

# The Essential Guide To Travel Photography

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

Over the years I have written many different guides, scripts, technical publications and more presentations than I really care to remember, but this is my very first ebook.

The obvious choice of topic for the first one has to be travel photography, as travelling is and always has been the thing that motivates me to work. After setting up Experience Seminars, I was lucky enough to have been invited to lead a number of photographic trips and also shoot specifically for some of the travel companies that I have worked with, enabling me to travel to some of the remoter parts of the world such as the Antarctic and some of the polar regions in addition to my own travels around Europe, USA and Africa.

I therefore have a vast range of images from around the world to choose from, with all the continents represented apart from Australia which has so far eluded me.

My aim is to give you a good understanding of what you need to grasp to get some great travel images and what settings are needed. I have also looked at the creative side of this type of photography looking at framing, lighting and seeing the best images to take.

Hopefully the images and explanations will inspire you to go out and get the very best images of your travels around the world.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance in producing this book.

Both have endured long hours of reading and proofing this book for which I am very grateful.

Brian Hall

Samantha Hall

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# Introduction to travel photography

This image was taken on an independent trip to Istanbul in the Grand Bazar. It was taken with a 35mm lens at 500 ISO on an EOS 5D with settings of 1/25th f5.6.

We all love to come back with stunning images to remind us of our holidays and travels. Yet all too often, the images that we bring back fail to live up to the memories of the places we have been.

Travel photography encompasses a wide variety of different subjects, it can be literally anything that we see on our travels. This means that a very broad range of photographic techniques need to be employed in order to get the great results that we want.

Travel photography can be enjoyed with minimal equipment and indeed the saying, less is more, can be very true.

One of the greatest challenges can be capturing images that sum up the character of the place. In the image on the right, the boat is vital to add scale to the image and show the vastness of the scenery that we are amongst.

It is an area where you really need to think through what does and does not make its way into the gadget bag, as you will not enjoy sightseeing if you have a heavy bag with you at all times.

It is also an area of photography where the conditions can change within minutes as we move through a location, choosing to photograph different subjects all the time.

Understanding all the controls on your camera and how they are applied to the images that you take, can greatly increase in the number of successful shots. This allows you to successfully shoot images in some of the most challenging lighting conditions.



Lighting plays a big part of all in the images that we shoot, so planning your day to make the most of the lighting, can also give you the best chance of getting some great photographs.

We are also going to look at how to cope with the less than ideal shooting conditions that you may encounter, due to the restrictions imposed by the itinerary that you have.

In this ebook we are going to look at the more general types of travel photography you will shoot with your EOS camera.

We will mention wildlife and close up and macro just briefly. These are topics in their own right and we have specific ebooks in the range that look at these subjects in depth.

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## Chapter 01

# Approaches to travel photography

This image was taken on an independent trip to Prage in April; it's a sunrise shot taken on an EOS 5D Mark II. It's taken handheld at 100 ISO on a 200mm lens. The settings were 1/500th f5.6.

## What do you want from your travel images - Family trips



*Family shots are going to be a big part of the photography on a family trip.*



*Taken at Fort Rinella, on Malta. Fun for the family and some great images.*

Travel photographers vary a lot as to how they view their photography.

This can range from someone who wants a few snapshots of the family holiday, through to those that do more adventurous trips and want to capture the experience, and on to those who travel to do photography.

So possibly the first thing that you need to establish with this type of photography is why are you taking the images? This may seem strange, but it's important to establish who you are out to please with the image that you take.

If you are on a family holiday, then you are going to want to keep the family happy, take

images of them and the places that you visit. These three things do not always work together well, especially if there are children to take into account.

The reality is that you will be out at times of day that will be less than ideal to get the best images. Having said that, it's still possible to come back with some great images of the family and the places that you visit, and these can provide some wonderful memories.

