

A person is silhouetted against a vast, layered mountain landscape at sunset. The person stands on a rocky peak in the foreground, holding a camera. The background shows multiple ridges of mountains covered in dense forest, with the sky transitioning from a warm orange glow near the horizon to a deep blue at the top.

THE EXPLORER'S GUIDE

TO TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESTINATION VIDEO

shutterstock®



1

TRAVEL TIPS AND REGULATIONS

All the tips and tricks you need to know about working abroad. From paperwork to personal safety, these are the things you need to know while packing your bags.



PLANES, TRAINS & AUTOMOBILES

Planning to travel for a destination shoot? Well the first thing you need to do is figure out how to get there.

It's exciting to plan a trip, until you have to go through the grueling process of scheduling everything. From plane tickets to rental cars, there are quite a few things to remember when planning.

Airports, Baggage, and Security

When planning to travel by airplane, there are so many little things that you have to remember for every trip. Once you have booked a flight, you will need to check the airline's regulations for carry-on bags,

weight of checked bags, and their rules on traveling with batteries.

Every airline is different, so it's important to always check the rules. Never assume that you can bring anything onboard with you.

Any seasoned traveler will first tell you about the need to **keep your camera gear with you at all times** — and rightfully so. No matter how much gear you take with you, if your camera body gets lost in transport, you won't be able to shoot anything. As a good rule of thumb, **always plan to carry on your camera body and lenses**. That is also the best way to physically protect them from being tossed around with all the other baggage.

The other things you always have to carry on are any lithium metal and lithium-ion batteries. These are the rechargeable batteries you will need to operate your camera, lights, and even drones. **You also need to know the Watt hours (Wh) of each battery**. Most airlines will allow you to carry on an unlimited (yet reasonable) amount of batteries under 100Wh. For any batteries over 100Wh, passengers are usually limited to two batteries. Combinations are often allowed, so many photographer and videographers will travel with two batteries over 100Wh and the remaining batteries under 100Wh. For those traveling with film stock, carry on film rolls as well. Checked baggage goes through a stronger x-ray process that can damage your film stock.

Now that you know how many things you have to carry on with you, **check to see if all of that gear will fit in a carry-on bag**. Most airlines allow one carry-on bag and one personal bag. So you can stow your camera and lenses in an overhead compartment, while keeping all your batteries in a backpack underneath your seat.

For larger gear, you may be able to carry it on depending on size, but you'll probably have to check things like tripods and light stands. For these types of items, you'll want to invest in a hard shell case. That way your gear is protected from being dropped, mishandled, or stacked upon.

With all the gear packed up nice and tight, don't forget that **most things will have to come out of the bag when you go through security**. Airport security, like the TSA in the United States, have several stipulations when it comes to getting into the terminals. You may be familiar with removing your laptop from carry-on bags. Similarly, you should remove your batteries and place them in their own x-ray container. This usually helps prevent them from pulling your bag aside to physically inspect it. If you are planning to use film, **know that the scanners can fog your unprocessed film stock**. You can request security officers to hand-inspect your film, especially any film over 800 ISO.

“keep your camera gear with you at all times.

Make sure you **have all your paperwork at hand and in order**. You may just need a passport, but work over an extended period of time may require a work visa or permit. Another consideration is to travel with proof of previous purchase of equipment. When returning home after shooting abroad, customs may ask you to verify that you had previously owned that camera of yours. They want to make sure you aren't avoiding taxes and traveling to buy cheaper equipment.

Rental Cars vs. Taxis

When you reach your destination, you should consider your own means of transportation. If that's an option. A rental car is the best bet, since it allows you to manage your time schedule. If you're shooting the sunrise, you may have trouble finding a taxi. If you opt for a rental, **be sure there is enough room in the trunk or backseat for all of your gear.** You can never know if all your gear fits into a random taxi.

When renting a car, be sure to **know what the auto insurance plan covers.** You may find yourself off-road or even using the car as a platform by standing on the hood or sitting on the roof. Know how any dings and dents will be handled. Another added benefit of renting a car is the **access to power.** If you remember your car charger, you can keep your phone alive during the drive.





RESEARCH & ACCOMMODATIONS

Whether you are staying with friends or in a hotel room, here are a few considerations for your location shoot.

Location, Location, Location

When it comes to working on location, you want to make sure you **stay somewhere central to all the places you want to visit**. It makes little sense to book a luxury hotel hours away when you will be spending time in remote areas.

