polarising filters.

If I am taking the EOS 5D Mark III, the normal lenses I take are the EF 17-40mm f4.0 L USM, the EF 24-105mm f4 L IS USM and the EF 70-300mm f4.5-5.6L IS USM. This gives a wider range than I have given above, but If I am shooting with the larger camera, I am normally shooting commercially and need the wider choice of lenses. I am also resigned to carrying a much heavier kit bag, as a professional, heavy bags come as part of the package.

I very seldom take a macro lens, TSE, fisheye or ultra wide lens unless they are definitely going to be needed at the location. As you go through the book have a looked to see what focal length is being used, if it is a macro lens or fisheye lens then it will be stated. You may well be surprised to see what a narrow range of focal lengths, that 90% of the images fall into.

General things about how I shoot



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To save me repeating the same details time and time again throughout this book there are a few things I'm going to explain here.

Firstly all the images in this ebook, were shot as JPEG images. I do occasionally shoot RAW images to produce some sample images from, which can save me hours of shooting time in the field, as they are easily batch processed. However when on a trip, even when shooting commercially, I will shoot directly into JPEG to minimise the amount of workflow that I have to do when I get back.

I know a lot of photographers do shoot RAW. However as I'm capable of getting an image correctly exposed, the correct colour and with the correct image processing done in the camera, I simply do not see the point of shooting RAW just in case I get it wrong, especially as I get to see the image the minute I have shot it. In my opinion many photographers overcomplicate workflow process and spend many hours needlessly processing RAW images whereas in fact the JPEG would've been just as good a quality.

The most important thing about shooting images is shooting them with the right lens and getting the framing correct. Most of the images in this book will not be cropped at all, from how they were taken. I try to keep the actual photography on the camera as simple as possible which allows me to shoot quickly and efficiently.

So much of the time, you will see that I'm shooting in program mode. More about that in the first chapter. I will use AV, TV and manual mode where it is appropriate to do so, but only when they will give me a benefit over shooting in program mode.

I will utilise the technology the camera has and so I will setup things like the picture style, the noise reduction, lens corrections and also features such as highlight tone priority, as and when they are needed. This means that the images being captured and saved onto the memory card are as finished as possible.

If I am doing a long trip such as the one to China in 2014, I will normally have a laptop with me. This allows me to download and start sorting the images I'm shooting. On that trip we actually had in total about 35 hours flying between the 5 flights and I was able to utilise that time to do much of the work I would have had to do on my return.

The other thing that is important when travelling, is to actually make the effort to walk and get to some locations that give the best results. The images above are from the visit we had to the great wall of China, The group actually did 13 of the watchtowers, some of which have steps up to 15 inches high to negotiate. The benefits can be seen from the images as we were the only people on the section of the great wall that we were photographing.

How new technology should change the way we shoot

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The images above are all shot on program mode. I manually set the ISO on all the images and some of the other camera overrides may have been used.

I changed from shooting film to digital early in 2003. Until this point I did not consider the quality available from digital to be good enough to warrant the change. Up until this point digital cameras were also prohibitively expensive.

The camera that changed everything was the Canon EOS 10D. It offered a camera featuring 6 million pixels which is good enough to produce an excellent A3 print. The EOS 10D had a good ISO range from 100 up to 1600, and even 3200 ISO using the expansion option. It also started to give an acceptable total range, roughly equally what I was seeing from film.

By this time I had been involved with digital cameras for many years, Canon had them from 1984 so by the time I joined in 1991 they were commonplace within Canon. I was already shooting with them on a regular basis and so I was very aware what they could and possibly more importantly, what they could not achieve.

The key benefit I saw with digital was the ability to change the ISO frame by frame. I had always carried a range of film speeds with me, but changing film mid roll, was a slow and laborious task.

One of the things I was very aware of what I started shooting digital was the need to get the exposure spot on. I never saw this as a problem, as I have learnt my photography using Kodachrome 25, a film known for its lack of latitude.

The EOS 10D gave very good quality, up to about 400 ISO, above this it was relatively noisy. A couple of years later the EOS 20D appeared and although it had the same ISO range as the EOS 10D, the 20D was more than acceptable right the way up to 800 ISO and even 1600 ISO was usable.

