

Features



TOP

Summer Means Vacation Photo Time

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Summer Means Vacation Photo Time

*By Annabeth Miller,
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Summer is upon us. That means cameras will be preserving precious memories from family vacations, get-togethers, weddings, graduations, and so much more.

However, when the perfect photographic moment comes into view, a great many find themselves frustrated with their ability to capture the moment with a great photograph.

Here's five simple tips from AAA that will go a long, long ways to helping you be prepared to get that great family vacation photograph.

5 Simple Tips for Great Vacation Photographs

Practice before you leave home – This is quite likely the most important tip of all. Get your owners manual out and practice some of the lighting and subject situations that you are likely to find yourself with. You're likely to have family members posing in front of scenes and objects. You're likely to be photographing in bright sun, cloudy skies, indoors, in places where flash is not allowed, on beaches, on hiking trails; the various situations are near infinite. Set up these situations as best you can at home and practice, practice, practice.

Memory Cards – Today's megapixel digital cameras can quickly eat up a memory card. This is particularly true if you plan to shoot any video on your vacation. Today's digital cameras will generally tell you how many photographs you can store on your memory card. Take a look at this and determine if your card is large enough to store all the photographs from your vacation. If you happen to witness an elk doing the moonwalk, you'll want to be certain to have enough space on your memory card to capture it.

/images/AB_2012/6.13.2012_louvre.jpg

Scene Modes - It's a simple fact: many baby boomers have never taken a photograph out of their digital camera's green automatic setting. Come on...live large...explore the scene settings on your camera! If your camera was purchased in the last few years, you are very likely to have quite a number of special scene modes. These might include special settings for portraits, beach/snow, cloudy skies, sunsets, landscapes, museum, close-up, indoors, etc, etc. While your green automatic setting will try to accomplish all things, these special setting will give your camera more information and allow it to do a better job.

Fill-Flash – One of the most common mistakes I see in vacation photographs is shadowy faces in front of a brightly-lit background. Your family is posed in front of the Grand Canyon. The scene is stunning. You shoot the photograph and the faces of your loved ones are dark and shadowy. Believe it or not, you should be using your flash quite a bit in sunny situations where people are standing in front of brightly-lit subjects. Your camera doesn't know that you have loved ones in front of the Grand Canyon. It just sees all that light and compensates accordingly. In situations like these, you need to force your camera to flash and then your loved ones faces will be bright and clear. Practice this at home before you leave!

[/images/AB 2012/6.13.2012 dublin street.jpg](#)

Composition – In photography, it seems to be human nature to stick our subjects smack dab in the middle of a photograph. However, this can result in drab, predictable

photos. Before you get to the subject of your photograph, give some thought to how you will compose it. How can you better tell a story with your photograph? Instead of shooting straight on, can you shoot down on your subjects?

Can you get ground level and shoot up? Type "rule of thirds" in Google and do a little study on composition. A little creativity and study on photographic composition can really make a big difference in coming home with great vacation photographs.

One other suggestion in this day and age of technology and "smart phones". If your phone has a good camera, consider shooting some (don't forgo using your digital camera) using one of the photo apps – like Hipstamatic and Instagram. Hiptamatic applies a number of software [filters](#) to make the images look as though they were taken with an antique [film camera](#). You can choose among a number of effects that can shed a unique and different perspective on your photos.

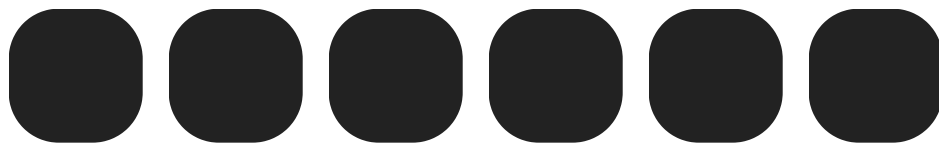
Whether you head 30 or 3000 miles away, you'll want to bring back great photos of your vacation

Photos Above: Top Photo - Warwick Castle framed on a hillside Warwick, England; Middle Photo - An example of being at the right place at the right moment - French soldiers celebrating after a Bastille Day Parade outside the Louvre, in Paris; Bottom photo - A photo of a typical Irish street, free from the tourist and commercial hub-bub. (Photos by Annabeth Miller)

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