Spend plenty of time researching any location you may want to travel to and shoot. You can find plenty of resources and references online.

See what other photographers and videographers have captured in those cities. If anything sparks your interest, be sure to hunt down the exact address or at least pinpoint an area.

Once you have a few key places in mind, learn how long it will take you to get there from your hotel. **Print out any maps and directions** — you never know if you will have a cell signal.

Another consideration is meals. If you're not one to try the local cuisine — or you don't want to take any risks until shooting is done — be sure to **pack some snacks and non-perishable meals**. If you are into local foods, check out reviews for any places that spark your interest.

Don't forget to **check the weather**. Be prepared for the temperature, humidity, rain, or snow.

Packing Your Bag

Every location has its own set of challenges. From weather to the physical nature of the landscape, you need to pack clothes that will **keep you comfortable and safe**.

Much of your clothing will come down to personal tastes. To pack light, **keep with neutral colors** — that way everything matches. Be aware of cultures and customs, as tight clothing or skirts may not be appropriate. Here are a few things you should always pack.

- **Rain Jacket** (Doubles as a Camera Monitor Cover)
- **Pockets** (Shirts, Shorts, Pants)
- **Quick Dry Clothing**
- **Long Sleeve Shirt** (For Warm and Cold Weather)
- **Underwear** (Athletic, Breathable)
- **Closed Toe Shoes** (Boots or Hiking Shoes)
- **Wool Socks** (Socks with padding)
- **Hat** (Rain, Sun, Baseball Cap)

As mentioned, your destination will play a big role in the specific type of clothing you bring. A mountain range or trail-heavy location will require hiking boots. For beaches, lakes, or swaps, you will want some water shoes or rain boots. **Dress appropriately.**

Pro tip: Place a scented dryer sheet in your bag to keep you smelling clean.

On top of clothing, there are a few other items you will always want to pack. Perhaps most important is a **first aid kit**. Even a few bandages and alcoholic wipes will help. You will also want to **protect yourself with sunscreen and bug spray**. Be sure the bottles you get meet airline standards for travel if you plan to carry on your bag.

Don't forget **basic toiletries** like a toothbrush, toothpaste, and even some toilet paper. You don't want to be left without toilet paper in the wilderness when nature calls.

Protect Yourself and Your Gear

As you research your location, make sure you have an insurance policy in place that will protect you and all of your equipment.

Traveling without insurance is a risk not worth taking. Protect your gear from damage and theft with an insurance policy. Make sure your policy is in effect while abroad.



2

CAMERAS, LENSES, AND ACCESSORIES

The cameras professional travelers use, the right type of lenses, and all the gear and accessories you need for a successful shoot abroad.



CAMERAS

Your camera is a physical extension of yourself. When it comes time to choose the perfect camera — **there isn't one camera for every shooter.**

Traveling photographers and videographers have countless options. Point-and-shoot, compact, DSLR, and mirrorless cameras are all perfect for travel. There are even specialty cameras like underwater action cameras and drones.

That said, here are a few of the most popular options from the biggest camera manufacturers. **The cameras featured in this list shoot both stills and video.**



Canon

PowerShot G16 (MSRP: **\$499** US)

- Compact Point-and-Shoot
- 12.1 Megapixel CMOS Sensor
- 28-140mm Lens Equivalent
- HD 1080p Video

PowerShot G7 X Mark II (MSRP: **\$699** US)

- Compact Point-and-Shoot
- 20.1 Megapixel CMOS Sensor
- 4.2x Optical Zoom Lens (24-100mm)
- HD 1080p Video up to 60fps

EOS Rebel T6i (Body Only MSRP: **\$749** US)

- Compact DSLR
- Canon EF Mount
- 24.2 Megapixel CMOS Sensor
- HD 1080p Video up to 30fps 720p up to 60fps

EOS 5D Mark III (Body Only MSRP: **\$2799** US)

- DSLR
- Canon EF Mount
- 22.3 Megapixel Full-Frame CMOS sensor
- HD 1080p Video up to 30fps
- HD 720p Video up to 60fps

EOS 1D-X (Body Only MSRP: **\$5299** US)

- DSLR
- Canon EF Mount
- 18.1 Megapixel Full-Frame CMOS sensor
- HD 1080p Video up to 30fps
- HD 720p Video up to 60fps