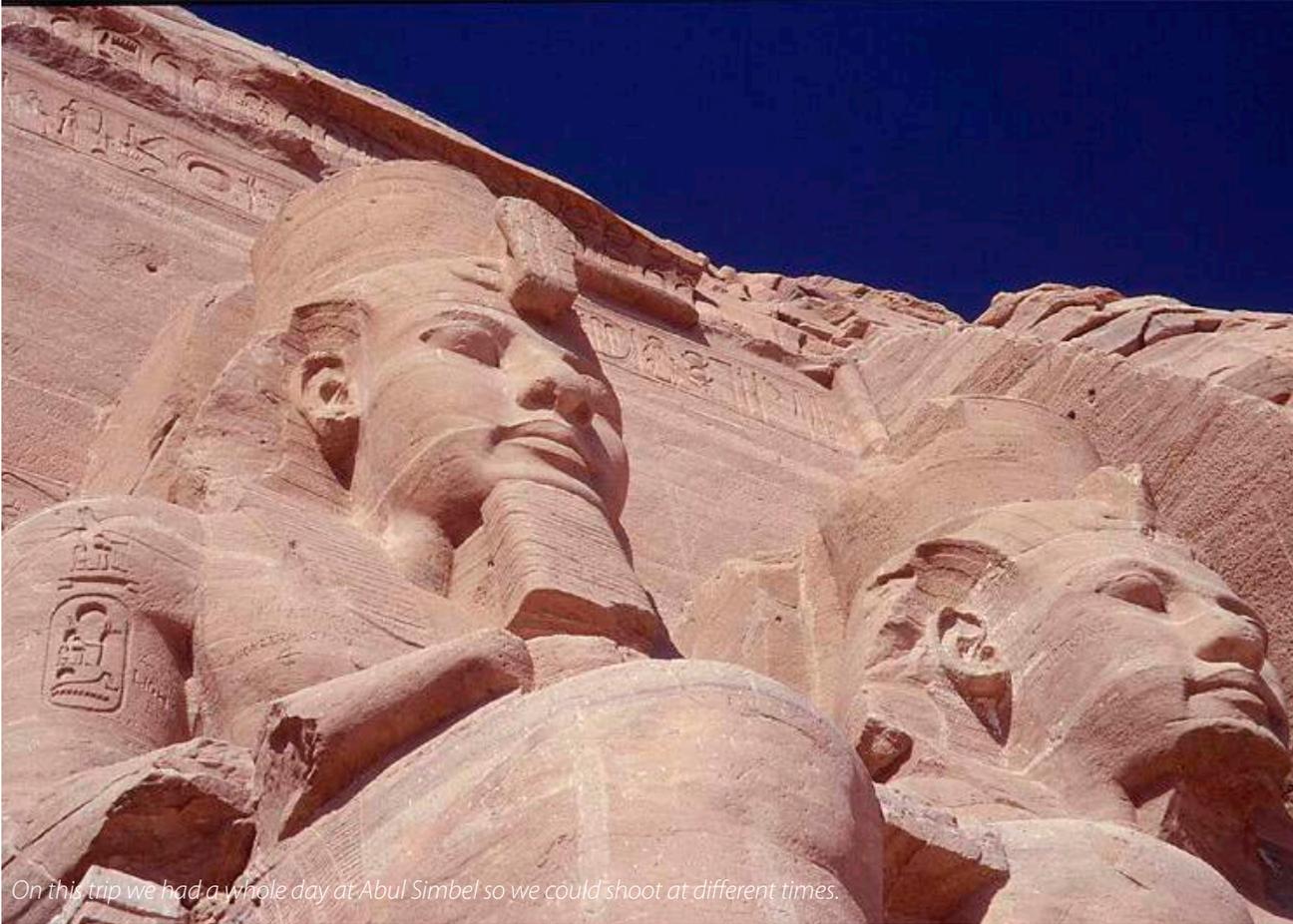
In these sorts of trips you are trying to please yourself and no one else. Don't get too despondent if your image is not as great as the ones in the guidebook.

The reality is that the person who took that was able to plan the time, the day and everything about the shot and did not have anyone else to consider.



*On an organised trip some of the tourist shows offer great opportunities and can be great fun for the family.*

## What do you want from your travel images - Organised trips



If you do the more adventurous organised trips, then these normally provide more time in the special locations and most of your fellow travellers will also be taking their own images; so there is less pressure to move on quite as quickly.

You will also visit the sites that do afford the opportunities to get some stunning images.

The conditions that you encounter may well prove challenging to both the photography and in some instances the camera.

With simple precautions, dust, cold, wet, and humidity should not stop you taking some stunning images.

The main challenge on these trips is getting to the locations at the time of day when the photography is best.

