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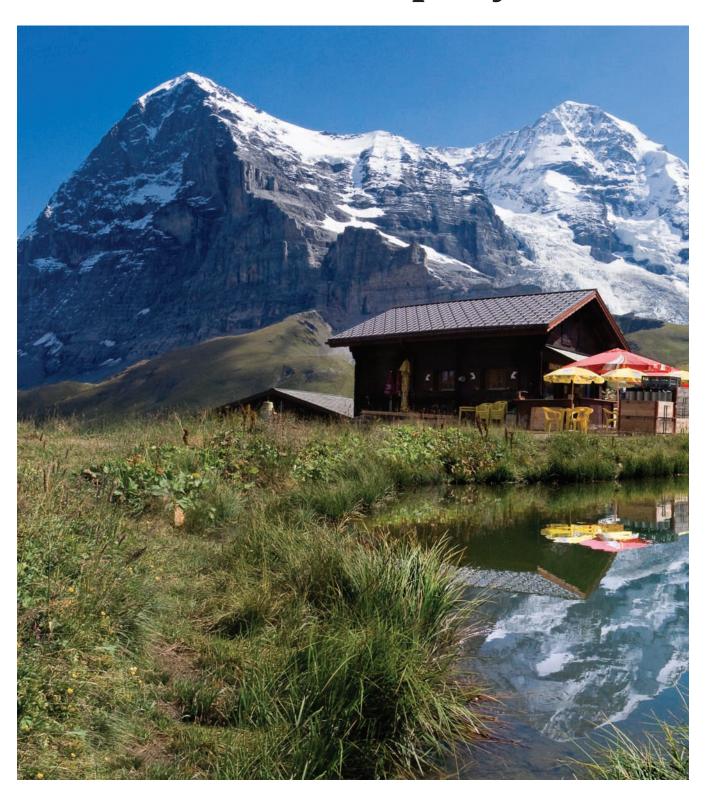
Above: Tom traveling in New Zealand, a favorite destination. Photo by Carol Dempsey. (2007)

"We shall not cease from exploration And the end of all our exploring Will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time."

— T. S. Eliot, Little Gidding

Back cover: Natural tannins released from decomposing vegetation stain Tidal River brown, in Wilson's Promontory National Park, Victoria, Australia. Captured with a Canon PowerShot G5 compact camera. (2004)

Tom Dempsey



Light Travel

Photography on the Go

PhotoSeek Publishing ♦ Seattle, Washington



Right: A Nepali woman turns a large prayer wheel at Pangboche Gompa, a Buddhist temple near Mount Everest in Sagarmatha National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Nepal. (2007)

Previous pages: The mountains of Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau (Ogre, Monk, and Virgin) reflect in a pond at Kleine Scheidegg train station in Switzerland. Six images were stitched to make this panorama—learn how on pages 44-45. Jungfrau-Aletsch is inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO. (2005)

Cover photo: Trekkers pause at 13,000 feet/4000 meters elevation near the impressive mountain face of Fang (25,088 feet/7647 meters) in the Annapurna Sanctuary, Nepal. Photographed using a Nikon D40X Digital SLR (DSLR) camera. (2007)

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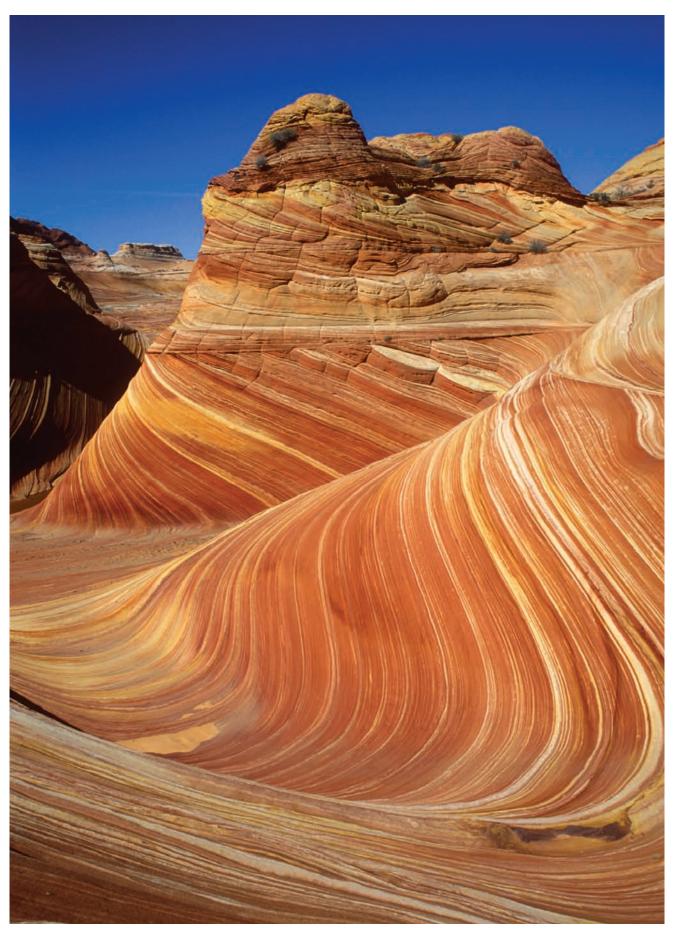
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 $Erosion\ of\ fossilized\ sand\ dunes\ created\ The\ Wave,\ on\ the\ Arizona\ side\ of\ Paria\ Canyon-Vermilion\ Cliffs\ Wilderness\ Area.\ To\ help\ protect\ this\ section\ of\ the\ Coyote\ Buttes,\ a\ hiking\ permit\ is\ required\ from\ the\ US\ Bureau\ of\ Land\ Management.\ (2003)$



Photographers catch sunrise on Mount Nimrod/Nemrut Dağı in the Republic of Turkey in 1999 before digital cameras bested the quality obtained from scanning 35mm color slide film. A decade later, the digital revolution empowers us with wonderfully lightweight cameras. Improved image stabilization and high-ISO quality free us from previous tripod constraints. But at dusk, night, and dawn we still require tripods to sharpen images recorded at shutter speeds too slow for hand holding a camera.

Introduction

Light Travel teaches and inspires on-the-go photography using minimal equipment.

I illustrate an active outdoor travel style for seeking evocative images:

- Part I: How to Enliven Images teaches how to compose, focus, expose, and optimize photographs. Which camera is best—compact or DSLR? Are your skills more important than your camera choice?
- **Part II:** Where to Seek the Light suggests exciting places to visit—a new state or another country. Revealing the beauty of our world can inspire environmental preservation and sustainable living.

If a topic seems too advanced, skip onwards and revisit later. Read the *Glossary* for definitions of photographic terms. Check the *Index* to find all occurrences of a term or place name.



Mesa Arch glows at sunrise in Canyonlands National Park, Utah. (2006)

Part I: How to Enliven Images

- Chapter 1: How to Compose Images
- Chapter 2: Focus, Expose, Edit, Create
- Chapter 3: Lightweight Cameras



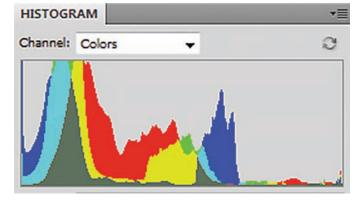
How can you create a charismatic photograph? Chapter 1 explains how in mostly non-technical terms. Chapter 2 teaches basic camera skills, then reveals optional computer techniques such as the following:

Most people shoot JPEG files (with the default sRGB color space) which are compatible with all computers and retail printers. Dedicated professionals often prefer working with RAW files and

Adobe RGB color space to preserve greater color depth and a broader range (gamut) of color data for improving prints.

The above panorama was stitched from five RAW image files recorded on a Canon PowerShot Pro1 compact digital camera using ISO 50, lens 7.8mm (31mm equivalent in terms of 35mm film), aperture f/8, and shutter speed 1/160th second.

Using **Adobe Lightroom** on a personal computer, for all five pictures as a batch, I adjusted the following: Exposure down -0.65 stops, white balance



WB Temp=5850 Kelvin, Tint -5, Blacks 4, Brightness +3, Saturation +63, and Red/Cyan Chromatic Aberration -55. Lights and Darks were brightened on the medium contrast Tone Curve by about 20%.

The five separate overlapping vertical photographs were stitched into a seamless panorama in **Adobe Photoshop CS3/CS4** software using the File>Automate>Photomerge menu. To the right is the histogram of brightness values shown in Photoshop for the resulting TIFF file image (which was optimized and saved in 16-bit **Adobe RGB** color space).

Chapter 1. How to Compose Images

"Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood."

— T. S. Eliot (1888 - 1965), critic, dramatist, and poet

All photographers, from beginning to advanced, can benefit from compositional exercises. Work through the exercises in this chapter:

- A. Evoke Emotion
- B. Fill the Frame
- C. Create Contrast
- D. Fill with Flow
- E. Apply the "Rule of Thirds"
- F. Play with Perspectives

Immediately after photographing each exercise, review image sequences in your LCD or EVF in *Playback mode*. Zoom into (magnify) each photo to check for sharp focus. Check for overexposure or underexposure using both the *highlight warning screen* and *histogram* for each photograph. Most importantly, ask yourself, "will this image maximize audience impact?" If not, shoot more as needed. When reviewing each picture on the LCD, your strongest instinctive reaction helps identify the best images.

Define it

Confused by camera lingo? See the *Glossary: Camera Terms Explained*.

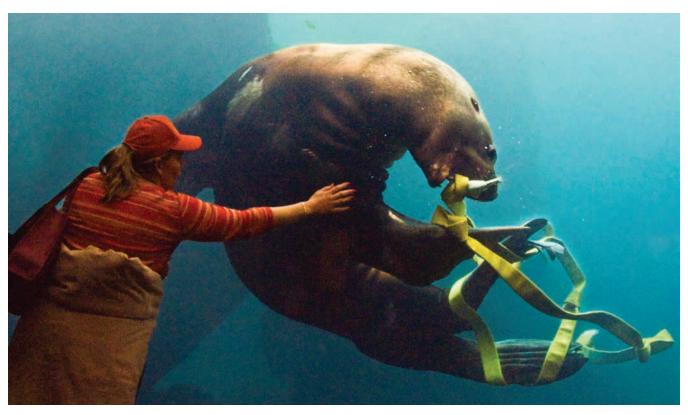
Photography is communication. What do you want to say in each picture? What's the story? Who is your audience?

Most of us take pictures for our own enjoyment and that of an audience of family and friends. Evocative images by other photographers can inspire us to record vivid touchstones for our own personal memory as well as for sharing with an audience.