Nikon

[Coolpix S7000](#) (MSRP: **\$279** US)

- Compact Point-and-Shoot
- 16 MP CMOS Sensor
- Zoom-NIKKOR ED (25-500mm Equivalent)
- HD 1080p up to 30fps

[Coolpix P900](#) (MSRP: **\$599** US)

- Compact Digital
- 16 MP CMOS Sensor
- Zoom-NIKKOR ED (24-2000mm Equivalent)
- HD 1080p up to 60fps

[DL24-500](#) (MSRP: **\$999** US)

- Compact Digital
- 20.8 Megapixel
- NIKKOR 8.8-185mm f/2.8-5.6 ED VR Lens
- 4K Video up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 120fps, 720p up to 240fps

[D7100](#) (Body Only MSRP: \$1199, Now **\$799** US)

- DSLR
- Nikon F Mount
- 24.1 Megapixel DX CMOS Sensor
- HD 1080i up to 60fps
- HD 1080p up to 30fps

[D810A](#) (Body Only MSRP: **\$3799** US)

- DSLR
- Nikon F Mount
- 24.1 Megapixel FX CMOS Sensor
- HD 1080i up to 60fps
- 1080p up to 30fps

[D5](#) (Body Only MSRP: **\$6499** US)

- DSLR
- Nikon F Mount
- 20.8 Megapixel FX CMOS Sensor
- 4K up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 60fps

Sony

[Alpha a6300](#) (Body Only MSRP: **\$999** US)

- Compact Mirrorless
- Sony E Mount
- 24.2 Megapixel Exmor CMOS Sensor
- 4K up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 120fps

[Alpha a7S II](#) (Body Only MSRP: **\$2999** US)

- Mirrorless
- Sony E Mount
- 12.2 Megapixel Full-Frame CMOS Sensor
- 4K up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 120fps

[Alpha a7R II](#) (Body Only MSRP: **\$3199** US)

- Mirrorless
- Sony E Mount
- 42.4 Megapixel Full-Frame CMOS Sensor
- 4K up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 120fps



Panasonic

[Lumix LX100](#) (MSRP: **\$799** US)

- Mirrorless
- 24.3 Megapixel Micro 4/3 CMOS Sensor
- Lumix DC Vario Lens (24-75mm Equivalent)
- 4K up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 60fps

[Lumix DMC-GH4](#) (MSRP: **\$1499** US)

- Mirrorless
- Micro Four Thirds Mount
- 16.05 Megapixel Micro 4/3 MOS Sensor
- 4K up to 24fps
- HD 1080p up to 60fps

Fujifilm

[X-T2](#) (Body Only MSRP: **\$1599** US)

- Mirrorless
- Fujifilm X Mount
- 24.3 Megapixel Crop CMOS Sensor
- 4K up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 60fps

Olympus

[OM-D E-M1](#) (MSRP: **\$899** US)

- Mirrorless
- Micro Four Thirds Mount
- 16.3 Megapixel MOS Sensor
- HD 1080p up to 30fps

**“There isn’t one
camera for every
shooter.**

GoPro

[Hero4 Black](#) (MSRP: **\$499** US)

- Action Camera
- 12 Megapixel Photos
- Ultra-Wide Lens
- 4K up to 30fps
- HD 1080p up to 120fps



LENSES

Choosing the right lens or lenses will come down to a few different factors. You need to consider the type of mount your camera uses, the style of shooting, the weight of the lens, its build quality, and overall lens speed.

Here is a breakdown of lens properties and some suggestions based on the type of travel photography and video you may be shooting.

Focal Length

The most important information to know when looking for a camera lens is the focal length. Focal length tells a photographer or videographer how the image is going to look. **The shorter the focal length, the wider the angle of view.** The longer the focal length, the higher the magnification and narrower the angle of view.

Depth of Field

The depth of field is the area of an image that is in focus. This focus range measures the distance between the nearest and farthest objects.

Lenses can precisely focus on one distance at a time. To have sharper images, a larger depth of field is needed. For images emphasizing a single subject over the background, a shallow depth of field is needed.

F-Stop

The f-stop is a numerical representation of lens aperture size in relation to the focal length. **An f-stop will tell you how much light your lens is letting in.**

Lower f-stop numbers (1.2, 1.4, 1.8, 2) will let in more light than a higher f-stop number (8, 11, 16, 22.)

In photography and video, a stop is a step that can either double the incoming light or cut the incoming light in half.