As a result some compromises have to be accepted that the light may not be at its best for the shots you are taking.

Your fellow travellers may enjoy the great views and want to spend the time in that location. However their motivation to get up at 6am for that special morning light, or staying out to get some great night shots, may not be as strong as yours.

The other problem that we have encountered with organised trips is the adherence to “normal” eating times. This is normally right in the middle of when that glorious sunset is taking place!

### Travel tip

Tour operators vary immensely as to how “rushed” the trips will be. The more that is crammed into a two week holiday the less opportunity there is likely to be.

The longer trips generally take things a slightly slower pace and give you more time to take in the locations and therefore get the images you want.

We often skip the “history lesson” from the guide and go photographing to make the most of the time that we have. We find the guides are normally happy providing you tell them.

## What do you want from your travel images - Photographic trips

Many more serious photographers plan their trips around the photography. In many instances going on trips specially organised for photography or even travelling independently to plan their own itineraries.

This makes the photography easier, as you can control the time and location of the visits to be in the right place at the right time for the best of the lighting. You can also plan the eating times around the times of day when the lighting is less than ideal for shooting.

However if planning the trip yourself, more planning and thought needs to go into the organisation of the trip than if you are simply following the guide.

It is also easy to miss some of the key things in the area through lack of research beforehand. However since the advent of the Internet, researching trips is now easier than ever before.

It has to be said though that planning a purely photographic trip, often fails to fit in with the normal definition of a holiday, which many people feel should be restful and relaxing.

So what is important when reading what we say in this ebook, is to adapt what we are saying to fit in with the type of trip that you want both for you and the people travelling with you.

We are going to look at the very best way to get the images and the times that will give you the best results. However many of the things that we are going to talk about, can be applied

*On this trip it was an organised tour around Spitsbergen but it gave excellent photographic opportunities, especially as the expedition leader was a keen photographer himself.*



to all aspects of photography and will still give improved results.

The conditions will also vary according to when you visit the location, so at the time of year that you visit it may not be at its most photogenic.

Plus no matter where we go the prevailing weather conditions can make a huge difference

to the overall success of the images that you are shooting.

Ultimately, it's your holiday and it's you who the results have to please. If they don't look quite like the ones in the brochure, then remember they do represent what you saw and did on your holiday, and therefore will be special to you and your family.

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## Chapter 02

# Equipment for travel photography

This image was taken on a trip to Las Vegas and was shot on a EF 8-15mm f4 fisheye zoom lens fitted to a full frame camera.

## What equipment works best

Generally travel photography can be done with minimal amounts of equipment. The exceptions to this are wildlife and close up photography where more specialised equipment is needed.

## Camera requirements

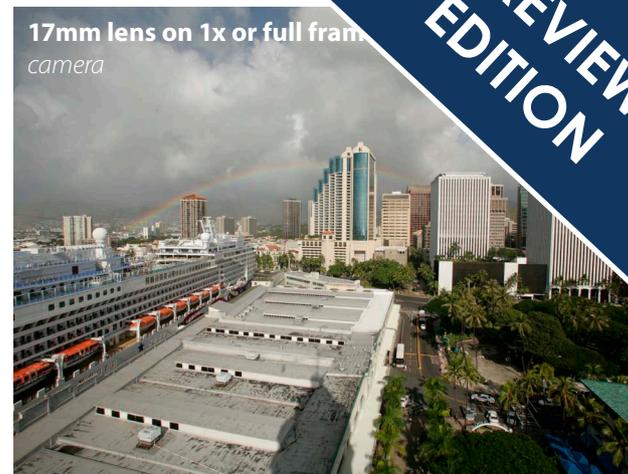
Any camera is going to be able to take great travel images. This is one area of photography where the smaller and lighter models have a distinct advantage as they are easier to carry.

The location you are going to and what you are going to be shooting will have an affect on the best model. Some areas such as wildlife will benefit form a higher specification camera. General travel scenes and landscape work well on any model. We are going to look later in the book at some of the more specific requirements for specific subjects.

Digital SLR cameras feature different sized imaging sensors. Which sensor size that your camera features will have a bearing on the lenses that you will select for your camera.

Canon now have just the two options, the 1.6x crop or sometimes referred to as APS-C or 1x or full frame models.

