

Sunrise/Sunset Photo Tips

1. Be prepared! Prepare ahead of time. Scout out your favorite spot since the sun rises and sets at a different angle depending on the time of year. Gather and check your equipment before you head out to shoot. Be sure to have your manual nearby. Equipment that will enhance your experience includes a tripod & cable/wireless release for slower shutter speeds and lens wipes or a lens pen to keep your lens spotless, saving you time in the post process! A great website, <http://sunrisesunset.com> gives you sunrise, sunset, twilight and moon information.

2. Shoot in RAW! If your camera has RAW file format capability, try it! The files are larger, but you can capture much more detail and can pull many more highlights out in the post processing than you can when shooting jpegs. You can shoot in both, but be sure you have a large enough SD card to accommodate the large files. Your photos may not look as vibrant as a jpeg straight out of the camera, but with a little post processing in LightRoom, PhotoShop or one of the many free photo editing programs you'll see a world of difference.

3. The Golden Hour! The golden hour gives you the most desirable light with a warm glow. 1/2 hour before sunrise & after sunset gives a soft peaceful mood. I've never been a morning person, but the light at sunrise can't be beat and never disappoints. *Be patient!* Some of the best color comes before the sun comes up over the horizon at sunrise and after it has gone below the horizon at sunset! If you are up early enough during a sunrise or patient enough during a sunset you can even catch The Blue Hour. Clouds add character to your sunset photos filled with color and you may also catch them reflecting in the water if you're lucky. Turn off Auto White Balance and set your White Balance to *Cloudy*.

4. Use a tripod! Whenever possible, use a tripod for your sunrise/sunset photos. Check your manual and use *Mirror Lock Up* to avoid shaky photos. Try different perspectives shooting low to the ground or high up. Shoot wide and then zoom in. Frame your shot and shoot! Change your perspective as you shoot so you don't get 100 versions of the same shot!

5. Metering! Typically you want to point at the color you want to capture (look for pinks and purples), but you need to think about what you want to capture. Do you want

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silhouettes of people and interesting foreground features? Meter for the sky. Do you want to focus on the foreground without washing out the background? Meter for the foreground and use your exposure compensation (find this in your manual as it differs from camera to camera). It depends on your camera's dynamic range and it is challenging to get a balanced exposure in one shot. Try *bracketing* your shots shooting one at normal exposure, one underexposed and one overexposed. Use your Live View to see the results and play with the settings trying +/-1 to +/-2 for your bracket. Your camera may also have a built in HDR (High Dynamic Range) setting where you set the bracketing range and it takes 3 photos in a row. You need to merge those in a photo editing software to get the HDR effect.

6. Aperture Priority! Shoot in Aperture Priority (A or Av mode depending on your camera) and your shutter speed will be set for you. A larger number on your aperture (f/11, f/16, f/22) will give you the starburst effect and also will slow down your shutter speed increasing the need for a tripod. Shoot wide at f/22 for your best starburst!

7. ISO! Turn off Automatic ISO and set it to the lower end for your camera, 100 or 200. The higher the ISO the more grain you will get in your photos. Today's DSLRs can handle some high ISOs without getting too grainy. It mostly matters if you want very large format prints.

8. Shutter Speed! This will automatically be set if you are in Aperture mode. You can use your Exposure Compensation to increase or decrease the exposure in this mode. Check your manual for the location of the button with a +/- on it for exposure compensation.

9. Vivid Colors! Some cameras have a setting for vivid colors under the Menu. Slightly underexposing will also bring out the vivid colors.

10. Get creative and Have FUN with it! And lastly, always look in the opposite directions of the sun. You can get some amazing reflections in windows and some beautiful colors!

Don't forget to reset your camera settings when you are done.

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