Ask or imagine how others may perceive the photograph. Other viewers later won't have your benefit of experiencing the smells, tastes, sounds, tactile sensations, or sequence of experiences that you felt when capturing the picture. Viewers will only experience what you present. Design your sensational image to stand alone, to complement a displayed sequence, or to gain impact with a well-written caption. Patient waiting or many shots may be required before recording a brief shining moment in a great photograph.

Are you serious about improving your photography? Don't leave home without your camera. Practice makes perfect. Cameras are great tools to record pictures of products and labels while shopping, or to photograph trailhead maps and signs for safety on a hike. Good quality subcompact cameras can handily fit a pocket/purse and make respectable prints. See *Chapter 3: Lightweight Cameras*.

Have fun with composition as you advance your skills and expand your creative portfolio.



A Steller Sea Lion plays with a firehose at the Alaska Sealife Center, Seward, Alaska. Photographed using a Canon PowerShot Pro1 camera with flash turned off to prevent reflections on the aquarium glass. (2006)

People pictures and fill flash

People often look best with candid or relaxed expressions of emotion. Be ready to capture the height of spontaneous laughter or excitement when people forget the presence of a camera. A *photojournalist* records events accurately without posing, as in the above Steller Sea Lion image. To engage the feelings of your audience or enhance the sense of scale, include local people at various distances from the camera.

Sometimes you can tell a story better by posing people or subjects. When arranging people outdoors, have them remove sunglasses and hats to reveal their expressive eyes. Record at least two shots to increase the likelihood of good expressions and open eyelids. Use *fill flash—flash always on* mode—to fill harsh outdoor shadows on faces.

The fastest allowed *flash synchronization* on many cameras forces 1/200th second or slower shutter speed, which can *overexpose* flash photos in sunlit conditions outdoors. To compensate, use low *ISO* and *stop down* (increase the *f/number* for *aperture*). An advanced camera such as the compact *Canon PowerShot G11* can shoot 1/2000th second flash synchronization to improve fill flash and also freeze fast action. To prevent *motion blur*, most cameras also limit shutter speed to no slower than 1/60th second whenever using flash in most

automatic exposure modes. To expose slower and pleasingly balance ambient light with flash—such as indoors or at dusk, night, or dawn—use a tripod and dial your mode to Night Scene, Shutter-preferred/S/Tv, or Manual/M exposure mode. Or use Slow Synchro (or Rear Curtain) flash in P/Program or Aperture-preferred/A/Av mode.

Permission and legal issues

Ask permission before online internet posting of images with identifiable faces, and remove if later requested. On public property in the USA, you can legally take pictures of anyone or anything in any public place, where no expectation of privacy exists, though first asking permission is common courtesy. On private property or in other countries, follow their rules. When you record photos containing recognizable faces of people or copyright works, a model release (a liability waiver) protects the publisher against legal claims by those people or owners. Photographers should have subjects sign a model release if the image will be sold to a *stock* photo agency or will be used commercially to promote a product or message in any media. Editorial or news usage usually doesn't require a model release. Tell publishers which of your photos are unreleased (having no model release), because publishers are legally culpable for unreleased images.

Exercise A: Evoke Emotion

Emotional impact outshines everything.

You don't need a big or expensive camera to capture a striking or touching image.

Research subjects in advance and open your heart in the presence of your photographic subject. When composing pictures, enter a state of emotional sensitivity, even vulnerability, while simultaneously applying technical and critical judgment. Trust your eyes, not the camera. Check the photo on the

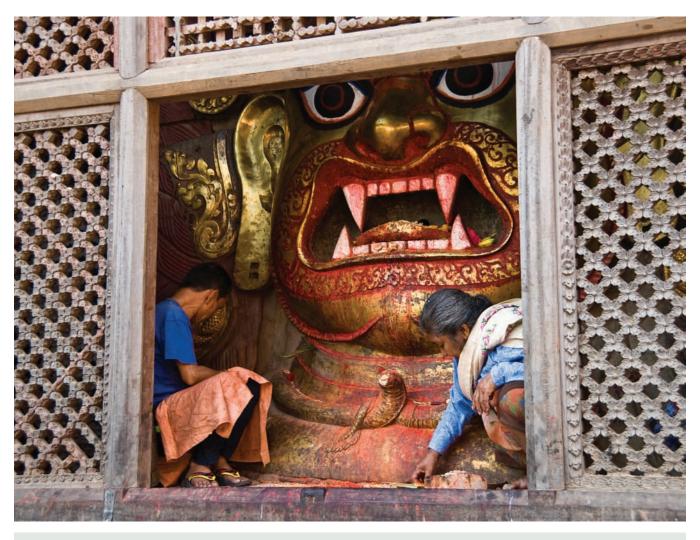
LCD after every shot to see if it catches the feeling of what you saw. Trust your instinctive reaction. Also seriously consider constructive feedback from your audience and peers.

If you know something emotionally crucial but not visible regarding the subject, imply it visually—zoom and play with lens perspectives, vary *shutter speeds*, follow the action (*pan*), or enhance impact with contrast or color saturation (adjusted in camera or on the computer) to match what you perceived.

Example A1: Keep sharp focus on an animal's *eyes*, or else you risk disconnecting your audience. Little else need be in focus. We instinctively look to face and eyes for emotional cues. We project our human feelings upon (anthropomorphize) everything including other animals, plants, and inanimate nature. Morph your instinctive reactions into photographs.

A flip-out-and-twist LCD enabled viewing at arm's length low into the wombat's enclosure, with permission at Bonorong Wildlife Park, Tasmania, Australia. (2004)





Example A2: The terrifying mask contrasts with the two calm caretakers. The 1794 golden mask of Seto Bhairab (White Demon) glares in Durbar Square, Kathmandu, Nepal. Nepal Airlines proudly painted a winged version of this sculpture on their jets. (2007)



Example A3: Intense colors and a recognizable icon such as a lighthouse (at winter sunset at Heceta Head, Oregon) can evoke strong emotional responses. Use audience feedback to edit and improve what you show. Display only your best and leave your viewers wanting more. (2006)

Exercise B: Fill the Frame

Simplify your composition to make a clear statement. Exclude distracting or unrelated elements. Tell a visual **story** with emotion, motion, humor, contrast, color, tone, pattern, symmetry, asymmetry, texture, and/or detail.

Choose vertical or horizontal framing which best enhances the flow of the subject. If in doubt, record both versions and decide later.

To establish a greater sense of scale and depth when photographing an outdoor landscape, include identifiable subjects at three or more distinct distances away—near, middle, and far (as in *Example E2*, page 39).

Example B1 (two images on next page)

Question: Without changing the lens zoom or aperture, how was the second photo on the next page shot with a blurred background and enlarged subject?

Answer: The camera was **moved closer and focused closer**, sharply on the eye of the Galápagos Marine Iguana (2009).

In the upper image, a rock arch and sea lion offer background interest, but too many subjects compete for viewer attention. The lower image has stronger impact because an unusual reptile *fills the frame*. Both photographs were recorded with the same lens setting—zoomed at 90mm with an aperture of f/11 on a *Nikon D60 DSLR* camera. For a given angle of view, a *DSLR* camera lens can usually blur the background more than a *compact* camera, mainly due to larger *sensor size*.



Try this: Keep the zoom lens *angle of view* and *aperture* constant. Move your camera physically closer, which enlarges the subject

in the frame. Now refocus at this closer distance, and the camera will reduce *depth of field* and blur background, as explained in the *Glossary*. Compare with pages 40-43, 53.

Example B2: All distracting elements are excluded, and enough water is included to establish pattern, space, and mood at Loutro Harbor, Crete, Greece. (2001)

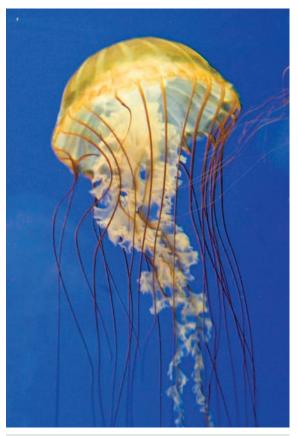




Above, various subjects compete for attention...



Step in closer to fill the frame for stronger impact.



Example C1: A yellow sea nettle in the Oregon Coast Aquarium pops forward against a blue background. Yellow and blue are complements of the RGB and CMYK color models on page 34. (2008)

Exercise C: Create Contrast

- **Juxtapose** varying shapes, lines, textures, colors, and subjects to excite your audience and illustrate relationships.
- Frame a brightly-toned subject on a dark background, or darkly-toned subject on a bright background.
- Find a colorful subject on a background having a contrasting or complementary color.
 For example, red contrasts brightly with green or cyan. Blue complements orange or yellow. Yellow pops well against purple or blue. Green complements magenta or red.
 Read more about Color Theory on page 34.
 - Colors have an advancing or receding quality. Intense, warm colors (red, orange, yellow) and bright values come forward.
 Cool colors (green, blue, purple) and darker values seem to recede away from the viewer.
 - Darker, less intense colors invoke a somber atmosphere while brighter and lighter colors can create cheer. Play with mood.
- If the subject or pattern clearly stands out, then you have achieved good contrast.

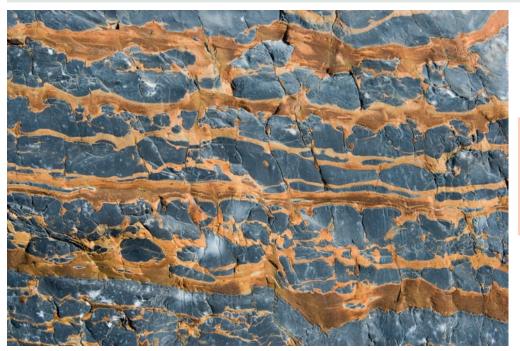
Example C2: A Booted Racquet-tail hummingbird stands out against a lighter background in Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve, near Quito, Ecuador. Red contrasts with green on the traditional RBY Artists' Color Wheel. (2009)





Example C3: Triangular blue feet contrast with the rounded eggs and white belly of a Blue-footed Booby. (2009)

Example C4: An orange layer of rock pops out against blue in the Canadian Rockies. Orange and blue are complements on the traditional RBY Artists' Color Wheel. (2008)



Creating contrast is the heart of photography.

Color Theory

K nowing how colors contrast and combine helps you compose images in your camera and later edit color tones on a computer. Color Theory is based on spectral color:

A spectral color is identified by a fixed wavelength of light in the continuous visible spectrum, as seen in rainbows and prisms. Historically, Isaac Newton described seven spectral colors using the acronym ROYGBIV in the order of decreasing wavelength: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet. Humans cannot see wavelengths that are outside of ROYGBIV such as infrared, radio, x-ray, and ultraviolet.