This allowed me to shoot handheld for most of the photographs I shot. It also allowed me to think about the settings needed for the shot rather than shooting at what I could get, with much lower ISO settings.

The other great benefit from digital was the ability to shoot as many shots as I wanted, as the photographs cost nothing - it was just the initial investment on the camera.

Interestingly at about that point, development on digital camera stalled for almost four years. It was when the 1D Mark III and the EOS 40D hit the markets that we saw some big changes. Many new features were added to these models, including the picture styles, highlight tone priority and high ISO noise reduction.

These features combined together, gave much better image quality, most notably the high ISO noise reduction allowed shooting at 6400 ISO and still giving the quality to produce an excellent A3 print on the EOS 1D Mark III. The pixel count had also gone up and we were starting to see 10 and 12 million pixel models on the market though this was not as important as the ISO.

How new technology should change the way we shoot

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The images above are all shot on program mode. I manually set the ISO which was either 6400 ISO or 10000 ISO for the cave image.

The most notable recent feature changes started with the EOS 5D Mark II and the EOS 50D and has now progressed to be featured on all the latest models. These models featured a new image processing system that now gave even better noise reduction which was so fast it could be applied to every image taken, not just the ones at very high ISO settings.

This has revolutionised how we take images, as the cameras now feature minimum ISO settings from 100 up to 12800 as standard. Some of the higher level models now enable the photographer to shoot up to 102400 ISO or even 204800 ISO, though it's rare to need more than 12800 ISO or 25600 ISO even in the very darkest conditions, even the cave image above only needed 10000 ISO.

The key benefit that this has offered, is that we can now truly think about the settings the image needs to make it work at its best. We can set the aperture and shutter speed we need, rather than having to compromise, as we are now able to find an ISO that will make those settings work.

It really has revolutionised professional photography and is responsible for some of the great images we are seeing, many taken in very lowlight locations where photographers have traditionally struggled. You have always been able to shoot in lowlight on a tripod, but this only works for a static subject.

I still do use a tripod for some shots, if I want light trails, to shoot HDR or get

ultimate quality and I am allowed to use a tripod and have the time. But, I also get a lot of shots that would have been impossible just 4 or 5 years ago which I find very exciting.

Other changes have also happened. We now have a lens correction option as standard that works for every image we take, removing any peripheral illumination problems and also correcting for any chromatic aberrations the lens may have. Of course you can do this in post production but it's much simpler and quicker for the camera to do the work for me.

One of the things that I find sad, is how many photographers struggle to get successful images, because they will not trust or even try the technology. Especially not trusting the higher ISO that would eliminate the camera shake that they often get. They have often been taught by those who simply do not understand, or just close their mind to how much the modern cameras can do for the photographer.

Using technology does not diminish your skills as a photographer, it frees your mind up for creativity and to have the time to see images and frame them at their best. After all when you get on the plane to travel, you are relying on the computer controlling the fly by wire systems that helps the pilot keep the aircraft in the air, but that does not diminish the skills of the pilot nor does it make it a poor aircraft.

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01 - Towns and cities

About shooting in towns and cities

When I'm shooting towns and cities I'm always looking for images that capture what the location is about.

These are always going to be very busy places and so if you want to photograph with few people about then you need to be out and about early or late in the day when the streets are a lot quieter.

It is also sometimes important to get off the beaten track. There are always the popular, must see locations, St Marks Square in Venice would be a great example. However if you venture off the beaten track and wander down a few alleys and along a few side canals, you will find a much quieter and much more picturesque part of Venice to photograph.

When I'm in towns and cities I try to walk as much as possible. This way you discover the bits that even the guidebooks don't talk about, which often have a lot of character. This is one of the reasons why I try to keep the outfit in cities very small and light.

I have always felt that I get the very best images in towns and cities in the cooler months away from the peak times. They are less crowded at this time and if you want to go and see some the attractions, the queues are far shorter.

Think about your lens settings carefully. Sometimes getting further back and shooting with a slightly less wide lens, will give a better less distorted image than shooting in close with an ultra wide lens.

Try to avoid shooting in the middle of the day, the light can be very harsh, but first thing in the morning and late evening will produce the beautiful golden light that reproduces the scenes far better.



