

# The Essential Guide To Photography With EOS Cameras

Written by Nina Bailey

Especially for Canon EOS cameras



PREVIEW  
EDITION

Written, designed and images by

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[www.eos-magazine.com/ebooks/es/](http://www.eos-magazine.com/ebooks/es/)

## Foreword by the author

All of my ebooks up until now have been about very specific topics. As a result they had been aimed at photographers with a reasonable amount of experience.

This ebook is designed for those that are totally new to digital EOS cameras, new to photography and also for those who are self taught and finding the transition from film to digital difficult.

In this ebook we look at a very diverse range topics about photography. We start by looking at the things you need to understand and then move on to look at the settings are that are used within photography. Most photographers will have heard of apertures, shutter speeds and ISOs. Many will be aware of how to set them on their camera, but one of the things that I've become aware of over the years with the training I've done, is that many are uncomfortable with how the settings combine together, and many photographers struggle with what setting to use, at which time.

I also take a look at the exposure modes found on the camera. I explain what they are and what's being set by the photographer or the camera respectively and also when they're best used.

I take a look at the difference between the basic zone modes and the creative zone modes. It is so important for photographers moving to use the creative modes that they understand how many of the settings on the camera they become responsible for, which were previously been set by the camera within the basics zone settings.

I also take a look at why it's important to use lenses correctly. What the overrides that are available to you do within the creative zone modes. Also I look at when flash should and should not be used within your photography.

I then finish off by looking at the thought process within photography and give you a summary at the end of the book to help you to shoot the commonly encountered subjects.

Nina





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# Introduction



## Introduction

It's easy when you are new to photography to imagine that all that's involved in getting a great image is simply to point the camera and press the shutter button. For some images it's true, that is all that needed.

At times though, that approach will result in an image that falls short of your expectations. An image may fail for a wide range of reasons. It may be that the light was not right. It can be that the settings were wrong or even that flash was not used or used at the wrong time.

The key to getting consistently good images is to understand what's needed to get the image right. That understanding comes from a good grounding in the basics of photography.

That grounding is the core of all the training I have given photographers over the years. Regardless of how you learn, the key to everything is getting the very best possible understanding of photography.

From that you can evaluate what's needed to make the image successful, then it's simply a question of setting your camera up to the correct settings for the image that you are taking.

This ebook sets out to give you the understanding to get that grounding, setting you off into your photographic adventure and gives you the ability to start creating wonderful images.



*The key to getting a shot such as this, other than being there at sunrise or sunset is knowing where the camera's exposure needs to be set. It's only natural to focus on the trees in the foreground, but the exposure will need to be locked on the sky to get a good result.*

PREVIEW  
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## Chapter 01

# What makes a successful image



## What makes a successful image



Photography is far more complex than many new photographers imagine. We have a number of variables that need to combine correctly to get a successful image.

In some areas of photography almost any camera settings will do, in others very specific settings are needed to capture the image exactly as we want.

I am going to look at the settings that are needed in later chapters. In this chapter I am going to look at the other things, which affect the images that you take, that you need to be aware of.