Visible non-spectral colors include purple and magenta, which are both mixtures of blue+red in the RGB color model. Mixing a spectral color with a grayscale color (white, silver, gray, or black) makes a non-spectral color, such as brown or pink. Pink is red+white in both RGB and RBY color models. Brown is actually a dark orange: a certain combination of red+green in the RGB model; or red+yellow+black in the RBY color model. The names of color gradations vary by language, culture, tradition, and perception.

The most common color models RGB, CMYK, and RBY are described below. Each model is based on three primary colors. Colors on opposite sides of a model color wheel are called complementary. When you place two complementary colors next to each other, they pop aesthetically and look brighter in contrast. Theoretically, mixing two complementary colors makes a neutral color (gray, white, or black, depending upon the color model).

RBY is a historical set of subtractive (pigmented) primary colors **Red**, **Blue**, and Yellow (RBY). These colors, commonly available in early paints (plus green), became the basis of artistic color theory in the 1700s and 1800s. The complement of each primary color ink is roughly the color made by mixing the other two primary color inks. Blue ink plus Yellow ink makes green ink. Blue ink plus Red makes purple. Red ink plus Yellow makes orange. Mixing R+B+Y theoretically makes black, but looks muddy using real-world inks. RBY paints cannot be mixed to create cyan or magenta. RBY color wheel tints vary by artist.

Mixing ink colors is called a subtractive color system, because inks selectively absorb and reflect different spectral color wavelengths and "subtract" brightness from white, non-inked paper. In the RBY artistic model using subtractive primary colors,



Above: A traditional Artists' Color Wheel uses subtractive (pigmented) primary colors of

RBY paints

- 1. **Red** primary complements (contrasts with) green.
- 2. Blue primary complements orange.
- 3. Yellow primary complements purple.

RGB is an additive (glowing light) primary color model that is used by digital cameras (where each color is roughly a peak of spectral color):

- 1. **Red** primary complements (contrasts with) cyan.
- 2. **Green** primary complements magenta.

circular spotlights above show that R+G+B make white light.

3. Blue primary complements yellow.

The **RGB** color model roughly relates to the three types of cone cell color receptors in the human eye. The light in an additive color model such as RGB emits directly from a source. The *complement* of each additive primary color is the color made by mixing the other two primary colors from light-projecting sources. A Red light source plus Green makes what we see as vellow light. Green light

plus Blue makes cyan. Red light plus Blue makes magenta. The overlapping



RGB light

Above: The RGB Color Wheel model uses additive (glowing light) primary colors of Red, Green, and Blue.

Red, Blue, and Yellow-RBY.

CMYK color printing technology uses a subtractive/pigment color model with three primary colors for

process inks: Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow (CMY). Theoretically you would get black by mixing Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow, but real-world inks combine with a muddy non-black appearance, so printers add a **Black** ink (historically abbreviated **K**). Printing presses make a rich black by applying K ink onto a bedding of CMY composite black. In the CMYK model, white is defined as zero ink on the white paper or print media.

The complementary color pairs for the CMYK model are the same as for RGB. As shown in the paint circles at right, mix two primary color inks to get secondary colors: Cyan ink plus Yellow makes green; Cyan ink plus Magenta makes blue; Magenta ink plus Yellow makes red.



CMYK inks



Example C5: The dark feathers of a Galápagos Dove stand out against a light background. (2009)



Example C6 above: On this aster flower, yellow brightly contrasts with purplish lavender. Flowers have naturally evolved highly contrasting colors to attract pollinators. Some flowers display *ultraviolet* color patterns which are invisible to humans but attractive to bees and certain other insects. On the long wavelength end of the visible spectrum, hummingbirds have co-evolved to suck nectar from red, orange, and pink flowers—colors which tend to be inconspicuous to insect eyes. (2008)



Example C7: A green beetle contrasts with a magenta thistle in Vikos-Aoos National Park, Zagoria, Greece. Green complements magenta in the RGB color wheel model, described on previous page. (2001)

Cut reflections with a polarizing filter

A circular polarizing filter for your lens cuts reflected light from water or shiny surfaces, as polarizing sunglasses do for your eyes. A polarizer is one of the few useful filters in digital photography, because the effect cannot be reproduced later using software.

Check the potential effect *before* taking the time to screw on a polarizing filter:

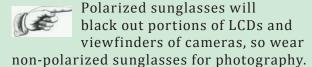
Hold the filter up to your eye and rotate it back and forth through a ninety degree (90°) angle. If you like the effect, mount the filter using its threads, look through the viewfinder (or at the live LCD), then rotate the floating ring again to find the desired appearance.

If you see no change as you rotate the polarizing filter through 90°, then the filter won't help, and will in fact hurt by reducing incoming light by 3 to 4 times (1.5 to 2 *stops*).

When finished cutting reflections or polarizing the blue sky, don't forget to remove the polarizing filter, and replace with your standard clear UV filter to protect the expensive lens.

Only apply a polarizing filter to your lens when the image will be improved as follows:

- Remove bright reflections from shiny surfaces such as water, glass, metal, or green vegetation. See beneath the reflective surface of lakes or streams.
- Enhance or remove rainbows, depending upon filter rotation between 0° and 90°. To find a rainbow, look in a line from your eyes to the shadow of your head on the ground, then redirect your gaze by a 42 degree angle to an area where direct sunlight falls on water droplets from rain, waterfall, or garden hose.
- Increase the contrast between clouds and blue sky, with maximum effect at a 90° angle from the sun (and null effect looking near 0° into or 180° away from the sun). Clear blue sky is polarized, but not cloud. Don't overly darken an attractive blue sky unless you intend to communicate a more somber message. Skies are naturally darker at higher altitudes.



Exercise D: Fill with Flow

Arrange and balance subjects in the frame so that viewers' attention actively **circulates** within the photograph and lingers in admiration.

We are instinctively attracted to areas which are **bright**, **sharp** (focused or contrasty), or **warm** (red, orange, or yellow). Lines, a pointy subject, or the direction of an animal's gaze all create **directional flow** which may need balancing by adding space or another subject in that direction.

Frame the composition horizontally or vertically to best complement the directional feeling of the subject. Horizontal lines can comfort or bore. Vertical lines can impress or cramp. Diagonal or curved subjects can excite or distract. S-shaped subjects usually dynamize compositions. The impact of your composition depends upon presentation format, context, and subject matter.

Odd Rule: one, three, or five subjects often flow better than an even number such as two or four. However, if two mates or a pair of subjects have more emotional or romantic impact, then ignore the Odd Rule.



Example D1: Diagonal lines of the boat guide your eye into the image. The floats are framed near the *Rule of Thirds* (*Exercise E*). Complementary colors *create contrast*. Solid shapes on the boat contrast with random liquid reflections. Although the legs of the person sitting in the boat may distract attention to the upper left, he humanizes the abstract image and provides a size reference. Galápagos Islands, Ecuador. (2009)



Framing an odd number of subjects can dynamize images.

Example D2: Above, three Australian Pelicans interact with body language and bright yellow eyes in Walpole-Nornalup National Park, Australia (2004). The striking birds and curved shoreline draw you into the composition. (Recorded using a compact *Canon PowerShot Pro1* camera.) Below, Carol Dempsey photographed dark sandstone curves by steadying a subcompact, shirt-pocket-sized *Canon PowerShot SD700 IS* camera against the wall of Lower Antelope Canyon, Arizona (2006). She used a lens of 7.7mm (46mm equivalent in terms of 35mm film), aperture f/2.8, and shutter speed 1/13th second.



For good *flow*, play with curves and lines.

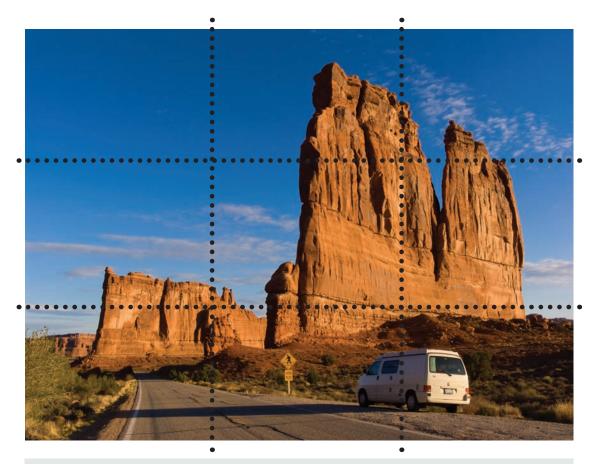
Exercise E: Apply the "Rule of Thirds"

Caution! **Centering** subjects can make a composition feel static or lack **flow**. Instead, start your composition by aligning important elements along **thirds**.

First, align important subjects of the composition along the lines of an imaginary **tic-tac-toe grid** (or activate the camera's grid lines) and shoot. Then recompose and

record different alignments. You may be surprised by which version will later strike you and your audience as most dynamic.

For example when capturing landscapes, level the sky at about one third or two thirds of the frame. Then reframe and record several different alignments of subjects. Check your instinctive feeling



Example E1: Which elements do you see aligned with the *tic-tac-toe grid*? Answer: The *horizon line*—the distant transition from land to sky—aligns with a *horizontal third*. The van, the road, and the foreground and background rock monuments generally align with *vertical thirds*. The subjects which follow the *Rule of Thirds* help shake up my static emotional response to the empty blue sky on the upper left. Arches National Park, Utah. (2006)

Do you also see the use of *Exercise D: Fill with Flow*? The van and road in the lowest *third* point into the composition towards the empty blue sky. The massive rock monument pulls your eye to the right. The bright white van pulls your attention downwards to notice the yellow sign and follow the road back towards the sky. This arrangement keeps your *flow* of attention circulating within the image. Blue and orange contrast and complement attractively as described in *Exercise C: Create Contrast*.

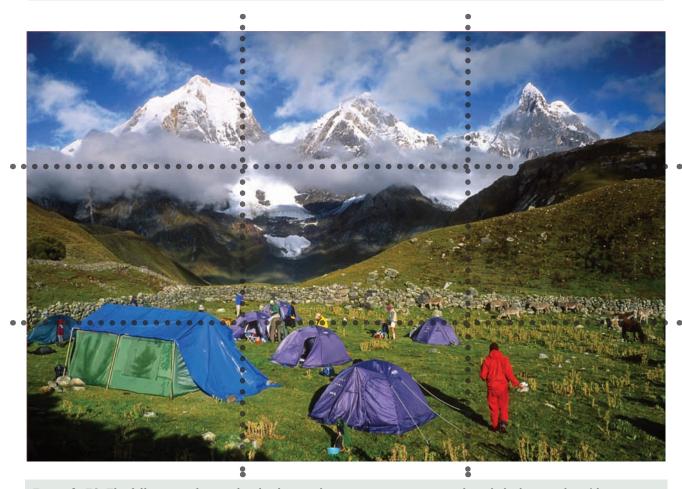
or audience reaction when viewing each version. The best photograph is the one that stirs the strongest emotional response.