Longyearbyen. Spitsbergen



The creek. Dubai



Xian. China

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Sunrays over Alesund, Norway (2003)

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About the image

I have included this image as an example of when I made some adjustments to the image that I have taken.

The image itself was simple enough to take, I was shooting on program mode as it automatically reads the focal length I'm using and sets a shutter speed that's appropriate for handholding. Because I'm shooting from such a distance, with a relatively wide lens the depth of field is irrelevant because all of my subjects are at an infinity distance.

The problem I had was that the sky was about one stop brighter than the city. If I exposed for the city itself, the sky had areas that were burnt out. Therefore in this image I actually based the exposure upon the sky in the background. This allowed me to capture the beams of light. However this meant that the city was rather dark and so afterwards in Photoshop I had to select the city area, feather the selection and lighten the city up using the levels command.

This adjustment was performed on the JPEG image, and I still retain good quality as the image was shot at a low ISO.

About the location

Alesund is a small town on the coast of Norway. It has very pretty architecture. It is at the end of a peninsular and is surrounded by islands and fjords making it very picturesque. This was taken on an autumn trip to Norway, but the weather was still very changeable.

This image was taken on a hill above the city and allowed me to get a good panoramic image of the city and the surrounding area. To the right is another view of the city.

Shooting details

Camera	EOS 10D
Focal lens used	37mm
ISO	200 ISO
Shutter speed	1/250th
Aperture	f6.3
Mode	Program
Exposure bias	0
Metering	Evaluative
White balance	AWB



Evening light on Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen (2003)



About the location

Longyearbyen is the capital town of Spitsbergen and is well inside the arctic circle. It is a very small town with mostly wooden houses as it is built on permafrost (ground that never thaws).

It's an interesting location, with polar bears regularly seen in town. If leaving the main town area it is recommended that you carry a gun at all times with some unusual road signs as per the image to the right.

Shooting details

Camera	EOS 10D
Focal lens used	100mm
ISO	200 ISO
Shutter speed	1/320th
Aperture	f8
Mode	Program
Exposure bias	0
Metering	Evaluative
White balance	AWB



About the image

This was taken in the evening as the town has 24 hours of daylight, though the sun does dip during the evening and rises again during the daytime. This was taken at 2.32am.

The mist on the hills added some extra atmosphere and made the town look even more colourful than normal.

This is a very simple image to take, it was literally point and shoot just framing with the ship in the foreground for a little extra interest.

Telephoto lenses are used a lot when shooting aboard ships, as you are normally too far away for a wide angle lens to be useful.

This was taken about 3 hours after we boarded the ship, and most of the passengers had already gone to bed, missing what was some lovely lighting.

Although I have been to Spitsbergen on three occasions, this is the only time I have seen such lovely golden evening lighting, as on the other occasions, I was there a few weeks earlier when the sun does not dip.

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Early morning light, Venice (2011)



About the location

Venice is a beautiful city, but in the middle of August when this was taken, the lighting in the middle of the day is very harsh and it gets very crowded.

It is important if photographing in the busy peak months to try and find places that offer better opportunities. This is taken in the Cannaregio region which is about a 25 minute walk from St Marks Square.

To get the best images in a city you need to walk around, as the main tourist spots do not always translate into the very best images.

If staying in Venice invest in a day or few days water bus ticket as it's a great way to quickly get from one area to another.

Shooting details

Camera	EOS 5D Mk II
Focal lens used	47mm
ISO	400 ISO
Shutter speed	1/250th
Aperture	f9
Mode	TV
Exposure bias	0
Metering	Evaluative
White balance	AWB

About the image

This was taken at an early morning and I had a lot of time in the city for over 2 hours. I was there in time to photograph the sunrise.

As the sun is at a lower angle the light is softer and reflects from one building to another, far better than it does later in the day. This means that we get a lot less shadows.

It is important to look out for the shadows in an image as they will always go much darker than we see with our eyes. I will look at this in more depth on the next page.

When I took this image I was using just the central focusing point and I made sure that this was on the brightly lit wall of the left hand building. By doing this it ensured that the exposure was correct for the building that I wanted and the shot did not need any exposure compensation.