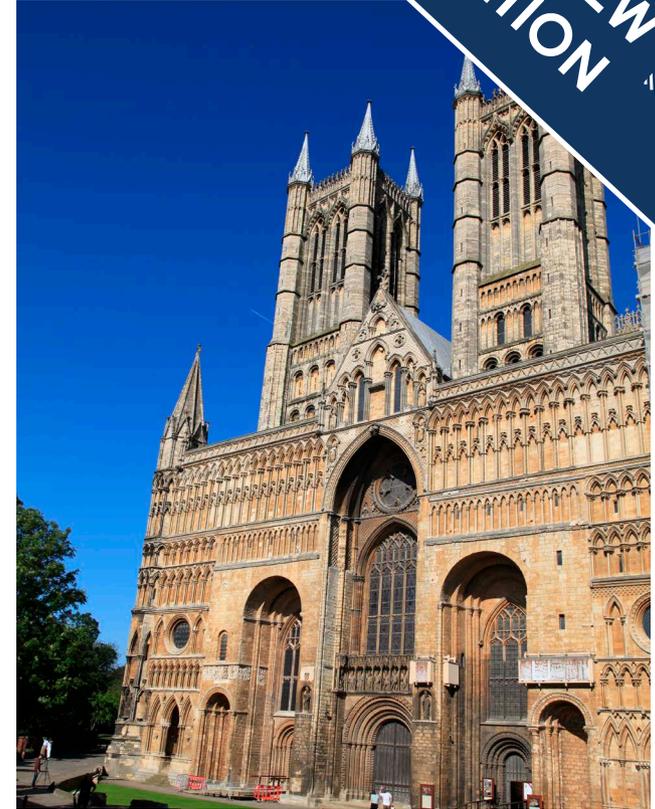


Some of these you have no control over, but they will affect the image you can shoot, the settings you can use and how the image will ultimately look.

Understanding how these settings affect the images you take is key to getting great pictures.

Spotting problems before shooting allows controls to be changed or framing to be altered to make the very best of the opportunities at the time.

Photographers are often baffled that some images come out much better than others, yet so often it is the conditions or direction that they



have been taken that results in the success or failure of the image. These are often things that are very obvious of only we learn what we need to look for.

The images far left and centre were both taken at about 11am, the lighting was wrong for the front of the cathedral that faces west. The left hand image was exposed for the cathedral but the sky it too bright and the centre image was exposed for the sky but the cathedral is too dark. The image on the right was taken at about 3pm when the light was just right.

## Where are you shooting

The first thing that you need to bear in mind is where you are taking the images. If outside then the weather conditions and lighting direction are the key things that you will need to think about.

If shooting indoors then I need to think about the low light levels that I am shooting in. It's easy to assume that flash is needed for all indoor images, yet in many instances shooting with the available light will give better results.

The very latest cameras within the EOS range are all capable of shooting in very low light levels using the high ISO settings that they all have.

The higher ISO settings prevent camera shake occurring in lower light levels and still give excellent quality, yet many photographers who have shot film shy away from using them as they fear quality problems that simply do not exist on digital cameras.

Some of the very latest ones have a handheld night PIC mode that allow you to handhold in virtually all conditions and either add flash to the natural light that is there or shoot solely with the available light.

We will look at the ISO settings in chapter 3 and the use of flash in chapter 7. Also in the next chapter we will take a look at lenses including some that are designed especially for shooting in lower light levels.



*This was shot handheld on a trip to China at 12800 ISO.*



*Taken using the handheld nightscene mode.*



*Shooting with telephoto lenses in lowlight requires different settings than when shooting in good light.*

## Lighting direction

Another thing that the photographer needs to think about when taking images is where the light is coming from when they are taking the image.

There are three main light directions that we deal with in photography, front, side and backlighting.

### Front lighting

The most commonly used one of these is front lighting. This is where the light is shining from immediately behind the photographer onto the front of the subject.

When the light is in this direction the subject is well lit and will normally photograph well. The sky will expose correctly and overall the exposure will be very even. The only drawback to front lighting is that all the interest in the image needs to come from the subject itself, as the lighting will not normally add anything to the image.

Sometimes the light will come from a slight side angle and this will give a small amount of relief to the subject that I am taking.

Front lighting works well for landscapes, travel scenes, wildlife and close up and macro images.

Front lighting can be a problem when shooting portraits as the subjects will be looking directly into the light and can cause the subject to squint.



*Front lighting works well when shooting landscapes.*



*Portraits can be a problem when front lit with harsh lighting and the subjects squinting.*



*If shooting wildlife it can show up lots of texture in fur and feathers.*

## Side lighting

Side lighting is where the lighting comes immediately from the left or right of the photographer. From 90 degrees to where the subject is located.

This means that some parts of the subject will be very strongly lit and other parts away from the light will be in shade.

Side lighting can give very dramatic images and can make landscape and travel scenes very 3 dimensional, though it can also present a number of exposure problems.

If the exposure is right for the brightly lit side of the subject, the other side that is in shade will be very dark or even just black.