Remember the first principle of composition: **emotional impact overrules everything**. I often start compositions with the *Rule of Thirds*, then feel free to stray as compelled by the subject matter.

"The very essence of instinct is that it's followed independently of reason."

 Charles Darwin (1809 - 1882), who conceived natural selection.

Initially, align subjects along a tic-tac-toe grid; then vary.



Example E2: The following subjects closely align with an imaginary *tic-tac-toe board*: the horizon line (the transition from sky to ground) and fog, the rock wall, the donkeys, a line of tents, the bright red trekker, and the blue tarp. The three peaks in the Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru also illustrate the *Odd Rule* in *Exercise D: Fill with Flow*.

The sense of scale is enhanced by foreground trekkers, tents, and donkeys that diminish in size with distance, towards the background of icy peaks and large glaciers jutting through fog. Attractive blue sky mixed with a few clouds usually provides a more striking backdrop than all-blue sky or mostly cloudy. Wake up early, spend extra time, and capture the right moment. (2003)

Chapter 2. Focus, Expose, Edit, Create

- A. How to Focus and Expose
- B. Revealing the Histogram
- C. How to Edit Images
- D. How to Print Images

"Remember: Your focus determines your reality."

— George Lucas, Star Wars: Episode I, The Phantom Menace.

A. How to Focus and Expose

Does your camera have trouble hunting for focus? Does it expose too brightly or darkly? Try *Examples A1-A7* to learn how to focus and expose more reliably. Novice photographers may want to do these exercises in *AUTO*, or the camera's default easy mode. If a topic seems too advanced, skip onwards and revisit later.

After you get more comfortable with your camera's *point-and-shoot* automatic exposure modes (such as *AUTO* and *Scene modes*), learn *P* mode (*Program* auto exposure), if available. Then study *A/Av* (*Aperture-preferred auto exposure*), and *S/Tv* (*Shutter-preferred auto exposure*). *M* (*Manual*) gives you more control but requires more practice and time to prepare for a shot.

Focus

Many cameras, especially compact models, struggle to focus

- in dim light
- · at the telephoto end of the zoom
- on uniform areas that have little contrast, such as blank sky or empty paper
- on very bright subjects within the focusing area

Focusing is most reliable if you first half-press and hold the shutter release button to lock focus* on an edge or contrast boundary of the subject, recompose, then fully press. Learn to distinguish your camera's visual and audio signal (beep) for focus lock versus the signal for failure to achieve focus. For sharper images, tuck elbows closely to your body, then press the shutter button while breathing out.

Expose

Three basic settings interact to collect light and control image brightness:

- 1. **shutter speed**: the duration of exposure controls motion blur (see blurred in Index)
- 2. aperture: a smaller lens pupil increases depth of focus (p. 53) but admits less light
- 3. *ISO sensitivity*: increasing *ISO* in dimmer light amplifies recorded brightness at the cost of increasing *noise* (random mottling)

Despite advanced circuitry, cameras are not smart enough to know which subjects are supposed to be black, white, or midtone in brightness, as demonstrated in *Examples A3-A7*. Your artistic judgment now comes into play: compensate exposure at shooting time then fine-tune tones later in an image editor on a computer.

^{*} Exception: A half-press of the shutter release button normally locks focus except in *Sports/Action* scene mode or *Continuous-Servo* or *AI-Servo autofocus*, which all continuously hunt for focus.

Basic skills: How to focus and expose more reliably.

Try these simple experiments with any camera: *Examples A1-A7* are important for all photographers to understand.

First, find one sheet each of white paper, black paper, and gray or tan cardboard. Lay the paper in a bright daylight area with diffuse light near a window indoors. To perform the exercises in *Examples A1-A7*, set your camera on *AUTO* (point-and-shoot mode, such as *AUTO* in green on the *Mode Dial* at right). But for better control, set your camera as described in *Improve Focus* on page 52.



Mode dial of a Canon PowerShot G9

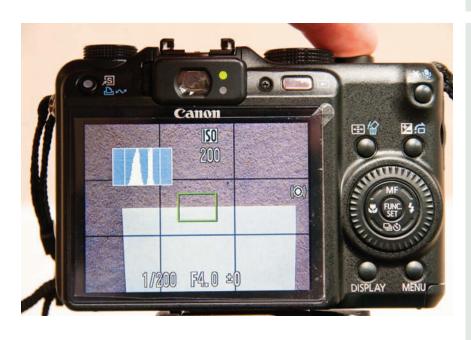


Example A1

Press halfway down on the shutter release button to lock focus* on the center of a white sheet of paper as shown above. Notice that most cameras won't be able to achieve focus on this uniform area having no edges and no contrast.

Check your Camera User's Guide under Focus Lock. As shown at left, the Canon PowerShot G9 (and other cameras in the excellent PowerShot Series) indicate difficulty focusing by flashing a yellow light near the viewfinder (in AUTO mode) or showing a yellow focus box in the center of the LCD (in P, Tv, Av, or M exposure modes). Turn on your camera's Grid Lines (tic-tac-toe guidelines) to help align subjects.

Note the *Canon G9* camera's useful *live histogram* shown on the screen in a light blue box with white peaks. *Histograms*, discussed on pages 50-51 and 54-59, are vital for learning about *brightness* and *exposure*.



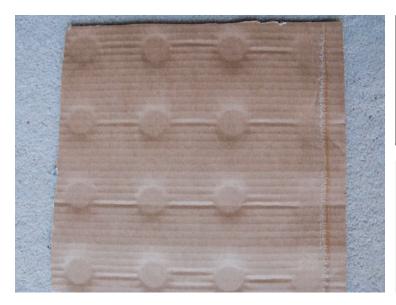
Example A2

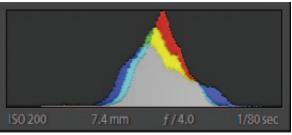
Now recompose the image so the edge of the paper is centered in the "crosshairs" of the focus. Press halfway down and hold the shutter release button to lock focus on the edge.

As shown at left, the *Canon PowerShot G9* camera indicates successful focus with a steady green focus rectangle and/or light.

If the camera still has difficulty focusing, make sure the zoom is at wide angle, move the camera slightly away from the subject, and try refocusing.

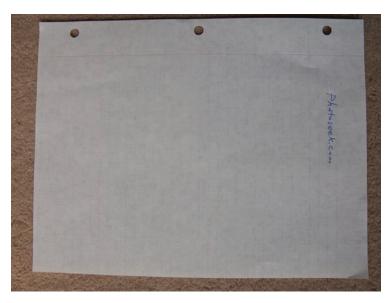
The default minimum focus distance for many cameras is about 1.5 feet or 50 centimeters. To focus closer than this, invoke *Macro Mode* (marked with a flower symbol) on a compact camera, or use a *macro lens* or *diopter filter* on a DSLR camera.

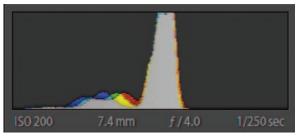




Example A3

Now compose to fill the frame with a piece of cardboard (gray or tan) laid on the carpet or floor. Fully press the shutter release button. By default, all cameras perfectly meter and expose subjects that average to middle tone (midtone) brightness (creating a histogram of brightness values peaking near the center, as shown above).

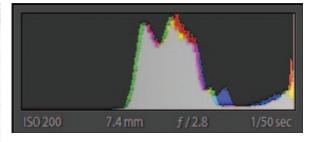




Example A4

Now compose to fill the frame with a piece of white paper. By default, all cameras mindlessly *underexpose* a predominantly white-toned subject, forcing it to appear gray (creating a *histogram* of brightness values peaking towards the center, as shown above).





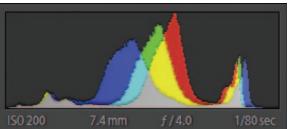
Example A5

Now compose to fill the frame with a piece of dark black paper. By default, all cameras mindlessly *overexpose* a predominantly black-toned subject, forcing it to appear gray (creating a *histogram* of brightness values peaking towards the center). Any white subjects appearing as a small percentage of the image area tend to overexpose (cutting off detail beyond the *white point* on the far right of the histogram). The cut-off *highlights* are unfortunately lost in your recorded JPEG file, but much can be recovered from a RAW file in advanced cameras.



Compensate exposure

Half-press and hold the *shutter release button* to lock exposure (or use an *Exposure Lock* button) on an area that averages to medium brightness (such as a *middle gray card*) in the same light as your main subject, then recompose and fully press. This more accurately renders subjects of all brightness levels, including shadows, midtones, and highlights. But take care not to *overexpose* highlights. Realize that cameras cannot record the full *dynamic range* from bright to dark that your eyes can see. For greatest control, try *Manual* exposure mode and study the camera's *histogram* and *highlight warning screen* for each image. Read more on page 56.



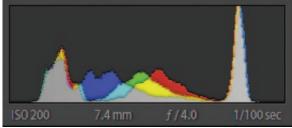
Example A6

Now compose as shown, mostly filling the frame with the medium-toned cardboard, but also including some black and white paper. By default, all cameras properly *meter* and *expose* a mediumtoned subject, which forces proper brightness for both white and black subjects that also appear in the frame! In the above *histogram* (a chart that tabulates pixel brightness), the cardboard peaks in the center, the white paper peaks in the highlights area to the right, and the small strip of black paper appears as bumps in the shadows area to the left.

White Balance determines color balance

Why does the camera make the cardboard appear accurately reddish brown in Example A6, but neutrally grayish in *Example A3?* **Answer:** The camera's Auto White Balance (AWB) adjusts color well when the framed area includes some neutral tones—white or gray as perceived by your eyes, such as the white sheet of paper in *Example A6*. But without a neutral color framed in *Example A3*, the camera's AWB makes the tan cardboard and light-tan carpet both appear wrongly neutral (by darkening reds and brightening blues). Proper color balance is shown in *Examples A6* and *A7*. Half-pressing and holding the shutter release button (or using an Exposure Lock button) also locks white balance and allows you to recompose before capturing the image with a full press. Read more about *White Balance* on pages 58-59.