It's often said that the full frame models are better for travel images. Photographically this can be the case, but the 1.6x crop models have the benefit of being smaller and lighter also making them perfect for travelling which is ideal for when the outfit needs to be small and light. Some lenses have been designed exclusively for



14mm



22mm

### 1.6x crop or APS-C

This is smaller than a frame of 35mm film, and as a result gives a crop factor on the lenses that are being used, hence the naming.

They do not actually change the focal length of the lens, but instead apply a crop factor to the image, so that the area being captured is smaller than it would be with the same lens on a full frame sensor camera.

The perspective and depth of field remains constant to the focal length of the lens being used, regardless of the body that it is being used on.

24mm



36mm

### Full frame or 1x

These give the same effects and angle of view as when shooting with 35mm film cameras.

These are popular with professional travel photographers as you do not need ultra wide lenses just to capture a normal field of view and all the techniques are the same as for film.

These are only found on a few high specification models, which are generally larger, heavier and significantly more costly than the basic models in the range.

## Sensor size and lens choices

use on the smaller sensor or 1.6x crop models and are prefixed with an EF-S designation within the Canon range.

The EF-S lenses have been developed to give frame coverage only for the smaller sensors.

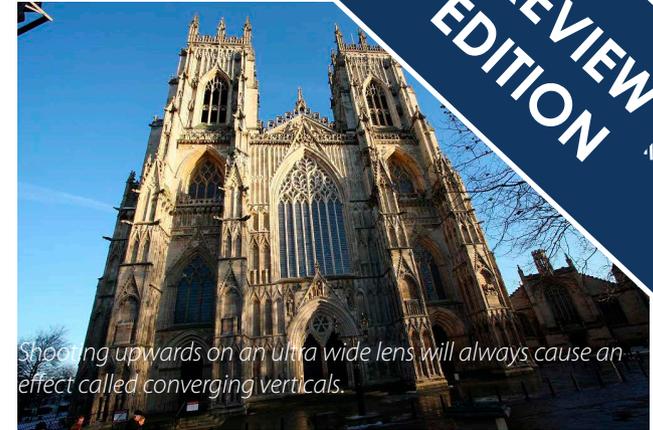
Only working with the smaller 1.6x crop sensors allows lenses to be made smaller, lighter and often more affordable and as a result these lenses are increasingly seen in the market place.

The smaller size and weight often combined with wider zoom ranges than the EF lenses in the range make them ideal for many travel applications, especially when the outfit size and weight needs to be kept to a minimum.

One word of warning, these lenses cannot be used on the higher specified 1x or full frame sensor models. One of the groups who we see eventually trading up to these higher level cameras are travel photographers, especially those who shoot in towns and cities and require wide lenses that are free from distortions such as converging verticals.

When shooting travel images we often need to shoot in confined spaces, and so we use wide-angle lenses a lot.

The cropped area given on the smaller sensor models result in the lenses that are traditionally used for landscape not giving a wide enough area. As a result wider lenses are needed for the smaller sensor models.



*Shooting upwards on an ultra wide lens will always cause an effect called converging verticals.*

Today this is not so much of a disadvantage as it used to be, as we now have a wide range of lenses available.

The only drawback of these ultra wide lenses is the converging verticals issues that we can get when shooting tall buildings. When the cameras are tilted upwards this can be made more pronounced with the use of the ultra wide lenses.

This will be more of an issue when using the ultra wide lenses for the smaller sensor models, as we are using lenses that have very short focal lengths such as 10mm through to 15mm. These lenses will naturally produce more distortions than the equivalent focal lengths on a full frame models



*The Canon EF-S 10-22mm USM is a good example of an ultra wide lens for the 1.6x crop models.*

## Useful features on EOS cameras for travel

### High ISO settings

Over the last few years we have seen lots of new innovations on the latest EOS models. Many of these have made shooting images when travelling much easier and more convenient.

One of the biggest changes in cameras over the last few years has been a big increase in the ISO range available to the photographer. This now allows the option of shooting in lowlight handheld if not using a tripod.

Most of the current EOS models allow the ISO to be set up to at least 25,600 ISO but some models go as high as 102,400 ISO or even higher. If you want to be able to get great shots in any light levels but not have the bulk or inconvenience of carrying a tripod then the later models offer a big advantage.