If we expose for the areas in shade the bright areas will burn out totally. We have to accept that this unevenness of exposure comes with the ability to create some stunning images if we get all the settings correct.

Side lighting will mean that we need to use a number of the camera overrides to get many images correct.

Side lighting works for landscapes, travel images, wildlife and some close up and macro images providing that the exposure is taken on the right part of the subject.

It also works for portraits, but it is generally best if flash is used to fill in the shadows.



*Side lighting adds a 3D effect when shooting landscape images.*



*Side lighting can produce very harsh effects if flash is not used to fill in the shadows.*



*Side lighting can produce very dramatic wildlife images.*

## Backlighting



Backlighting is where the light is coming from behind the subject. This is the lighting type that can give the most problems to photographers.

This is because any sky in the image will be very bright and any subjects will have the side facing the photographer in shade and therefore be significantly lower in brightness than the sky.

The biggest problem with this type of lighting is the difference in brightness between where the light is coming from and the light that is falling onto the subject. If it is dramatically different in brightness then it will not be possible to expose correctly for both.

The time that backlighting is most used by photographers is when shooting sunrise or sunsets.

When shooting this type of subject we normally ensure that the exposure is right for the sky and allow foreground subjects to become silhouettes. This does mean that we have to select the subjects carefully, ensuring that they work as silhouettes.

For other types of subjects we have to accept that if the exposure is right for the main subject the sky will inevitably burn out. If we get the exposure right for the sky the main subjects will go very dark or may even be silhouetted. This can work for some subjects and indeed it may be the effect that I am after.

The new HDR backlight mode that I am now seeing on some models is designed to alleviate this problem to a degree, but there are limits as to

how much backlighting it can deal with. The more advanced cameras are now also featuring a HDR mode which does the same thing but giving the photographer more control. We will look at this in depth within the mode chapters.

The best solution is to choose your shooting time carefully and avoid shooting in backlit where possible unless you want the effects that it can produce.

The images above show the difference that shooting at the right time of day will make. The image above left was taken in the afternoon when the light was producing backlighting. The image top right was taken in the morning when the subject was front lit.

## When backlighting works

Although backlighting can be difficult to shoot with, it is the one lighting type that often produces some of our most dramatic images.

It's a light source that is fantastic at sunrise or sunset and dusk or dawn, producing colourful eye catching images.