I was shooting on TV mode with 1/250th set as I was changing lenses a lot between my 24-105mm and my 70-200mm and wanted to ensure the shutter speed was right for both. The ISO set at 400 ISO allowed me to do this and still get a reasonable aperture.

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What we see versus what we can capture

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This image has had post production done to replicate what we would see with the eye at the time of taking the image.



This is how the camera captured the image. This image was taken on the EOS 100D and has not had any post production done to lift the shadows.

Learn to understand contrast

One of the key things we need to understand once we start shooting travel images, is that what we see with eyes, is not what the camera captures.

In the early days of digital, the range of tones that were captured was only about three or four stops and this gave a very big difference from what we were seeing.

On the modern digital cameras this range has expanded significantly and we are now capturing in the range of 6 to 7 stops on most of the current models.

However our eyes actually have a capability to see a range of tones which in photographic terms, is equivalent to about 14 stops. This means that the contrast that we see with our eyes, is much less than is going to be captured by camera.

This means that the areas which seem bright to our eyes may well appear to be brighter in the final image. Dark areas in shadow will also appear to

be darker than they look to the eye. Basically the contrast in the image will increase significantly, roughly about 50%.

Of course there are a lot of things that affect how our images look. Where we focus, tells the camera what we want to be exposed correctly. In the image above I was using just a single focusing point and that was focused on the building in the middle of the shot. The camera has exposed that correctly. The areas in bright sunshine have also been correctly exposed. However the trees on the right of the picture and the area of the pavement that are in shade have gone significantly darker than they would have been seen by the eye.

This means that we need to learn to look at the images we are taking and see where the shadows are. They need to be factored into our framing, as well as avoiding them when we are focusing the camera, as they will affect the overall exposure for the scene.

St Julians Bay, Malta (2010)



About the location

St Julian's Bay is a very fashionable resort on island of Malta. It's one of the few bays left that still has the traditional small fishing boats moored in the harbour.

I have been to Malta a number of times, but this is the only time that I had visited in the summer. St Julians Bay is very popular at that time of year and I ended up parked nearly a mile away from the harbour and had to walk back.

The advantage was the smaller boats were all moored in the harbour and gave a great foreground to the general view of St Julian's Bay.

I actually prefer visiting Malta in the winter when it's much quieter, easier to park and there's some more dramatic lighting than you see in the summer months.

Shooting details

Camera	EOS 550D
Focal lens used	24mm
ISO	100 ISO
Shutter speed	1/100th
Aperture	f8
Mode	Program
Exposure bias	0
Metering	Evaluative
White balance	AWB

About the image

I took this image at 10:00 AM in the morning. I was the first thing to shoot the morning. I wanted, as the light was beautiful this time and it was much cooler. It was actually getting up to 38°C during the middle of the day.

One of the things I find in Malta is all the pavements are quite light and this reflects a large amount of light up onto the buildings and as a result minimises the problems with shadows.

Getting close to the boats in the foreground has given me a good foreground interest in the image and the scene at the back simply becomes the background.

To make the colours richer within the image I had a polarising filter fitted, and this was rotated to give me a good sky and minimal reflections off the water.

Polarising filters lose quite a lot of light and this is why the exposure looks quite low for the amount of light in the image. Without the filter fitted the exposure would've been about 1/250th f11.

I will take a more in-depth look at using polarising filters in chapter 14.

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Las Vegas, Nevada, USA (2012)

Shooting details

Camera	EOS 5D Mk III
Focal lens used	8mm
ISO	100 ISO
Shutter speed	1/250th
Aperture	f10
Mode	Program
Exposure bias	0
Metering	Evaluative
White balance	AWB

About the lens

This image was taken on the EF 8-15mm f4L USM fisheye lens. This is a lens that produces some very eye-catching images.

It will only produce this circular effect on the cameras that feature a full frame or 1x imaging sensor. In a 1.6x crop or APS-C sensor model the curvature effect is also less noticeable.

It's not a cheap lens and the effect becomes repetitive after a while. So it's a bit of a luxury to have in the kit bag.

However, lenses can be hired and for certain trips it may make a great addition to the range of lenses you have with you.