Many of the cities that we visit when travelling offer great opportunities at night to capture some stunning images.

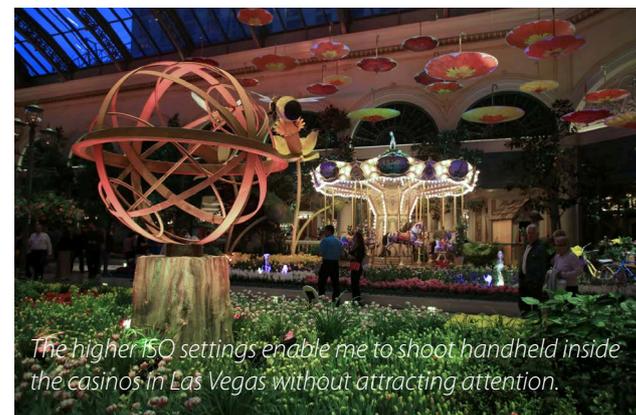
The ability to shoot at these higher ISO settings allows us to shoot handheld and therefore make the most of the opportunities that may present themselves.



*Las Vegas is very brightly lit and so ISO settings in the range of 1600 ISO up to 6400 ISO are sufficient to get good shake free images.*



*This crypt is very well lit so this shot only needed 3200 ISO to get a shutter speed fast enough to handhold the shot.*