Example A7:

Compose as shown where black, midtone, and white subjects comprise equal areas of the image. The camera's light meter automatically calculates an average exposure with a centered histogram—just right for the appearance of these particular subjects, not too light and not too dark overall. See *Compensate exposure* on this page.

Improve light metering

Choose one of your camera's light metering methods depending upon the subject:

- 1. Matrix/Evaluative is the default for most cameras and measures light from the whole frame, often working best for flash photography. Beware of overexposing brightly toned portions of a predominantly dark or medium toned picture.
- 2. *Center Weighted* measures light from just the central area of the frame, which is the most predictable method if you get in the habit of prefocusing and exposure-locking with a half-press of the shutter release button, as I usually do.
- 3. **Spot** measures light from a tiny area in the middle of the frame, which usually throws off the exposure for the rest of the image unless you are very experienced.

The *auto exposure* (*AE*) meters in all cameras overly darken white snow to look like midtone gray, and overly brighten black subjects to appear as midtone gray (as shown in previous *Examples A3-A7*). Why? Because cameras mindlessly average whatever you frame in the metering area towards midtone brightness (halfway between white and black). To compensate exposure more reliably, set or lock exposure on an area of the subject which averages to medium tone or middle gray (or has an equal proportion of dark and light tones), then recompose and record the image.

Improve focus—active or still

Set focus mode differently for active and still subjects. (Review focus lock/focus mode in your Camera User's Manual Index: on Canon PowerShot G9, press MENU button to change focus settings.)

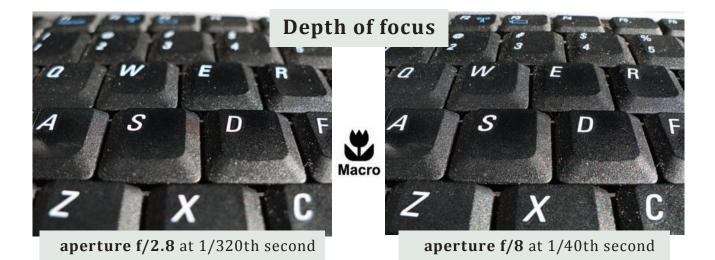
- For the most predictable control, set your autofocus/AF mode to Single Servo on Canon (or AF-S on Nikon DSLRs), which stays locked at the desired distance when you half-press and hold the shutter release button. Landscape photographers rarely use Canon AI Servo or AI Focus (or Continuous-Servo AF or Focus Tracking in Nikon terms), which automatically tracks fast moving subjects (such as children, animals, or sports) and uses release priority for fast click but focuses less reliably on where you aim the camera.
- For the most reliable focus, set your AF frame/area for single point in center. For landscapes and fixed subjects, don't use multi-point AI Focus (Artificial Intelligence) or FlexiZone or Face Detect, which often focus on the closest or unintended subject. Only use these modes for rapid photographs of people or action when you have no time to prefocus. Terminology may differ between camera brands.
- Most compact cameras lock both exposure and focus simultaneously when you half press the shutter release button.
 Advanced cameras offer a separate Exposure Lock button to helpfully grab the exposure from a framed area different from where you lock focus. Button behavior differs between brands—check your User's Manual.

Troubleshooting

Do your camera menus or options seem to shift and change? An accidental bump in or out of a camera bag can easily rotate



the camera's *mode dial* to an unintended setting. Be aware that each setting on the mode dial can have a different set of options which are supported for focus, exposure, shutter speed, metering, release, and flash. *Multiselector buttons* are easily bumped accidently, moving *Single Point* autofocus off-center such as on *Nikon D40X*, *D60*, and *D5000 DSLR* cameras.



Example A8: Aperture adjusts *depth of focus* (or *depth of field*): Looking through a pinhole puts more in focus than seen by your eye pupil alone. To improve sharpness from front to back, use a smaller opening in your camera's lens diaphragm by **increasing** *f/number* for *aperture*, and by **focusing at one third of the distance between subjects**.

Landscape Scene Mode increases depth of focus in bright light but doesn't in dim light. More reliably, use Aperture-preferred (Av or A) or Manual exposure mode. In the above left image, most of the keyboard is blurred when using a wide open aperture of f/2.8 on a Canon PowerShot G9 camera. The top right image sharpens more foreground and background by using an aperture of f/8. To match the depth of field of aperture f/8 using a 7.4mm lens on the Canon G9 compact camera, the much larger sensor of a Nikon D60 DSLR camera would need a 24mm lens set to f/25, requiring 3.5 times higher ISO to match shutter speeds. (Both lenses have the angle of view of a 35mm lens in terms of 35mm film.) Read about aperture, depth of focus (DOF), and f/8 is great in Glossary pages 184-185.

Below: Avalanche Lilies bloom in late July at Mount Rainier National Park, Washington. Photographed with a Nikon D60 **DSLR** camera using ISO 400, lens 18mm (27mm equivalent in terms of 35mm film), **aperture f/16**, and shutter speed 1/250th second. (2009)



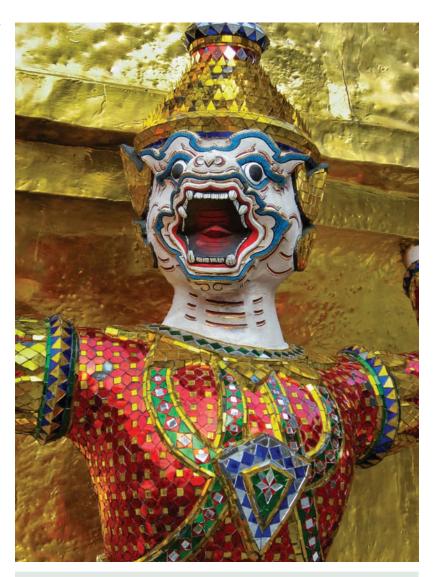
Chapter 3. Lightweight Cameras

- A. Top Three Cameras for Light Travel
- B. Light Travel Camera Table
- C. Big Prints from Small Cameras
- D. To Full Frame and Beyond
- E. The Ideal Light Travel Camera
- F. Tom's Gear

We learned in *Chapter 1* that you don't need a big or expensive camera to capture a touching or striking image. The best camera is the one that you have with you. Small, high-quality cameras lighten your load around town or on hiking, backpacking, or international trips.

This chapter compares details of some classic cameras which record excellent image quality in a relatively lightweight body at a reasonable price value.

If you already prefer a different camera for your specific needs, that's fine! Good photographers create image quality mostly from their own skills, not from specific camera features, size, or resolution.



Carol Dempsey photographed this sculpture at Bangkok's Grand Palace using the shirt-pocket-sized *Canon PowerShot SD700 IS* camera (only 7 ounces). Visitors who see a 16-inch print of this in our home gallery cannot distinguish a quality difference from nearby prints shot on a much bulkier DSLR camera. (2007)

Canon soon upgraded the SD700 IS to SD850 IS and its wide-angle sibling SD870 IS.

As of 2010, you can record better quality images with the equally tiny *Canon PowerShot S90* subcompact (one of the *Top Three Cameras for Light Travel*). Later models will quickly surpass these.



A Glacier Lily flower blooms in the Cascades Range of Washington. (2006)

Subcompact digital cameras such as the Canon PowerShot SD700 IS (new in 2006) can capture impressive macro close focus images. See Chapter 1: Magnify your world on pages 46-47.

A. Top Three Cameras for Light Travel

After lugging cameras around the world for thirty years, I suggest the following high quality, lightweight cameras that can comfortably capture magical light in travel afar:

1. Panasonic Lumix DMC-G2 or GH1 mirrorless camera

32 ounces with 14-140mm zoom lens (equivalent to 28-280mm lens on 35mm film cameras). Add 45-200mm telephoto lens for wildlife photos (equivalent to a 90-400mm lens). Equals DSLR quality up to ISO 800. Takes both high quality still images and autofocus HD movies (with plug for Dolby® stereo sound). Worthy rivals: Samsung NX10 & Olympus PEN E-PL1.

2. Canon PowerShot G11, G10, or G9 compact camera

13.4 ounces with 5x zoom (6x in *G9*) and high quality, fitting a large shirt pocket. On the *Canon G9* and *G10*, dial the ISO to no more than 400 because images shot at ISO 800+ record too much *noise*. Upgrade to *G11* to reduce noise by two ISO stops, articulate the LCD, and synchronize flash to 1/2000th second (to fill shadows in sunlight without overexposure).

3. Canon PowerShot S90 subcompact camera

7.2-ounces with fast f/2.0-4.9 **28-105mm** equivalent 3.8x zoom. The **Canon S90** shrinks its sibling G11 to the size of a deck of playing cards and captures images almost as sharp.

As a backup for your main camera (such as #1 above), bring one of the smaller pocket cameras (#2 or #3). Successor models will undoubtedly improve capabilities. Check for updates at *PhotoSeek.com* online.

Top picks!

B. Light Travel Camera Table

Top pick! indicates Tom's vote for top three cameras for lightweight travel and best image quality for their size.

