

Take better holiday photos this Summer!

The most important thing about holiday photos is capturing personal memories that you can treasure forever, but here are a few pointers to make them more pleasing.

1. Ever ready

The most memorable and unrepeatable moments of a holiday can happen at the unlikeliest of times, so try to keep your camera with you and always be ready to shoot.

2. Family fun

When photographing children and image-conscious teenagers, the best shots are taken when they're naturally enjoying themselves. Instead of formal poses, try to be unobtrusive and snap them playing on the beach or just having fun. Using a long lens and taking shots from a distance can assist you with this. Take it easy on photographing the family for the first couple of days..... (see 10. below).

3. In the shadows

For close-up portraits of family members and friends, avoid harsh sunlight. Moving into the shadows stops your camera turning eyes into black holes and capturing unsightly shadows under noses and chins.

4. Get up early

Skip that lie-in and you'll be able to catch some wonderful lighting before breakfast, just as the sun is coming up. You'll also be able to shoot popular scenic views before the crowds arrive. You can probably arrange to take it easy during the middle of the day, and be ready for the evening light to take even more good pictures.

5. Whatever the weather

You don't need clear blue skies for great holiday photos. Dramatic weather makes for brilliant shots and even dull, overcast days are great for portraits. If shooting portraits, try dialling-in a little overexposure for smoother skin tones.

6. Straighten up

Photos of landscapes or architecture, and shots that include the sea's horizon, often require the camera to be absolutely level. This can be surprisingly hard to achieve, so zoom out a little further than normal to allow for straightening and cropping on your computer later. Your camera's viewfinder may have a rectangular frame that you can see as you compose your shot, so use this to keep the image level.

7. House of cards

Memory cards are cheap these days, especially if you buy online. Take plenty to last the whole trip. Don't trust all your shots to one high-capacity card - it's safer to use several low capacity cards instead.

8. Think differently

Keep your eyes open for the unfamiliar. Photographed alone or as backdrops to portraits, unusual objects or buildings can add interest to your shots. Depending on your proficiency with editing software, you could put that nice portrait in front of one of your landscapes when you get back home.

9. End of the day

No holiday collection would be complete without sunset shots. Look for strong foreground shapes to create silhouettes or for reflections in water. Everybody's seen great sunset... so make yours different.

10. End of the holiday

With a bit of luck, you'll have had some great weather on your holiday and, by the end of it, everybody will be looking tanned, healthy and relaxed. This is the best time to take your posed portraits.

There are some key ingredients to take high impact shots on bright summer days. Let's have a look at some of the more technical aspects of shooting outside in bright light by using RAW format and saturating colours for a bit of contrast.

- Colours are saturated and really punchy when next to an expanse of white. Seek out some white surfaces and team them up with subjects that feature primary colours.
- Reduce the amount of colours in the shot to create the most impact.
- To increase contrast and to make skies really blue, fit a polarising filter to your lens. Experiment and you'll see a huge leap in the colour reproduction in your shots.
- A polariser is also great for shooting water and will give you much punchier lakes and seas.
- Although noon summer sun is as neutral a colour temperature as you're likely to get, shoot RAW so you can tweak the white balance and you'll be certain of maximum saturation.
- If you can't shoot RAW then take a custom white balance reading for JPEG images.
- Clear skies lead to scenes with wide dynamic ranges, so meter very carefully and check your histogram. Spot meter if you have to and consider bracketing shots. Blend images afterwards.
- Adjust the Levels on all your shots using your image-editing software. Curves also add impact. Try saturating a single colour to create contrast in the shot.
- However, be careful of chroma noise appearing by cranking up the saturation levels a bit too high.