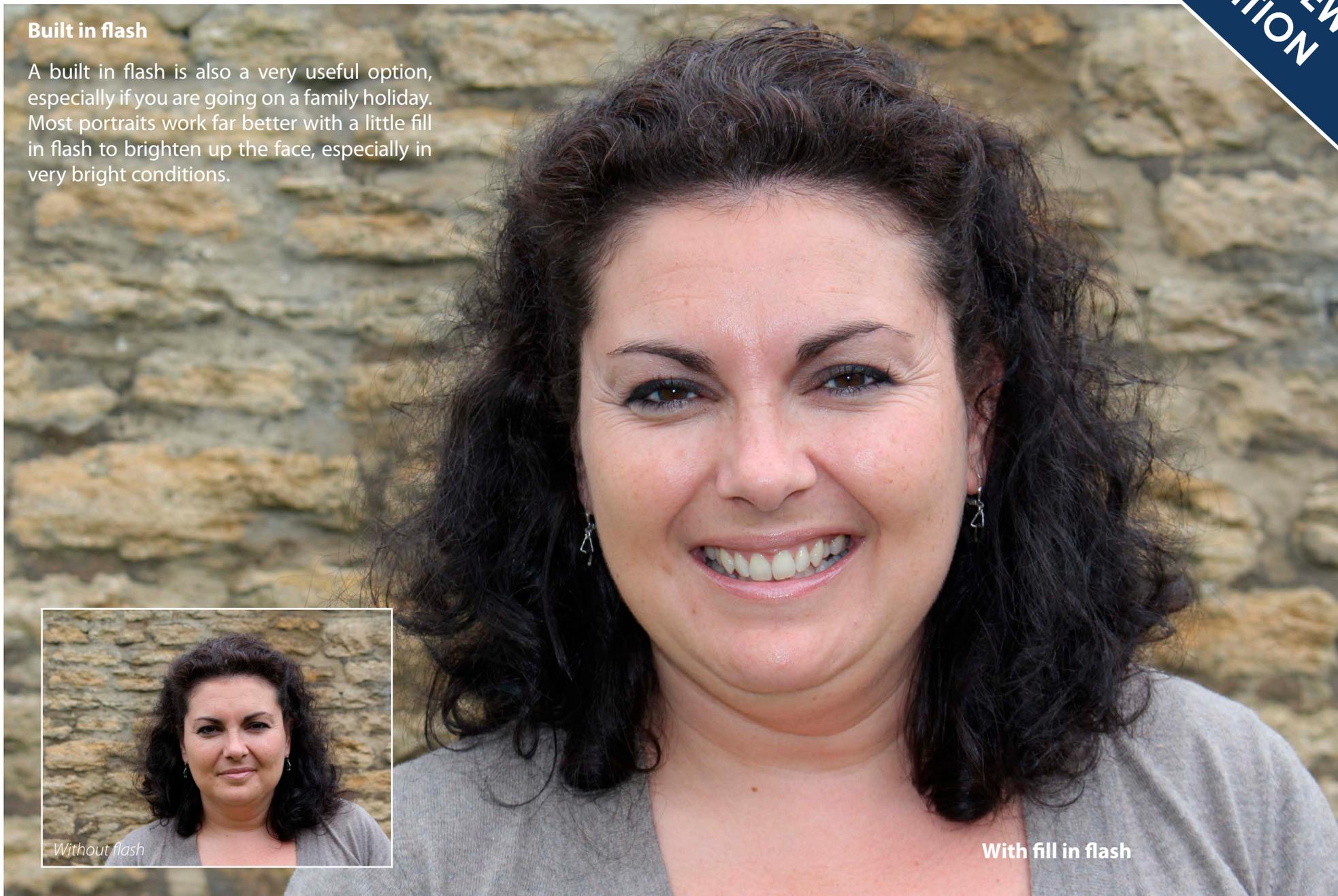


*The higher ISO settings enable me to shoot handheld inside the casinos in Las Vegas without attracting attention.*

## Useful features on EOS cameras for travel

### Built in flash

A built in flash is also a very useful option, especially if you are going on a family holiday. Most portraits work far better with a little fill in flash to brighten up the face, especially in very bright conditions.



*Without flash*

**With fill in flash**

## Useful features on EOS cameras for travel



### HDR Mode

Another feature that we have seen appear recently is the introduction of HDR shooting. This allows three images to be taken and then combined together to give an image with a wider dynamic range.