Stopping down is the equivalent of moving from a lower number like 2.8 to a higher number like 4.

Stopping up moves from a higher number down.

Lenses with the same f-stop do not necessarily let in the same amount of light. The glass elements within the lens affect the total amount of light let into the camera. More expensive lenses will allow more light in versus cheaper lenses. A professional lens may allow in 90% of light, where as a consumer model may only allow in 60% of light.

T-Stop

T-stops are used by filmmakers to precisely **measure the exact amount of light entering** a lens at any given f-stop. Combined with the f-stop, t-stops give a much more accurate number. For example, a 100mm lens at f/2 with a light transmittance of 75% will have a t-stop of 2.3.





Crop Factor

Not to be confused with a 35mm lens, crop factor deals with the size of a camera's sensor. **A full-frame sensor is 35mm**, though technically the size is 36mm x 24mm. It comes from 35mm film, which required a 35mm sensor to capture full-size images on the film stock.

Any camera with a sensor smaller than 35mm wide is a cropped sensor. Regarding lenses, this will make a lens appear to be more of a telephoto lens. For example, a 100mm lens with a crop factor of 1.6x will act like a 160mm lens on a full-frame camera.

Lens Stabilization

Most lens manufacturers use a form of lens stabilization which compensates for camera movement when taking a photo or shooting video. The system uses electromagnets to move internal glass elements.

The magnets act like a spring suspension that absorb camera shake. You might be familiar with these types:

- Canon – Image Stabilization (IS)
- Nikon – Vibration Reduction (VR)
- Sigma – Optical Stabilization (OS)
- Tamron – Vibration Compensation (VC)
- Leica – MegaOIS
- Pentax – Shake Reduction (SR)

The downside of lens stabilization is the added cost, as these types of lenses can cost double the amount of the same lens without stabilization. Also, if you are using the camera and lens with a tripod, it is best to turn off the lens stabilization. This prevents the lens from overcompensating and wearing out the system.



Types of Lenses

Wide-Angle Lenses

A wide-angle lens has a focal length of 35mm or smaller. Lenses smaller than 24mm may also be called ultra-wide lenses or fisheye lenses. Due to size exaggeration, **wide-angle lenses are great for shooting landscapes and architecture.**

Telephoto Lenses

Telephoto lenses have a focal length of 85mm or higher. They are usually very long in length, making them easy to identify. Telephoto lenses are used to shoot objects that are far away, **ideal for capturing wildlife and sporting events.** They blur the background, making them ideal for isolating subjects.

Telephoto lenses have more glass elements, making them more expensive. They can be broken down into two subtypes. Medium telephoto lenses have a focal length of 85-300mm and super telephoto have focal lengths over 300mm.

Standard Lenses

Standard lenses have a focal length between 35mm and 85mm. The most commonly used standard lenses are the 35mm and 50mm. Standard lenses usually have a much cheaper base price than wide-angle and telephoto lenses. **Standard lenses are perfect for shooting portraits and medium shots.**

Prime Lenses and Zoom Lenses

Lenses that have a fixed focal length, meaning the focal length cannot be changed, are prime lenses. Lenses with an adjustable focus length are called zoom lenses.

Zoom lenses have a multitude of moving parts, limiting the amount of light they let in. However, they give the shooter more control of the composition based on their position. Prime lenses require the shooter to physically get closer or farther away from a subject. **Travelers often find zooms to be more practical.**

Lenses for Travelers

Every traveler has their own preference for both the type of lenses they use, as well as how many they take with them. **Some may prefer only to carry one versatile lens, but most average three lenses.**

Here are some of the most recommended lens options based on popular types of travel photography and destination video. *Remember to take the crop factor into account on cropped sensors.*

General Purpose Travel

If you want to only carry one lens, or as few as possible, a general purpose lens is ideal for capturing everything **from portraits to landscapes**. General travel photography and video will either need to have a large zoom range with little weight, or an all-purpose prime lens.

15-85mm

- Versatile Zoom Lens
- Standard for Everyday Photography
- Designed for Cropped Sensors

24-70mm

- Wide-Angle to Medium Telephoto
- Popular Among Professionals
- Very Sharp Images

50mm

- Versatile Focal Length
- Compact and Lightweight
- Perfect from Portraits to Action Shots
- Stellar in Low Light





Portraits and Culture

If your travel photos and videos focus on people and their culture, you will want a lens that can really capture intimate moments. Lenses with apertures of $f/1.8$ – $f/3.5$ are great for portraits with a subject in focus and a blurred background.