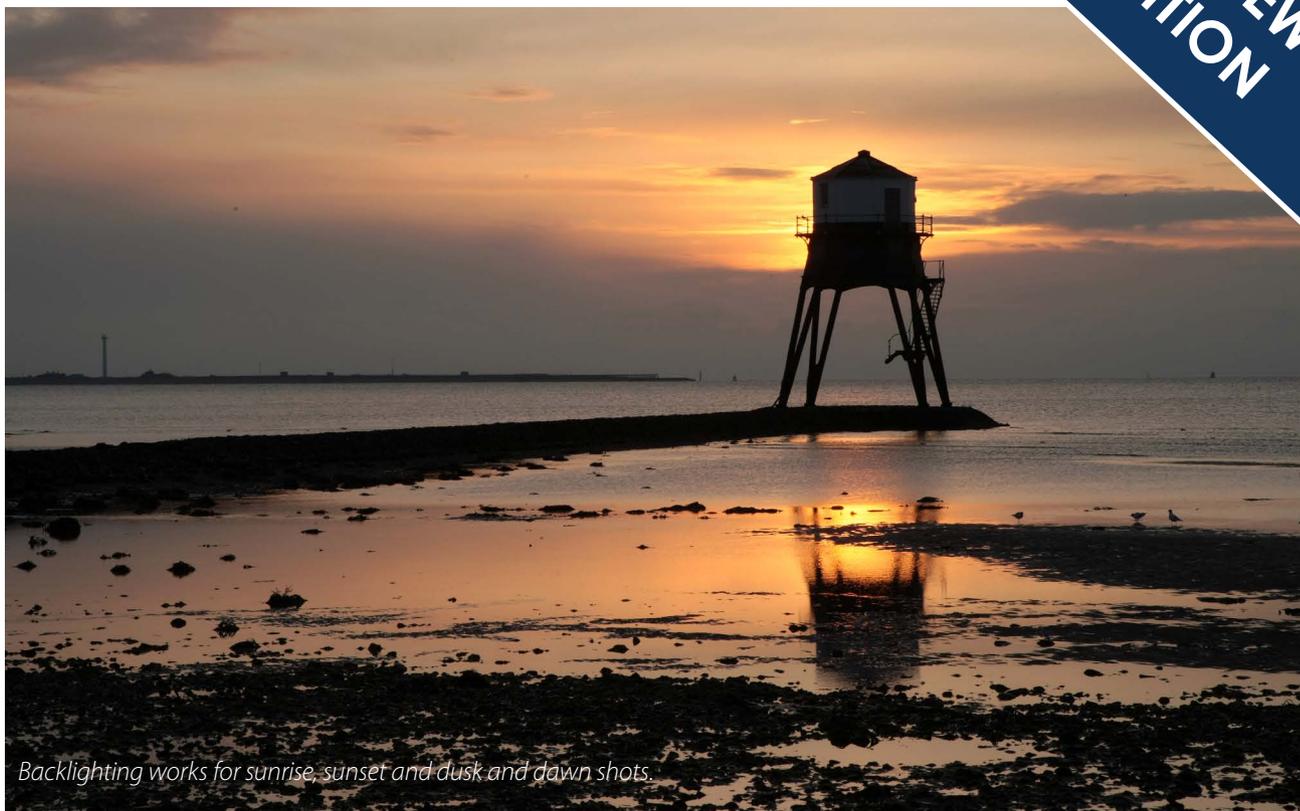
It's also the lighting type that I will use the most when I shoot portraits. Because the subject is looking away from the sun we get a much better facial expression. However, as there is no light falling on their face, fill in flash becomes essential. This does not need to be from an external flash unit. The camera models which have got the built-in flash which is on most of the models does a perfectly good job.

The other time that I like shooting backlit is when I shoot wildlife but it has to be right subject. The lion cub example bottom left, is an ideal subject where backlighting will work, due to its furry outline.

We will be looking at a number of techniques that you need to learn and utilise throughout this ebook.

Subjects lit by side lighting can be shot successfully on the fully automated modes. Unfortunately when we start to shoot with backlighting, the fully automated modes do not give us the controls that we need.

To be able to get the camera to expose in the right part of the image, we would need to use overrides such as exposure compensation and AE lock. We will look at these in the overrides chapter.



*Backlighting works for sunrise, sunset and dusk and dawn shots.*



*Some wildlife work well backlit if they have fur that will pick up the rimlighting effect.*



*You get better facial expressions shooting portraits backlit but you will need fill in flash to light the face.*

## What's the weather

I'm a UK based photographer and shoot a lot in the UK and I will be the first to agree that the British weather and photography do not always work together well.

The reality is that the conditions that you are shooting in will affect the image that you take. The images on a bright sunny day will often look far better than on a dull overcast day.

If you have a stunning day, blue sky, puffy clouds and clear lighting it can be very difficult to take a bad image, especially if shooting landscapes or general travel images.

However, not all sunny days make for great photography, often the light in the summer is bright but there is a general haze across the sky.

This is okay if shooting close up, macro or portraits. However for landscape and general scenes the sky will be pale and undefined and the lighting can be quite soft on the scene, resulting in an image that looks flat and uninteresting.

A very cloudy day will often mean that there is no sun to illuminate your subjects. Although you will still be able to take images the results will look flatter and less interesting than those taken in brighter conditions.

On cloudy days to get the very best images you need to choose the subjects that you shoot carefully. Portraits work well, details and close up images work. It's the wide landscapes and travels scenes that invariably are disappointing.