Camera grouped in color shade by similar image quality	Advantages (Disadvantages)	Weight of Camera with Lens and battery	Lens focal length range	Lens focal length equivalent in 35mm film terms	Closest focus distance (macro coverage)	Image size in megapixels	Sensor size
1. Panasonic Lumix DMC-G2, GH1, or G10 Top pick!	G2 & GH1 have high-res EVF/LVF and articulate a 3" LCD. Fast focus, even in Live View. HD autofocus 720p movies, Dolby® stereo sound. Rivals image quality of Canon 450D/XSi and Nikon D5000 up to ISO 800.	32 ounces / 904 grams with 14-140mm lens. 15 ounce body.	LUMIX G VARIO HD 14-140mm f/4.0-5.8 ASPHERICAL MEGA OIS lens, Optical Image Stabilization of 2-3 stops. 10x zoom.	28-280mm equiv. lens For wildlife: 90-400mm equiv. lens	30 cm (98 x 73 mm coverage, or 3.86 x 2.87 inches)	12 mp	17.3 x 13.0 mm 4/3 type MOS sensor. JPEG & RAW
2. Canon EOS 550D / Rebel T2i DSLR	3" LCD with Live View. HD movies 1080p (manual focus) @30/25/24 fps & stereo sound plug. (But fixed LCD, bulky body, and slow focus in Live View.) Better ISO ≥1600 than Canon EOS 500D/Rebel T1i.	40 ounces / 1134 grams with 18-200mm lens. 19 ounce body.	Canon 18-200mm 1S f/3.5-5.6 EF-S lens (21 ounces), image stabilized up to 4 stops. 11x zoom.	29-320mm equiv. lens and many more	34.5 cm through 11x (73 x 49 mm coverage) but not sharp in center	18 mp	22.3 x 14.9 mm CMOS APS-C sensor. JPEG & 14 bit RAW
3. Nikon D5000 DSLR Tom's travel camera	Articulated 2.7" Live View LCD. HD movies 720p (but manual focus & mono sound). Better highlight, high ISO, and RAW dynamic range than Canon EOS 500D/T1i. (But bulky body, and very slow focus in Live View.)	41 ounces / 1163 grams with 18-200mm lens. 21 ounce body.	Nikkor 18-200mm VR II f/3.5-5.6G DX AF-S IF ED lens, image stabilized up to 4 stops 11x zoom.	27-300mm equiv. lens and many more	46 cm through 11x (93 x 62 mm coverage at 200mm, but corners soft even at f/11)	12 mp	23.7 x 15.6 mm CCD APS-C sensor. JPEG & 12 bit RAW
4. Canon PowerShot G11, G10, G9 Top pick!	Great image quality from a 13-ounce camera, with RAW. G11 has flip-out LCD & 1-2 stops ISO lower noise versus G9, G10. Movies 640x480 with mono sound. (Cheaper Canon A650 IS has flip-out LCD; no RAW.)	13.4 ounces /380 grams, compact	G11, G10: 5x zoom lens, IS image stabilized 1-4 stops. 6.1-30.5mm f/2.8-4.5.	610, 611: 5x zoom 28-140mm equiv. lens 1S f/2.8-4.5 69: 6x zoom 35-210mm equiv. lens	1 cm (17 x 22 mm coverage) at wide angle, with great depth of field	G11: 10 mp G10: 14.7 mp G9: 12 mp	7.6 x 5.7 mm CCD 1/1.7" type sensor. JPEG & RAW
5. Canon PowerShot S90 Top pick!	Canon S90 has the inner workings and manual controls of Canon G11 in half the size. Movies 640x480. (Mono sound, no viewfinder.)	7.2 ounces / 205 grams, subcompact	3.8x zoom lens, IS image stabilized. 6-22.5mm f/2.0-4.9	28-105mm equiv. lens	5 cm (65 x 49 mm coverage) at wide, with great depth of field	10 mp	1/1.7" type sensor JPEG & RAW
6. Fujifilm Finepix F200EXR or F100fd	Fujifilm F200EXR and F100fd: JPEG sharper & less noisy Canon G9 or G10. Takes 640x480 movies (with mono sound). Wide dynamic range (mitigates lack of RAW file support).	7.4 ounces / 210 grams, subcompact	5x zoom lens, image stabilized 1-2 stops. 6.4-32mm f/3.3-5.1	28-140mm equiv. lens, best quality landscape camera ≤ 8 ounces	5 cm (58 x 43 mm coverage) at wide angle, with great depth of field	12 mp	1/1.6" Fujifilm Super CCD HR VII sensor. JPEG only

Best quality images from the smallest camera

Compare the top pick *Canon PowerShot S90* to:

- Samsung EX1/TL500 (2010) has brightest 24-72mm f/1.8-2.4 lens, flip out 3" AMOLED display, 1/1.7"
 CCD sensor, RAW, but heavier, pricier, short 3x zoom.
- Fujifilm Finepix F200EXR (2009) has longer 5x zoom but lens 1.5 stops slower at wide and no RAW.
- Panasonic Lumix LX3 (2008) has 1/1.6" sensor and bright f/2.0-2.8 lens but only 2.5x zoom 24-60mm.
- Good compact travel superzooms Casio Exilim FH100, Samsung HZ35W, & bargain Kodak EasyShare Z950 require brighter light and capture fuzzier resolution.

Top pick compact *Panasonic G Series* cameras

- have excellent mirrorless design and sharp interchangeable lenses, less bulky than DSLR
- have Four Thirds inch size sensor which equals APS-C up to ISO 800 but is noisier at ISO ≥1600
- autofocus in digital live view faster than a DSLR, but slower than a DSLR using its optical viewfinder
- outshine worthy Olympus PEN E-PL1 (14-150mm lens, 2010) with better OIS, image auto-rotation, & better menus but add 9 ounces & noise at ISO 1600+
- beat Olympus E-620 & E-520, and Fujifilm S100FS

Promising mirrorless cameras with APS-C sensor

- Samsung NX10 (new in 2010) has good mirrorless APS-C design, bright AMOLED display, less bulk than DSLR. Rivals Panasonic G Series & costs less.
- 2. Sony NEX-5/NEX-3 (2010) takes top images with value-priced, tiny, lightest-weight (10 ounce), mirrorless APS-C body but has poor menus, buried manual controls, and can't use viewfinder with flash.

Best travel DSLR cameras with APS-C sensor

- 1. Canon EOS 550D/Rebel T2i (www.usa.canon.com)
 - beats *Nikon D5000 DSLR* with sharper images, better movies, sharper LCD, one stop less noise at ISO ≥1600, and faster live view focus, but the body costs more and doesn't flip out the LCD
- 2. Nikon D5000 (www.NikonUSA.com)
 - beats the mirrorless Panasonic G2/G10/GH1
 with two stops ISO low-noise advantage at ISO
 1600+, one stop better VR image stabilization,
 and quicker optical viewfinder autofocusing
 but autofocuses live view LCD painfully slower
 - captures better highlights, high ISO, and RAW dynamic range than Canon EOS 500D/T1i DSLR
 - weighs 12 ounces less than the pricier
 Nikon D300 and records similar image quality
 - retains most features of Nikon D90 (remote flash & GPS options), lowers cost, subtracts 3 ounces, and flips out a vari-angle LCD

The *Tamron AF 18-270mm f/3.5-6.3 Di II VC LD Aspherical IF MACRO* lens can substitute as a cheaper travel lens for many DSLR cameras. But this 15x zoom autofocuses slower and less reliably compared to superior *18-200mm Nikon VR* and *Canon IS* zoom lenses, which better track rapidly moving subjects. All three *superzoom* lenses capture resolution 10 to 25% fuzzier than a *fast* f/2.8 pro lens, but weigh less, zoom across a wider range, save money, and stabilize images.

Stabilize handheld shots

Do yourself a favor and get a higher-end camera/lens introduced in 2008 or later with good optical image stabilization, which supports sharper hand-held shots in much dimmer light when using slow shutter speeds or long telephoto lenses. Image stabilization can let you hand hold the camera for shutter speeds 1 to 4 stops slower (2 to 16 times longer), depending on the camera model and lens. Mounting a camera on a tripod usually records sharper images, but hand holding a camera using image stabilization increases your creative fun and freedom.

Each brand labels optical image stabilization differently:

- **Canon** *IS* = *Image Stabilization*
- **Nikon/Nikkor** *VR* = *Vibration Reduction*
- Panasonic O.I.S. =
 Optical Image Stabilization
- **Tamron** VC = Vibration Compensation
- **Sigma** OS = Optical Stabilization



Unleash your camera from a tripod and release your inner creativity. Use image

stabilization along with higher ISO to reduce blurring caused by hand-held shake. But beware of extra image noise at ISO settings above 400 on compact cameras and above 1600 on DSLRs.

With optical stabilization turned on, you can hand hold the following camera zoom lens settings as slow as the shown *shutter speed* if you take extra shots for insurance:

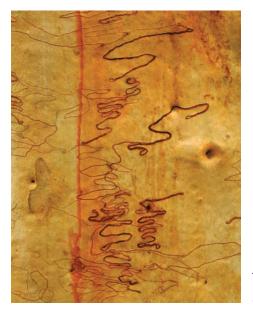
- Canon PowerShot G11/G10 with 28-140mm zoom (equivalent in terms of 35mm film) IS Continuous can be steadily hand held as slow as 1/4th second shutter speed, even at 140mm.
- Nikkor 18-200mm VR II f/3.5-5.6G DX AF-S IF ED lens for DSLR: hand hold as slow as 1/6th second shutter speed at 18mm (27mm equivalent in terms of 35mm film) and 1/25th second at 200mm (300mm equivalent).
- At shutter speeds slower than shown, use a tripod to steady the camera to prevent hand-held blurring of images.

Part II: Where to Seek the Light

- Chapter 4: Exciting Destinations
- Chapter 5: Nature Worship
- Chapter 6: Natural Patterns



Annapurna South (left), also known as Annapurna Dakshin or Moditse, rises to 23,684 feet/7219 meters elevation. Prayer flags express compassion at a monument to fallen climbers, at Annapurna South Base Camp (ABC at 13,550 feet/4130 meters elevation), in Nepal. Annapurna is Sanskrit for "Goddess of the Harvests." Three images were stitched to make this sunset panorama.



For the viewer, photography is vicarious travel through time and place.

A Squiggly Bark Gum (eucalyptus tree) is marked by a worm which squirms under the bark. Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park, near Sydney, Australia. See Chapter 6 and Index for more natural patterns. (2004)



Wind blows prayer flags into an arch which frames Annapurna I, the world's 10th highest peak (26,545 feet/8091 meters, which appears shorter than the peak on the previous page only due to perspective). (2007)

Chapter 4. Exciting Destinations



Blue-footed Boobies do a sky pointing mating dance on the Galápagos Islands, Ecuador. Recorded with a Nikon D60 DSLR camera using a Nikkor 70-300mm VR f/4.5-5.6 lens at focal length 185mm, ISO 800, aperture f/9, and shutter speed 1/160th second. (2009)

Currently, my favorite places for outdoor photography and recreation are:

- New Zealand and Australia pages 80-93
- *Nepal* 72-73, 94-103
- The Alps: Switzerland & France 104-109
- South America: Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina. Antarctica. 110-133
- Western Canada 134-139
- Western USA 140-161

See the *Index* to find images throughout the book for each country or state.

This chapter may inspire your own unique adventures. Plan a trip or see more images on my nature travel photography website:

www.PhotoSeek.com



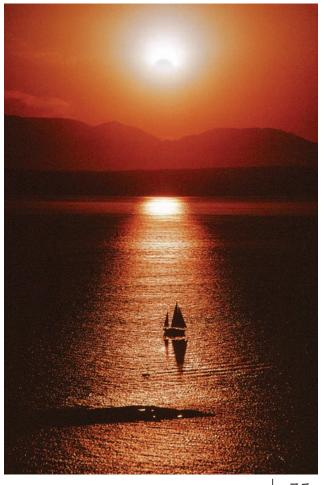
Above: Trekkers cross the outlet stream of Lake Carhuacocha (13,600 feet/4145 meters elevation) in the Cordillera Huayhuash, Peru. Photographed on Fujichrome Velvia 50 color slide film using a Nikon N70 SLR camera. (2003)

Right: A partial solar eclipse over Puget Sound, Seattle, Washington on July 11. Photographed on Kodachrome 64 color slide film using an Olympus OM-1N SLR camera. (1991)

The Romance of Difference

My home state of Washington packs incredible scenic variety into a small area, one of the most rewarding destinations on earth. Yet I hunger for experiences beyond my familiar home horizon.