16–35mm

- Popular Among Photojournalists
- Great for Group Shots
- Similar Angle of View to Cell Phones

85mm

- Great for Interiors and Exteriors
- Ideal for Portraits on Full-Frame Sensors
- Great Telephoto Lens for Crop-Sensor Cameras

Landscapes

Wide-angle lenses are the best for landscape travel photography and video. Lens apertures of f/5.6 and above will help keep everything in focus.

16-35mm

- Ultra Wide-Angle Zoom
- Amazing for Landscapes and Portraits
- Expensive

17-40mm

- Wide-Angle Zoom on Full-Frame Sensor
- Standard Zoom on Cropped-Sensor
- Similar to the 16-35mm
- Sharp Details

18-35mm

- Excellent for Landscapes and Architecture
- Versatile Wide-Angle to Standard Zoom
- Similar to the 16-35, and Cheaper

10-24mm

- Ultra Wide-Angle Zoom
- Great for Landscapes, Cityscapes, and Interiors

24mm

- Wide-Angle Prime
- Excellent for Low Light and Astrophotography





Wildlife

Telephoto lenses are a must for capturing wildlife. That said, these lenses are the heaviest. A zoom lens offers more variety while traveling, yet fixed super-telephoto lenses may be necessary depending on the distance to your subject and the subject's size - *birds* vs. *elephants*.

70-200mm

- Fantastic for Photos and Video
- Acclaimed by Pros and Hobbyists
- Perfect for Wildlife and Portraits
- Heavy and Expensive

200-500mm

- Wonderful for Wildlife, Especially Birds
- Great for Distant Landmarks
- Large and Heavy

600mm

- Designed for Wildlife and Sports
- Very Expensive
- Very Large
- Very Heavy



Timelapse

Timelapse photography requires a wide lens with a deep depth of field. For those shooting days, nights, and day to night, you will need a lens that can perform at every time of day.

14mm

- Ultra Wide-Angle
- Stellar for Landscape
- Perfect for Nighttime Shoots

16mm

- Ultra Wide-Angle
- Small and Light
- Great for Landscapes and Architecture



GEAR & ACCESSORIES

Shooting abroad poses one of the biggest challenges for photographers and videographers alike. How much gear is the right gear? From extra baggage fees to misplaced luggage, there are plenty of valid concerns.

Your best resource is your own research of the locations. You may find that some places, like major cities, have plenty of rental houses for you to rent additional gear, like specialty lenses or big gear like tripods. Renting can save you the hassle of packing all your gear.

If you don't have the luxury of renting, choosing the right gear should be a priority.

Batteries and Power

To operate your camera, you're going to need power. Depending on your location, you may not have access to electricity while shooting. **Be sure you have enough batteries to keep you out in the field long enough to capture what you need.**

The camera isn't the only thing that needs batteries. Don't forget AA, AAA, 9V, or any other type of battery you may need to operate equipment like lights. It's also recommended to carry a battery pack so you can recharge your phone while on location.

Remember to be sure to pack your batteries appropriately, as previously mentioned.

In addition to batteries, it's **always good to have some surge protectors and an extension cord** to add a few outlets to your hotel room. Don't forget power adapters for the various types of outlets around the world. Make sure you have one that works in the country or countries you are headed to. If you will spend significant time in a car, pack a car charger as well.

Memory Cards

Now that you have a camera, lens, and batteries, you're certainly going to need plenty of memory.

If you plan to shoot a ton of material, your first thought may be to purchase one very large SD or CF card. While that may seem like an easy solution, it's actually **best to have multiple smaller cards**. That way if something happens on location — like dropping your camera into the water — then you will still have all the photos and footage you shot on the other memory cards that didn't end up taking a dive.

Make sure you purchase the appropriate speed of card for your camera, as that will help you capture

the best quality images as quickly as possible. Don't forget to pack any cables you may need to dump and backup your photos and video.

Tripods, Monopods, and Stabilization

Having stable images and footage is crucial to a successful travel shoot. You will want to find gear that is as light as possible. Carrying heavy sticks over a long period of time will really wear you down and hurt your back. Compact gear should be a priority.