*A cloudy day is never going to look as good as an image taken on a sunny day.*



*The better lighting and sky has just lifted this image and given a shot that looks better than the one on a cloudy day.*



*The lighting doesn't get any better than this for travel and landscape images.*



*Even shooting wildlife the colours and details are much better on a bright clear sunny day.*



*There was some very weak sun getting through the clouds but the bright colours in the mist works in this shot.*



*If the weather is dire, frame tightly and concentrate on the detail shots.*

## Wet and stormy weather

Ironically as the weather becomes more inclement it can also become more photogenic. Stormy weather can give some great landscape images, especially if there are a few breaks in the cloud as we can see from the top image to the right.

In this type of weather, also think about the light levels that you are shooting in. The thicker the clouds the more they will cut down on the light you have to shoot with. The image top right was taken on 400 ISO, but I was shooting with a very wide lens which meant that I did not need a particularly high shutter speed.

Be wary of using your camera in the rain. Some of the professional models, the 1D series, 5D series and 7D series models are well sealed and will withstand a reasonable amount of moisture.

The advanced, or enthusiast models such as the EOS 70D, 60D do have enough sealing to protect them against short exposure to light rain.

Weather sealing adds to both the cost, size and weight of models and the result of this is the smaller lightweight models in the series, 700D, 100D, 600D, 650D and similar models do not have any weather sealing.

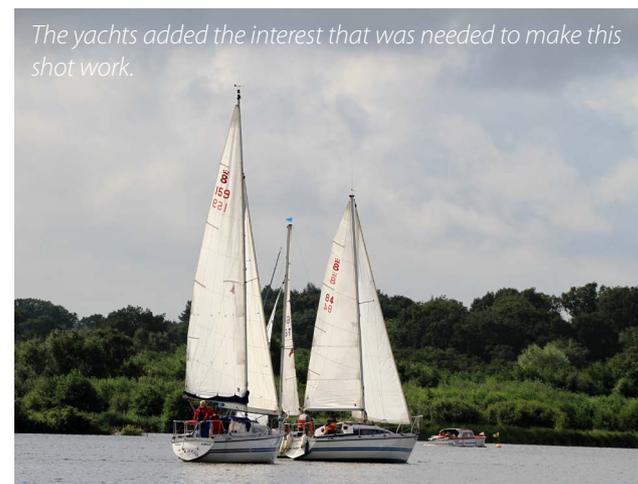
They are vulnerable to moisture entering the camera if used in anything other than a very light drizzle. However if you are going out and it might rain, a small plastic bag carried in a pocket is all you really need to protect the camera. You can also buy special rain covers that would allow you to carry on shooting.



*This was taken just before a big storm.*



*Backlighting can work if there are some breaks in the clouds.*



*The yachts added the interest that was needed to make this shot work.*

## What time of day are you shooting

If you are new to photography this may seem a strange question to think about. Photographers are much more aware of light than those that do not take photographs.

The time of day changes the type of light that you are shooting in. Early in the day it's coming from a lower angle, is much warmer in colour but not as bright as in the middle of the day.

As we get towards sunset the light again comes from a lower angle, is warmer in colour and gradually will diminish in brightness.

Early in the day and late in the evening we have a period that is referred to by photographers as the golden hours. These are a couple of hours after sunrise and a couple of hours before sunset.

At these times the light is warm and golden in colour and from a lower light angle and will generally give the very best looking images.

The actual times that this happens will vary a lot in the UK as in the winter we have very short days when the golden lighting lasts virtually all day. In the summer we often get 18 hour days and you either have to be up very early or out extremely late to see any of the golden lighting.

Once we understand and start to see the way that light and weather affects the images that we take, we may choose to go out and shoot specific images at times of day when they will be at their best. We may even chose to do more photography in the cooler months as the conditions are often better.



*This was take in the winter at 9am when the lighting is warm and golden.*



*Taken at about 5pm in winter when there was a reasonably colourful sunset.*



*This was taken at 10:40 am in summer when the light is much stronger and cooler.*

## How bright is the light

The other thing that we have to think about when I am taking the image is how bright the light is that I am shooting in.

This will affect the settings that we have to use on the camera. The reality is that on a cloudy day or at sunrise and sunset, the light is considerably less than it is in the middle of the day.

This can make it harder to get the image as we want, especially if specific settings are needed to capture the subjects exactly as we want.