Curiosity drives creative energy. Familiar surroundings are comfortably reassuring, but can eventually dull the senses. Humans naturally seek novelty and contrast. The joy of travel lies in the romance of difference.



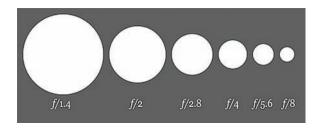
Glossary

Camera Terms Explained

Below, words in **bold** are defined as glossary entries. Items in *italics* indicate other common photographic jargon, brands of camera gear, websites, and book sections.

Adobe Lightroom

a computer software program designed by Adobe Systems (www.adobe.com) specially for photographers to elegantly and quickly organize, edit, and output images. Adobe Lightroom cut my workflow time in half compared to using Adobe Photoshop with Bridge, or Canon Zoombrowser. The upgrade from version 1.4 to 2.x added important Graduated Filter, Adjustment Brush tools and a quicker interface to Adobe Photoshop CS3/CS4 for features such as Photomerge (for stitching panoramas, described on pages 44-45). **Lightroom** smartly stores its *non-destructive* editing commands and labels in a powerful database (and in XMP sidecar files for RAW). Lightroom gives photographers total control over adjusting exposure, tone, color, highlight recovery, shadow fill, contrast curve, black and white clipping points, sharpness, noise reduction, lens chromatic aberrations (red, blue, or purple fringing), lens vignette correction, and more. **Lightroom** version 3 imports movies and improves copyright watermarking of export files.



aperture; aperture-preferred / A / Av

The **aperture** is the hole or pupil formed by the *lens diaphragm* (overlapping blades) in a camera. Each **relative aperture** size is expressed as an **f/number**—the ratio of the lens **focal length** to the



The Glossary gives you a leg up on technical terms. A lava lizard perches on a Galápagos Marine Iguana, Ecuador. (2009)

pupil diameter. For example, an **aperture** of f/8 on an 18mm **focal length** lens makes the **aperture** diameter 2.25 millimeters (or 18mm divided by 8).

A **zoom lens** labelled *F3.5-5.6* or *1:3.5-5.6* means that as you zoom, f/3.5 is the widest (or brightest) **aperture** at *wide angle* and f/5.6 is the biggest opening at the *telephoto* end. **DSLR** and advanced **compact cameras** have an **Aperture-preferred** (or **Aperture-priority/A/Av**) auto **exposure** mode that lets you set the opening size (**f-stop**) while the camera meter automatically decides the **shutter speed** (at a given **ISO** setting).

color theory

See Color Theory on page 34 in Chapter 1.

compact camera, or point-and-shoot camera

a consumer camera designed for ease of use by a mass market, with a body smaller than a **DSLR** camera. In the hands of skillful photographers, *advanced* **compact cameras** (using up to **ISO** 200 or 400) can record image quality like low-end **DSLR** cameras. *Subcompact* cameras weigh up to 8 ounces and fit a shirt pocket.

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depth of field, depth of focus, or DOF

the range of distance that remains sharp in front of and in back of where you locked focus. Foreground and background that are outside of the depth of field will appear out of focus, as in the keyboard example on page 53. Shallow **DOF**—where background and/ or foreground blurs a short distance from the focus point—is most noticeable in macro close focus and telephoto photography. Increase depth of focus and sharpness from front to back by using a higher **f/number** (smaller pupil) for the **aperture** and by locking focus one third of the distance between closest and furthest subjects. Landscape images often employ deeper DOF than portraits. In portraiture, sharper emphasis can be drawn to the subject by throwing the background out of focus—by reducing the f/number value for the **aperture** (making a larger pupil size)—as in the Red-footed Booby photo on page 116. Focus on the eye of the person or animal being portrayed and little else need be sharp.

If you keep the **zoom lens** angle of view and **aperture** constant, then moving your camera closer to a subject and refocusing will enlarge the subject in the frame, reduce **depth** of field, and blur background (as for the second iguana on page 31). Moving away and then refocusing on the subject will increase **depth** of field and shrink the subject in the frame. If you keep the **aperture** constant and don't move the camera, then an 18mm lens shrinks the subject relative to the viewing frame and has a greater **depth** of field than a longer lens, such as 120mm telephoto.

For a given camera using a fixed **aperture**, wherever you stand or **zoom** (wide or telephoto), the **depth of field** will remain the same as long as you keep the focused subject appearing the same size in the frame (as in the tortoise example on page 41).

In bright light, many **compact cameras** let you conveniently record photos with closer, deeper focus than a camera with a larger sensor (unless you take the time to mount a special macro lens or diopter filter on a DSLR camera). For example, the Canon PowerShot G9 compact camera can sharply magnify small objects by focusing to 1 cm (framing an area of 22 x 17 mm), which is much closer than the 50 cm closest focus on Nikon's VR DX 18-200mm travel lens (giving 93 x 62 mm macro coverage). To match the depth of field of the Canon G9 with aperture f/8 zoomed to widest angle 7.4mm, the Nikon D60 DSLR camera (mounting Nikon DX format lenses for APS-C sensor) would need a 24mm lens set to f/25, and 3.5 stops higher ISO to match the shutter speed. The focal length in this example uses an equivalent to a 35mm in terms of 35mm film.

Depth of field is determined by lens **aperture**, **focal length** (or *optical angle of view*), distance to the focus point, and size of **sensor** or **film**. Look up the **depth of field** and *hyperfocal distance* for most cameras on

- www.dofmaster.com/dofjs.html
- www.dpreview.com/learn/?/Glossary

f/8 is great

To optimize sharpness, use an **aperture stop** of **f/8** on **DSLR** cameras, or a middle **aperture** on **compact cameras**. Also use a **shutter speed** that is fast enough (with **image stabilization** turned on) to counteract blurring due to long telephoto or hand-held shake.

Most lenses capture sharpest images when using an **aperture** 1 to 2 **stops down** from the widest, brightest opening. The **depth of focus** increases with narrower **apertures** (higher **f/numbers**) but is counteracted by light diffraction through the smaller lens pupil, which softens or blurs *resolution*. **Zoom** lenses can be 5 to 25% blurrier than *prime lenses*.

To research how to optimize sharpness for a given lens, check camera reviews:

- www.dpreview.com
- www.popphoto.com
- www.photozone.de

For example, using *Nikon*'s versatile *Nikkor* 18-200mm VR II f/3.5-5.6G DX AF-S IF ED lens, you can sharpen images from 70mm to 200mm by using **apertures** between f/8 and f/16 (usually f/8 is great). This lens transmits images worst (blurriest) at 135mm, where as a workaround you can use an aperture between f/11 and f/16 for results much sharper than the other pupil sizes.

On a **DSLR** camera, **f/8** often nicely balances **depth of focus** with sufficient **shutter speed** while avoiding the fuzzier light which would diffract through a smaller opening such as f/22.

If your goal is to maximize **depth of field** while avoiding the softening effect of diffraction through the tiniest lens pupil, **f/16** is usually sharper than higher **f/numbers** for a **DSLR** camera lens (or use **f/8** for **compact cameras** in bright light). **f/16** requires four times brighter light intensity (two full **stops**) compared to **f/8** (for a given camera, **shutter speed**, and **ISO**).

DSLR, SLR cameras

an acronym for "Digital Single Lens Reflex," a style of camera that allows you to see from the optical viewfinder through the lens via a mirror. (Reflex means reflection.) When you press the shutter release button, the mirror must flip up, temporarily

blocking the viewfinder in order to expose the digital **sensor** to light shining through the lens. A **DSLR** camera is bigger and heavier than a **compact** or **point-and-shoot camera**. **Digital SLR** (**DSLR**) style cameras fit a digital **sensor** in place of the **film** found in older **SLR** cameras. Prior to the use of a mirror in **DSLR** and **SLR** designs, cameras with viewfinders had two optical light paths: one light path through the lens to the **film**, and another path through the viewfinder to the eye, either positioned above the lens (a *twin-lens reflex* or *TLR*) or to the side (a *rangefinder* camera).

dynamic range

the ratio of the brightest to darkest light value recorded by a camera or displayed by a device. "2048 to 1" means the brightest highlight is 2048 times brighter than the darkest shadow. 2048 is a range of 11 stops, 11 doublings, or 2 to the 11th power. To increase dynamic range, see RAW in Glossary, HDR on page 45, and Dynamize JPEG on page 62.

RAW files can record an extra one to three stops of dynamic range from a scene compared to JPEG files, using DSLR cameras with APS-C size sensors (see box at right). But on compact cameras (which have smaller sensors), RAW files record only about half of a stop of extra dynamic range compared to JPEG.

exposure

the amount of light received by the sensor or film, as determined by aperture and **shutter speed**. The resulting image brightness and noise depends on the **ISO** setting of the **sensor** or **film**. The **shutter speed** determines the amount of motion blur, and the aperture determines the **depth of field**. Overexposure can lose **highlight** detail by *clipping* data at the *white point* of the **histogram**. *Underexposure* can lose **shadow** detail by clipping data at the *black point* and can create extra **noise** if you brighten on the computer instead of shooting with *proper exposure*. Artistic judgment determines *proper exposure*. When shooting **RAW** or **IPEG**, to preserve the most detail (from **shadows** to midtones to highlights), shoot histograms to

Below right: **Shutter speed** and **aperture** are interlinked. For example, in **Aperture-preferred** (**Av** or **A**) auto exposure mode, each increase of the **f/number** in the table (a **full**

aperture stop) opens the **shutter** twice as long in order to let in the same amount of light. All columns transmit the same **exposure value**, or **EV**.