Monopods are the easiest form of stabilization to travel with. They are incredibly compact, and even some of the more rugged ones are still rather lightweight. A carbon fiber monopod may cost more upfront, but they are well worth the price.

Tripods are the standard form of stabilization for photographers and videographers. There are a ton of different options, and there is a whole market for traveling shooters. You can find compact tripods that collapse to an incredibly small size. There are a variety of heads, from traditional mounts to pistol grip pivot heads. **Tripods with pivoting heads tend to be the best for travel** since they can offer level images no matter how rugged the terrain. There are also travel tripods that have additional features like built in flashlights.

When it comes to choosing the right tripod, your main concerns should be the weight, size when collapsed, tallest height when extended, and that the tripod can support the weight of your camera and lens package.

Videographers may want more options when it comes to stabilization. There are **travel shoulder-rigs** built for a variety of cameras, as well as **traditional stabilizers like a Steadicam**. With traveling, weight should be a primary concern, as well as the

size of the rig when collapsed. The smaller the better, but remember that a variety of small parts means the potential for pieces to get lost in the shuffle. You may also need a set of tools to put the rig together, depending on the type of stabilizer you choose.

Lights, Flashes, and Reflectors

Photographers will be quick to find that **traveling with a video light is usually much more practical than carrying a camera flash**. That's not to say camera flashes can't be the go-to for lighting your travel photos, but the video light also doubles as a flash-light and can be used in combination with reflectors to help capture stunning images.

Video lights are compact, and you can easily find them at a very low cost. This is great for travel, so if something does happen to your light, it's easy to replace. Many video lights can use rechargeable batteries, or even AA batteries.

High-end video lights and light wands have the ability to change their color temperature. This is great for all sorts of shoots. You can use them to light subjects or adjust the colors and use them as back-drop lights.

A collapsible reflector is really the best lighting tool for traveling photographers and videographers. Most travel shoots will use a ton of natural lighting, and a reflector give you the power to harness the sun. Collapsible reflectors can fit into small pouches, and many come with a variety of color options. The closer the reflector is to your subject, the more powerful the light.

Additionally, a **traditional flashlight or headlamp** can always help light up a subject. Many flashlights have a very harsh light, so make sure you test the look of the flashlight ahead of time. These tools are also helpful when digging through your gear bag in the dark.



ND Filters

No matter if you are shooting stills or footage, you will want to make sure you have some neutral-density filters. Shooting outdoors in the middle of the day can be a nightmare for anyone, but an ND filter can help you capture excellent images in bright conditions.

With an ND filter and the correct combination of aperture and exposure settings, your camera can grab stills and video that would otherwise be overexposed.

Graduating ND filters, or split ND filters, can be used to balance the light, especially at sunrise and sunset. They can darken a bright sky, while leaving the landscape naturally lit.

Variable ND filters offer multiple stops of light control, all in one filter. You can easily adjust the ND filter to whatever you need for the shot. If you invest in a nice variable ND filter, you may want to add a step-up ring. That will allow you to use the filter on all of your lenses, no matter the lens diameter size.

Microphones and Audio Recorders

Videographers will need to remember microphones or audio recorders to capture audio on location. From the ambient sounds of an oasis to capturing interviews, quality audio is crucial to every video.

For travelers, the best option is **a handheld audio recorder and a lavalier mic**. Both are small and easy to transport. You can use the hand recorder to capture ambient sounds, and then plug the lavalier mic directly into it for interviews. It's the simplest and most travel-friendly setup.

Depending on the type of lavalier mic you own, don't forget audio cables and adapters if needed. Wireless lavs can be a hassle on remote locations, so consider going hardwired into the recorder.

Cleaning Kit and Tools

From microfiber wipes to a dust blower, investing in a portable cleaning kit can save your shoot. Dust, dirt, and all the natural elements will wreak havoc on your gear. Make sure you can easily clean your lenses while on the go.

Be sure to pack the necessary tools to take your gear apart if you have to do heavy cleaning or assemble any camera rigs. Invest in a quality multitool, not one that will easily break. A steel multitool with built-in screwdrivers, pliers, and knives are often the best.

Don't forget any allen wrenches or specialty tools you may need for specific gear. Zip ties are also great to have. Keep all your tools in an easy to grab pouch, so you know where everything is. Don't forget that **tools may need to be placed in your checked bags**.

Laptops and External Hard Drives

Working on location is usually much more than just shooting. To dump and check your photos and footage, **don't forget to bring your laptop**. It's also recommended to store your files on external hard drives as additional backups.