Freezing action is a good example of this. If we need a high shutter speed to freeze the subject we will need a fairly good light level in order to use the settings that we need.

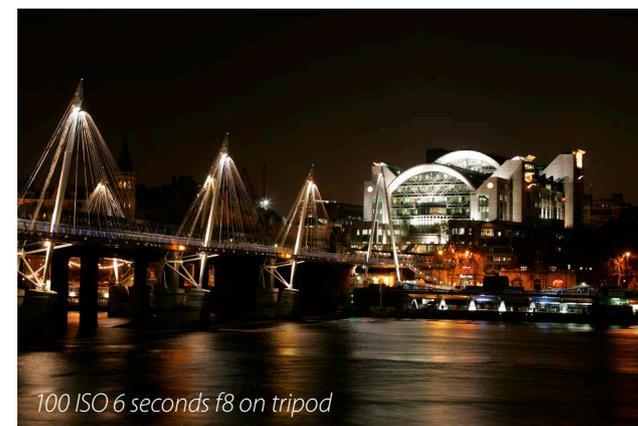
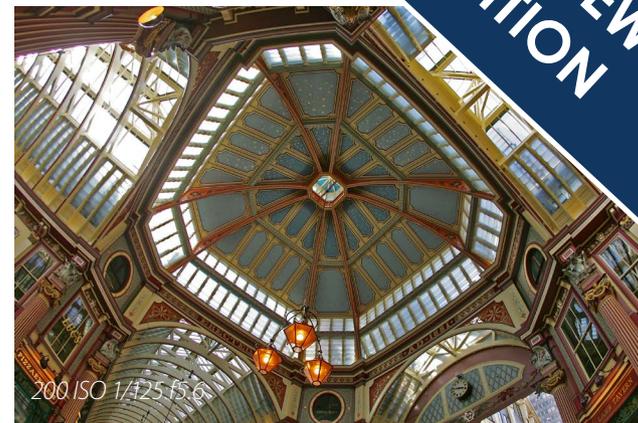
If you are using the camera on the basic zone or fully automatic mode settings the camera will look after this for you.

There are three settings that it will constantly be altering for you, the aperture, shutter speed and ISO.

When you start shooting on the creative zone modes you start to take responsibility for these three settings and choose the settings that you want to use.

However you still need to be selecting settings that are right for the light levels that you are shooting in.

We will look a lot more at this in chapter 3 when we look at the settings that we use.



## What are you going to include



This may seem like a totally different subject, but the conditions that we shoot in are often the thing that decides the framing. If the conditions that you are shooting in are very good, blue sky, puffy clouds, etc, then getting lots into the image can work very well.

If the conditions are not so good then keeping the framing tight on the subject will often give a much better result as in the image above left.



Framing is something that many new photographers struggle with. There is often a compulsion to make sure that you get everything into the frame. If photographing a person, to fit the whole person in. With a landscape there is often a desire to get as much as possible within the frame, rather than concentrating on what the image is really of.

Often the best images are those that concentrate on just one subject keeping the image very



simple. This makes the image both simple to look at but also striking through its simplicity as in the image above centre.

New photographers also forget that the camera can be used vertically as well as horizontally. Many subjects suit the vertical or portrait framing better with less spare space around the subject to provide distractions as in the image above.

## What are you going to include



The framing that we use can also make a difference to how we perceive the subject that I am taking.

Vertical framing will emphasize the height of a subject; horizontal framing will emphasize the width of something.

In the images above the subject suits both ways of framing. I shoot a lot of images where I take



both a horizontal and vertically framed image. When I am writing the ebooks it is useful to be able to choose from both formats as one often fits the page layout better than the other.

The same will apply if you are planning to create a photo book, where the layouts tend to be biased toward the majority of the images being shot horizontally. If you are planning to create a

slide show to watch on your TV, the new wide screen format does not work at all well with vertical images.

I look at framing images a lot more in The Essential Guide To Seeing Images ebook. The Essential Guide To Understanding Light ebook looks in a lot more depth at understanding and using light to create better images.

# eBooks for your EOS photography

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