This can now be performed in camera with most of the current models, however if you do not have the feature you can shoot three images using the auto exposure bracketing that most models feature and then combine them in software in the computer later. Although HDR is best shot on a tripod, the cameras now feature an auto align option that allows handheld images to be lined up with just a small crop to the original image area.

## Lenses for travel photography

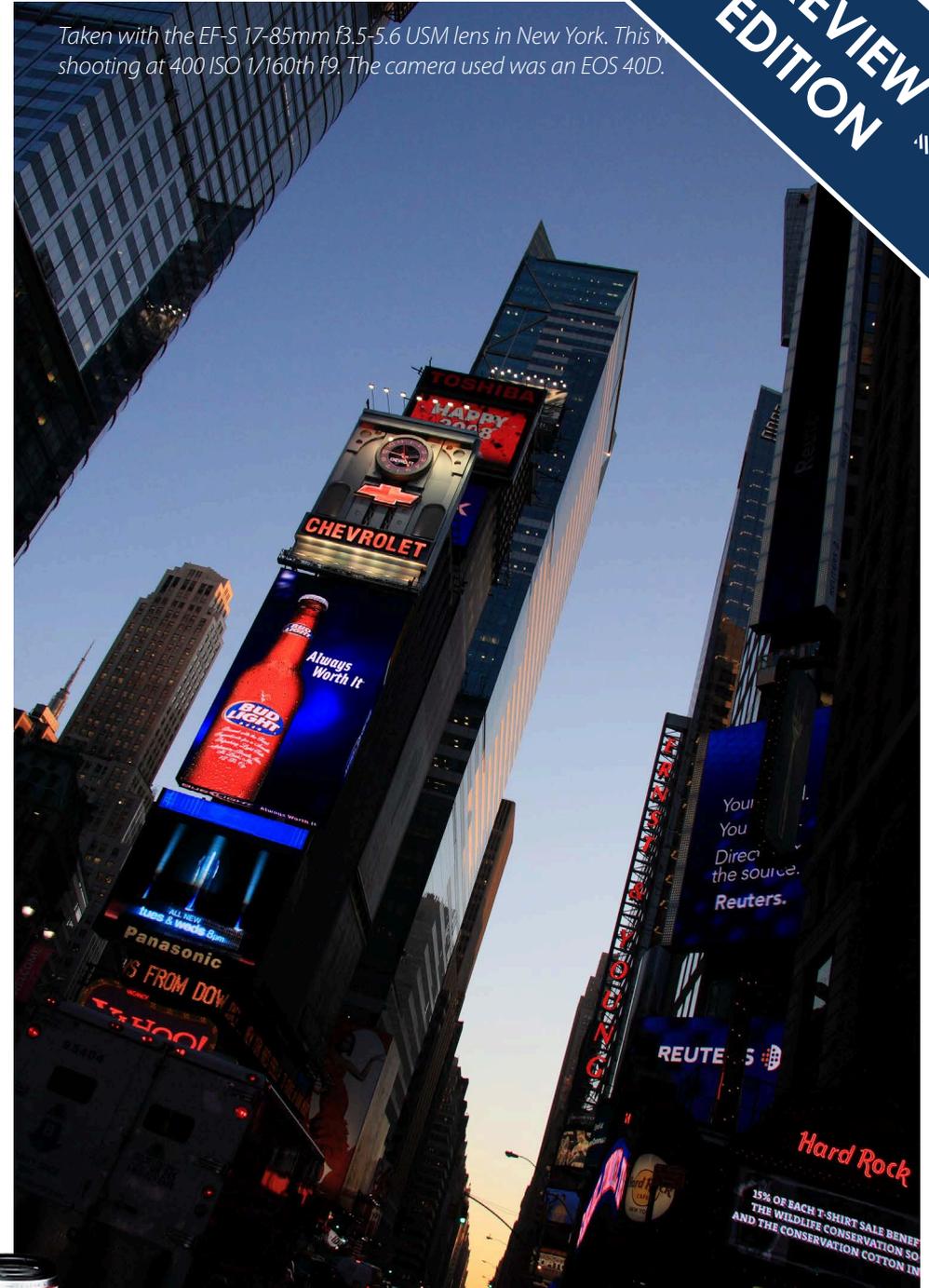
As long as there is some basic way of overriding the exposure, white balance and focusing, the camera will cope with just about anything that travel photography is likely to demand of it. We will look at the camera settings used for travel photography later in this book.