Create a solid folder structure for your project, so files are easy to find when it comes time to edit. You can break your travel photos and video into individual folders based on the day you shoot or on specific locations.

Backing up your folders on an external hard drive is highly suggested. **Opt for a Solid State Drive (SSD)** to store your images and footage. They have faster read/write speeds and are more durable.

Upon your return, don't forget that Shutterstock would love to see contributor submissions.



Backpacks, Cases, and Carry-Ons

Now that you have a rough idea of all the camera gear you need to travel with, it's time to find the right bags for your travel shoot. The perfect bag is the one that is perfect for you.

Rolling bags will only be your friend in the airport. Oversize rolling bags and hard-shell cases will keep your gear safe in transport, but when it comes to working on location, portable camera bags are far more practical. Heavy cases are needed to get your gear to another country, but not always necessary when getting to a specific location once there.

Sling bags and **messenger-style camera bags** are great for those with a small amount of lightweight gear. If you will be wearing them for a long period of time, they can start to wear out your shoulders. For the best experience, consider an ergonomic backpack-style camera bag.

Camera backpacks are perfect for travelers, and they come in a variety of sizes. There are small bags for those with just a camera and a couple lenses, and there are heavy-duty backpacks that can carry several camera bodies, lenses, and gear. You can even clip on additional gear outside of large bags, like your tripod. These backpacks are designed to keep you moving, so look for a bag that distributes weight evenly and has nice sturdy straps. Most backpacks will also meet carry-on status for your flights.

For safety and security, inconspicuous bags are better, as **thieves can easily spot tourists with expensive camera gear**. Low-profile bags are the best for getting around unnoticed. **Also consider removing any camera straps with brand names and placing gaff tape over the brand name on the camera body.** No need to draw extra attention to yourself.

A full-page background image featuring the silhouette of a person standing on a grassy field, holding a camera. The person is facing away from the viewer, looking towards a vibrant sunset sky with orange and yellow hues near the horizon and a clear blue sky above. The person's shadow is cast on the ground.

3

WORKING ON LOCATION

Tips and tricks for shooting all of your travel photos and destination video out in the wild.



SHOOTING ON LOCATION

All your travel planning, preparation, and packing has led to this moment. **Don't rush.**

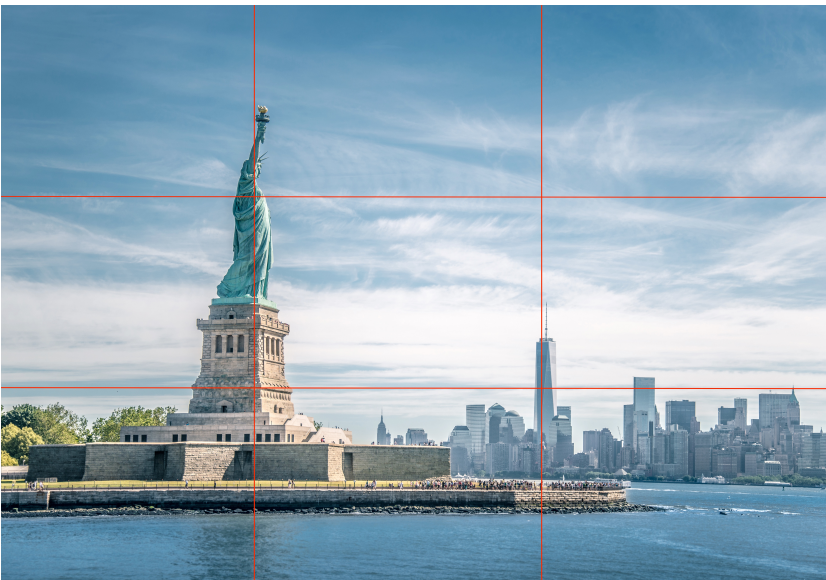
When the time comes to finally start shooting, have patience and rely on your skills to take incredible travel photos and videos.

Scout the Location

Before setting up the tripod or adjusting camera settings, take a good look around. Check the location for light sources, any distracting elements, and the overall composition.

Consider any needs for additional support gear. Will you need the reflector to bounce sunlight toward a point of interest? Does the location have great ambient sound to record? What picture style, white balance, or other camera settings will help you best capture the location? Don't just point the camera and shoot, expecting to fix everything in post.