About the location

Everyone knows Las Vegas, the gambling capital of the world. It attracts photographers because of its night time photographic opportunities, but there's also some great images to be had during the daytime.

It's in the middle of the Nevada desert so if you go in summer expect it to be very hot. I was there in March and the temperature was over 25°C.

About the image

I had already been to Las Vegas a couple times before and I had taken a lot of images of the city. This time I was looking for something a little bit different, and so I decided to take the fisheye lens with me on the trip.

A fisheye lens on a full frame camera set to 8mm will capture 180° of the scene that you are seeing. If shooting forwards be careful as you often get your feet into the image.

This image was taken sitting on the pavement with the lens pointing straight up towards the sky. The sun is in the image but I managed to get it hidden behind the tree on the right hand side to avoid too much burnout in sky.

I'm sitting down in order to get as near to the ground as possible if I'm standing up I lose quite a lot at the bottom of the palm trees and the other buildings within the image.

There are no filters in use as it's impossible to fit them on to the front of the lens. There is a filter holder on the rear but this is not practical to use except with coloured gels.

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Why do I shoot on program mode so much?

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Basically it's easier and more reliable

One of the questions I get asked a lot, is why do I shoot on program mode so much of the time, especially as so many other professional photographers rubbish the mode so much.

It's a fair question to ask. My background is a technical one, I worked at Canon for many years and as a result I've got a very good in-depth understanding of what the camera is actually doing and when.

It's important to realise that program is not exactly the same as the green square mode. Canon simply wouldn't put the same mode on twice.

The green square or Auto+ mode as it's now called, is a point-and-shoot mode with virtually no overrides.

Program mode is a creative mode. It allows exactly the same overrides to be used as TV, AV and manual mode. So when I am shooting in program mode I can still override settings such as metering, white balance, exposure compensation and focusing options.

What program mode does for me is to look at the lens that I am using and senses the focal length that I am currently set to. It actually senses it per individual millimetre setting on the lens. So if I have the lens set to 147mm, it knows that's the focal length that I'm shooting with. It will then set a shutter speed that is correct or higher than the shutter speed needed to correctly handhold the lens.

Within the program mode's programming, it also has deviations for if the lens is a wide, standard or telephoto lens. With a wide lens it favours mid to small apertures, whereas on a telephoto lens it will prioritise the shutter speed for both handholding and the freezing of action.

Therefore program mode allows me to simply point and shoot, allowing me time to think about my framing, focusing and any overrides that I may need to use rather than having to check the basic settings for every single shot. I tend to utilise the ISO on manual as I prefer to be in control of what is being set as I feel the camera normally uses too low a setting on auto.



About the location

Prague is one of most picturesque cities that I've been to. It's also fairly small and compact, making it easy to walk around and therefore get the very best pictures.

This is taken from near the Charles Bridge, looking towards the hill where the castle is located. The cathedral was actually inside the main castle grounds.

If you are planning a visit try to stay near to the river or in the old part of the town as this allows you to be within walking distance of everything.

Prague is a good place to visit if you have a limited budget, as the Koruna still has a good exchange rate against the pound making the food and drink very affordable compared to many cities in Europe.

Shooting details

Camera	EOS 5D Mk II
Focal lens used	165mm
ISO	400 ISO
Shutter speed	1/320th
Aperture	f4
Mode	Program
Exposure bias	0
Metering	Evaluative
White balance	AWB

About the image

This image was taken in the morning, just after sunrise. I was out there in the morning and this meant being out and about by about 6 o'clock in the morning.

The light that you get just after sunrise is very soft and a beautiful colour. As you can see from the shooting details, this image was taken on auto white balance which has got the colour absolutely right. The camera's white balance systems have improved significantly since about 2009 and I find that it rarely needs to be overridden with general areas of photography.

The camera was used on program mode and this has set a shutter speed high enough to safely handhold. The aperture was quite wide at f4, but all of my subject is beyond the infinity point for the lens and so will all be sharp.

The lens used had a f2.8 aperture and so by shooting at f4 a good optical quality is obtained.

The advantage of using a telephoto lens is that it has helped to compress the scene, which has given a good compression to the buildings in the scene.

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