What lenses are needed for travel photography? Let's point out at the outset, that is like asking how long is a piece of string. So there is no one solution that fits all.

What is needed is to take a look at the trip that you are planning and ask yourself what you are likely to see and photograph. Also think about the location that you are going to and find out what the weather conditions and light levels are likely to be like when you are doing the trip.

The lower the light levels that you plan to shoot in the more thought needs to be given to the equipment that you will be shooting with. We will look at this aspect in more depth in several later chapters.

We are going to look at the key subjects that you are likely to encounter on your travels and discuss the lenses that you are going to need. Rather than talk about individual lenses we are going to look at the focal length range needed. So if we are talking about 15mm to 300mm, that does not have to



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## Lenses for town and city photography

be in one lens. It may need to be in two or even three lenses.

The best way to photograph in towns and cities is to walk around them. You simply see a lot more things and get to far better viewpoints.

You also get to see areas that are not on the main tourist trail and often provide some great photographic opportunities. The key requirements are a comfortable pair of shoes and a light, easy to carry camera outfit.

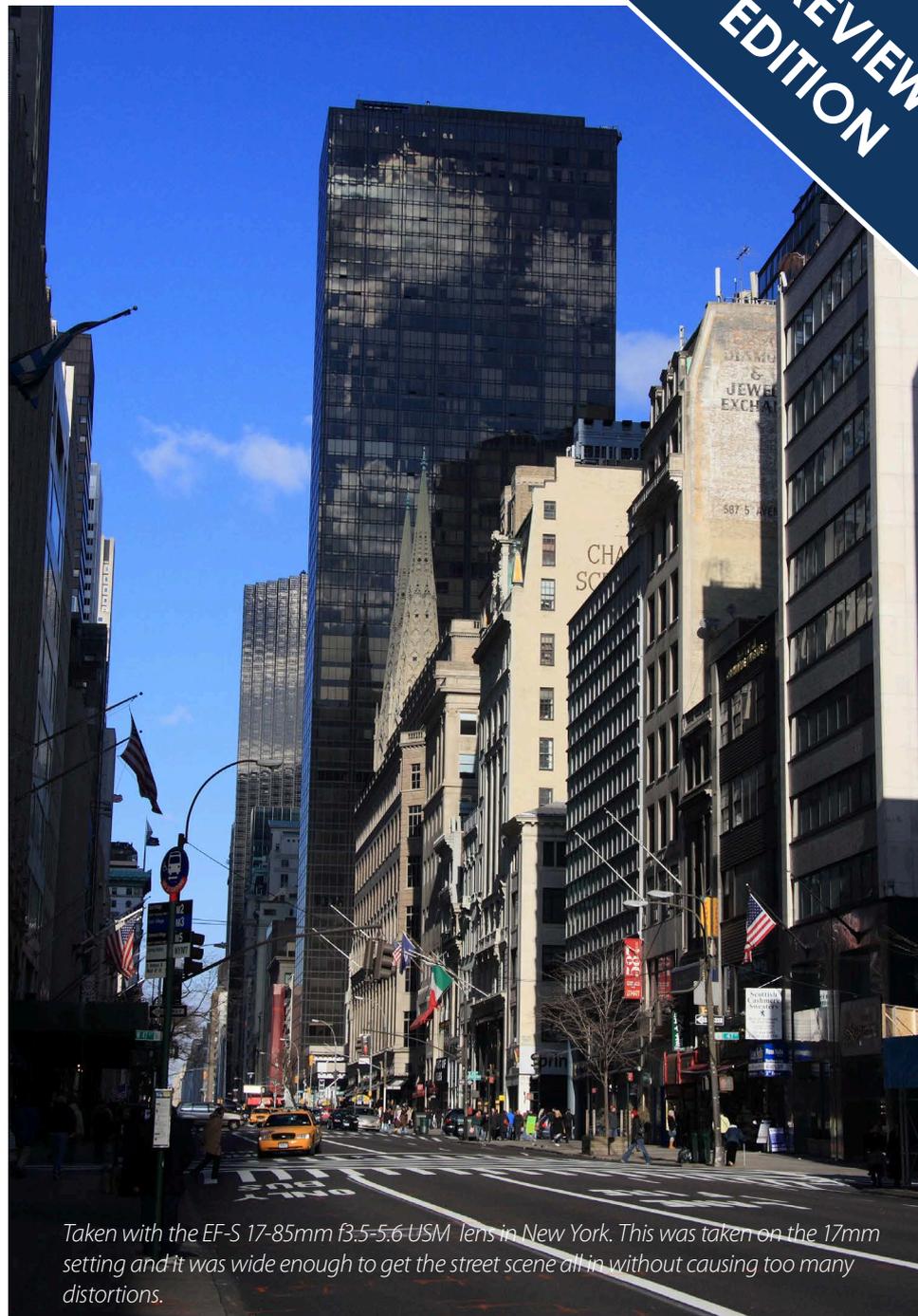
Most of the photography in towns and cities can be achieved with a single lens, something like a EF-S 15-85mm or EF-S 17-85mm lens is ideal if you use an SLR camera with a 1.6x crop sensor.

The advantage given by the EF-S 15-85mm lens is that it does offer a wider angle of view. This is often dismissed by photographers on the basis that it is only 2 or 3mm wider than the standard kit lenses and that will not make a very big difference to the image.

Photographers often forget that many of the scales that we use in photography are logarithmic, and lens focal lengths are logarithmic in type. They double and half with the 50mm standard lens focal length used as the central reference point. So each time we half the focal length we double the width that we get. This means that as the focal lengths become shorter just a mm or two can make a very big difference in the area that we can capture. At the telephoto end of the scale a mm or two is almost imperceptible.

The other lens that we use a lot for travel photography when we are using cameras with a 1.6x crop factor is the EF-S 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 STM lens. Although not giving such extreme wide angles its works better if you are only going to carry the one lens. The EF-S 18-200mm f3.5-5.6 is also another good option for this but heavier and bulkier to carry.

If you have a camera with a full frame sensor then lenses like the EF24-105mm f4L IS USM will be a better option giving a lens which will shoot most of the subjects that you are likely to see. The 24-105mm focal length on a full frame model gives exactly the same angle of view as the 15-85mm lens on a 1.6x crop sensor model.



*Taken with the EF-S 17-85mm f3.5-5.6 USM lens in New York. This was taken on the 17mm setting and it was wide enough to get the street scene all in without causing too many distortions.*

# eBooks for your EOS photography

You've just read a **free 20-page preview** of this eBook, part of a comprehensive series of Canon EOS camera eBooks that I've produced, based on years of experience training Canon EOS photographers like you. Thanks for downloading it.

There's much, much more – most of my eBooks are around 150 pages long, so you've had just a small taste of what you can learn about your camera. And it won't cost you the earth – prices start **from just £4.95**.

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*Nina*

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