Composition and the Rule of Thirds



The rule of thirds is helpful in composing compelling images and footage. Most cameras have a grid setting, allowing you to perfectly frame your subject.

The rule of thirds divides an image into nine equal parts. For interesting composition, you should place important elements along the lines or at intersections. Often the horizon is set along the lower horizontal line, and subjects like trees or landmarks stand tall along the vertical lines.

Create a Sense of Scale

One of the biggest challenges of travel photography and video is giving viewers an accurate sense of scale. You may want to shoot the beautiful, massive mountains out in the distance, but if the foreground is full of empty land, viewers may not get an accurate sense of depth or distance.

By including simple **objects in the foreground**, like gates or signs, or even natural elements like bushes and rocks, you help keep a viewer's attention. Not only can they get a sense of scale, they can also see a better progression of distance.

Alternatively, you can use elements like roads or fences as **leading lines** to point a viewer's eyes toward your subject. Leading lines can add a sense of distance, especially when using universally relatable objects like railroad tracks. Leading lines can also be very subtle, like the mortar in between bricks or shadows from nearby buildings.



Shoot During Golden Hour

You will certainly be shooting all day and night while traveling, but waiting for the right light will give you some of the best images. Be aware that shooting at high noon will give you very harsh light and shadows. Set aside time to specifically shoot during golden hour. The **golden hour occurs right after sunrise and again right before sunset** — when the sun is at its lowest position on the horizon. Waiting for the golden hour will give your photos and video soft shadows and warm color.

Instead of just waiting for the sun, download one of the many golden hour apps to get the exact time of sunrise and sunset based on your location.

Golden hour, as well as the time leading up to sunset, provides a great opportunity to use the sun as a back-light or to use a reflector to bounce natural light onto your subject.

Make sure your tripod, camera, filters, and all accessories are in place before golden hour. That way you are ready to shoot when the perfect light hits.

Check the Weather (Again)

You should have checked the weather when packing, but it's worth checking again.

Having a rain jacket in your bag will always come in handy to protect you and your gear come rain or shine.

Don't be afraid of bad weather, as it is often the best weather. Overcast skies or lightning storms give you a chance to capture images you never imagined.

Rain gives you the ability to work with reflections. Look for puddles in the streets or water on the tops of cars.

Quick Tips for Travel Photos

The tripod is your friend. You already packed it, be sure to use it. **A tripod is crucial for shots that require a long exposure.**

For portraits and culture shots, be sure to have every person **sign a model release form.**

Don't take a ton of photos of the same thing. You're wasting memory space. **Focus and get a few clean shots.** This will also save you time when sorting and editing photos.

Check the histogram for balanced exposure.

Bright locations can be a challenge; don't rely on the look of the photo in the camera screen.

Use custom picture profiles to save time out in the field.

“Don't just point the camera and shoot, expecting to fix everything in post.”

Quick Tips for Travel Video

Destination videos provide their own set of challenges that photographers don't have to worry about. On top of composition and lighting, videographers must have **movement in their footage.**

That doesn't necessarily mean moving the camera, as subjects in motion can make footage much more compelling.

When shooting, be aware of all the movement on camera and of the camera itself. **Avoid repetitive motions like pans and zooms** and add more variety. That way the edit won't have nonstop movement.

Viewers need to take in the scenic views; let the camera sit and record.

For each location, try to **capture both wide shots and close-ups**. Those clips will complement other shots nicely. Aim to keep shots at least ten seconds long. This will allow the editor to easily transition between clips with fades or dissolves.

Finally, **don't forget to capture audio**. Having a few minutes of ambient sounds, like rushing waters or birds singing in the trees, will make the final video come to life in the edit.

shutterstock contributor

**We want to see the world
through your eyes.**

Shutterstock is a global marketplace
for artists and creators to sell royalty-free
images, footage, vectors, and illustrations.

submit.shutterstock.com



The Explorer's Guide to Travel Photography and Destination Video is only the beginning. Taking time to hone your craft while abroad will give you the skills necessary to create stunning work.

Safe travels and best of luck with your shoot.



Legal Information

© Shutterstock Inc. 2016

Image Credits

All images courtesy of Shutterstock Inc. Copying, sharing, or distributing Shutterstock images without proper licensing is prohibited. For more information, please visit <http://www.shutterstock.com/license>.

The opinions expressed in this guide are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Shutterstock Inc.