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Dynamic range—the eyes have it

Human eyes can see a much wider **dynamic range** of light values (from brightest to darkest) compared to the range captured by cameras or portrayed by prints or display devices:

- 10 to 24 **stops** (16 million to 1) of dynamic range can be seen by human eyes when the pupil dilates or contracts like a camera's **aperture** (or 10 to 14 stops with a fixed pupil).
- 12 stops of dynamic range are recorded in RAW files (or 9 stops in JPEG files) of Nikon D5000 and Canon EOS 550D/ Rebel T2i DSLR cameras (see www.dpreview.com).
- Up to 11 stops of dynamic range are recorded in RAW files of Canon EOS 500D (2009) and EOS 40D (2007) DSLR cameras, about 2000:1 ratio of brightest to darkest light. (9 stops JPEG.) RAW files from the Canon EOS 450D/XSi (2008) and Nikon D60 record about 10 stops (JPEG 9 stops).
- 10 stops of dynamic range can be displayed by the *Canon Realis SX50 Multimedia Projector* with 1000:1 contrast ratio.
- 10 stops can be displayed by Dell UltraSharp 2407WFP-HC 24-inch Widescreen Flat Panel LCD Computer Monitor (2008) with 1000:1 contrast ratio and 1920x1200 pixel resolution.
- 8 stops are recorded in RAW files of a *Canon PowerShot Pro1* **compact camera** (2004) with 2/3" type (8.8 x 6.6 mm) **sensor**.
- 6 to 7 stops of dynamic range can be recorded by JPEG files from the average compact digital camera made in 2007.
- 7 stops of dynamic range can be captured by *Kodak Gold 200 ASA* negative print **film**.
- 5 stops of range can be captured by Fujichrome Velvia 50 color slide film.
- 4 to 7 stops of dynamic range can be displayed in photographs printed on paper.

far right without *clipping* (piling up) **highlights** at the white point, then adjust final appearance later on the computer. Or if you prefer to capture **JPEG** without later editing, expose more carefully at shooting time.

EVF, Electronic Viewfinder, or LVF

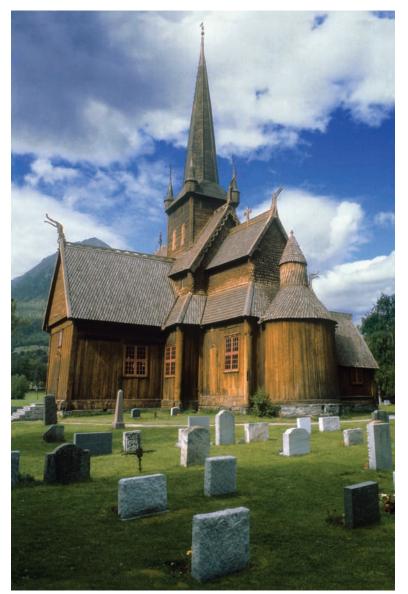
an acronym for **Electronic Viewfinder**, also known as a **Live View Finder**, which is the miniaturized digital image display seen through an eye cup on some digital cameras. An **EVF** or **LVF** replaces an *optical viewfinder* (eliminating the need for the bulky mirror apparatus design of **DSLR** cameras). A digital

f/number	f/1.4	f/2.0	f/2.8	f/4	f/5.6	f/8	f/11	f/16	f/22	f/32
shutter speed seconds	1/2000	1/1000	1/500	1/250	1/125	1/60	1/30	1/15	1/8	1/4

EVF or **LVF** helpfully shows the following: the live digital image recorded by the **sensor**, current camera settings, and in some models, a live **histogram** of light values. Note that a **DSLR** optical viewfinder consumes less power and may focus more clearly and quickly than an **EVF/LVF**.

film, 35mm film=135 film format

35mm **film** was introduced in 1892 by William Dickson and Thomas Edison, using **film** stock supplied by George Eastman, with a standard image size of 24 mm by 36 mm. **Film** is a sheet of plastic coated with an emulsion of light-sensitive gelatin-bonded silver halide salts, with variable crystal sizes that determine sensitivity (**ISO**, formerly *ASA* and *DIN*), contrast, and resolution. Chemical *film developing* is required to make a visible photograph. The small, high-quality *Leica* camera, designed in 1913 and mass produced starting in 1925, helped popularize the 35mm size film for professional photography. In 1934, *Kodak* introduced the 35mm-wide *135 film* in a handy metal cartridge, which surpassed the popularity of the physically larger



medium format 120 film in the 1960s. Large format film is defined as 4 x 5 inches or larger.

f/number, f-number, F number, or f-stop

= (lens focal length) ÷ (aperture diameter)

If the lens **focal length** is 16 times the **aperture** diameter, then the **f/number** is f/16. The following standard **full stop** f/numbers are listed from widest to narrowest **aperture** (left to right), each admitting half the light of the previous **full stop**:

f/1.4 2 2.8 4 5.6 8 11 16 22 32 45

When you **stop down** to narrow the **aperture**, you are changing to a higher value of the **f-stop** or **f/number**. Cameras with **Aperture-preferred** or *Manual* exposure modes can let you adjust aperture by half or one-third stop increments between the above full stop values.

For a given camera, the brightest (widest) aperture of a *fast* lens such as f/2.8 has a larger diameter than that of a *slower* f/3.5 lens. *Faster* lenses gather more light and are usually larger, heavier, costlier, and can create

better quality images than *slower* lenses. *Faster* and *slower* are terms reflecting the direct effect on **shutter speed**.

Most lenses are labeled on the barrel with their widest aperture. For example, *Nikon's 18-200mm VR* **zoom lens** marked "1:3.5-5.6" opens as brightly as f/3.5 at 18mm wide angle and f/5.6 at 200mm telephoto. The *Instruction Manual* says it can **stop down** to f/22 at wide angle and f/36 at telephoto.

Higher f/numbers decrease the **aperture** diameter (pupil) and admit less light while increasing depth of field. About two **stops** down from wide open is usually sharpest on typical modern lenses (thereby balancing the increased **depth of field** with the worsening diffraction of light through a smaller, darker opening).

On a given camera, a given f-stop transmits the same amount of light to the **sensor** no matter what lens you use. For example, the diameter of an f/5.6 pupil of a 200mm lens is 10 times larger than that of a 20mm lens, but both transmit the same amount of light to the sensor—at a given f-stop, a 20mm wide-angle lens gathers light from a wider area and stuffs it through a smaller hole than does a telephoto lens.

Each decreasing **full aperture stop** (measured by **f/number**) doubles the area of the pupil's circle. For each **full stop** change, the pupil's *diameter* (twice the radius size) changes by a factor of 1.414 (the square root of 2).

The Viking stave church at Lom, Norway was rebuilt in the year 1300. Photographed in 1981 on Kodak Ektachrome 200 color slide film.

focal length; and focal length multiplier or field of view crop factor

Focal length is the distance in millimeters (mm) from the optical center of the lens to the *focal point* located on the sensor or film when a subject at infinity is in focus. Lenses are defined by focal length, zoom range, brightest aperture f/number, closest focusing distance, and macro magnification. Good zoom lenses flexibly cover wide to telephoto angles of view, without the need for separate fixed-focal-length (prime) lenses.

The equivalent focal length in terms of 35mm film is the combination of camera lens and digital sensor size that captures the same angle of view (measured in degrees of arc diagonally in the frame, or sometimes horizontally) as does a 35mm film camera. On a 35mm film camera, 50mm is a normal lens with a 47° diagonal angle of view (roughly what humans perceive, about 40-60 degrees, not counting peripheral vision). With 35mm film, a 28mm lens is wide-angle and a 200mm lens is telephoto. Most DSLR and 35mm film cameras capture a width-to-height ratio of 3:2, while many compact digital cameras record an image with a 4:3 aspect ratio. For comparing cameras more accurately, check if your brand measures 35mm film equivalent angle of view diagonally (most common) or horizontally.

A focal length multiplier, also known as field of view crop factor (such as 1.5 or 1.6 for DSLR cameras with APS-C size sensors), measures how many times smaller is the diagonal measurement of a sensor compared to the diagonal of a 35mm film frame. For example the Nikon D5000, D80, D60, and D40/D40X DSLR cameras have a 1.5 field of view crop factor, which makes the angle of view of the sensor through a 200mm lens to be the same as a 300mm lens recording onto 35mm film. (200mm multiplied by 1.5 equals 300mm.) Despite the sensor being 1.5 times smaller diagonally, these cameras can capture better quality images than

digitizing (scanning) 35mm film. This *Nikon* factor of 1.5 makes an 18mm **focal length** lens capture the angle of view of a 27mm *lens equivalent in terms of 35mm film cameras*. The *Canon Digital Rebel* series **DSLR** cameras all have a **field of view crop factor** of 1.6 (including models *EOS 300D, 350D/XT, 400D/XTi, 450D/XSi, 1000D/XS, 500D/T1i, 550D/T2i*) due to an APS-C **sensor** slightly smaller than *Nikon*'s.

gigabyte, gb

one billion (1,000,000,000) bytes in the context of disk or **memory card** storage capacity or data transmission. Exception: in the case of computer **RAM** (**Random Access Memory**), **gigabyte** traditionally means 1,073,741,824 bytes (or 1024 to the third power).

highlights

the brightest tones in a photograph, as tabulated on the far right side of the **histogram**.

histogram

a useful chart (below left) which collates the gradations of pixel brightness of a digital image. An image is a spatial distribution of pixels, and its **histogram** tabulates pixel brightness frequency from dark to bright, from left to right. A camera's **histogram** sorts every pixel in an image into 256 bins of brightness value, and displays each bin count as a vertical bar. The 256 vertical bars meld into a spiky or bell-shaped curve. **Shadows** (darks and blacks) rise on the left, midtones pile up in the middle, and **highlights** (brightest pixels) accumulate on the right. Many cameras display a monochrome Combined RGB histogram. Advanced cameras show three histograms for the separate red, green, and blue channels of primary color. Adobe Lightroom helpfully shows six-color histograms. Learn more about histograms in Chapter 2: Focus, Expose, Edit, Create.

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To preserve the most detail, shoot **histograms** to far right, without piling up (clipping) **highlights** at the white point.

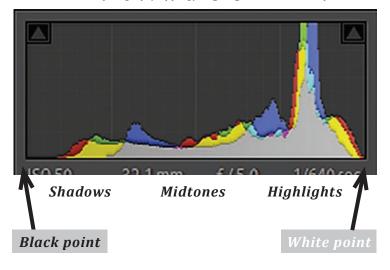


image stabilization: IS, VR, VC, OIS, OS

a desirable optical innovation to counteract the shake of hand-holding a camera, which can blur images when using a slow **shutter speed** and/or long telephoto lens. Turn off **IS** when using a *tripod*. Optical **image stabilization** can permit hand held shutter speeds 1 to 4 stops slower (2 to 16 times longer), depending on the camera model and lens. Each brand labels stabilization differently, as follows:

- Canon IS, Image Stabilization
- Nikon/Nikkor VR, Vibration Reduction
- Tamron VC, Vibration Compensation
- Panasonic OIS, Optical Image Stabilizer
- Sigma OS, Optical Stabilization
- Sony Alpha Super SteadyShot CCD-shift image stabilization in the camera body
- Pentax body-based Shake Reduction

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ISO sensitivity rating (ASA & DIN for film)

can be set higher to shoot images in dimmer light without changing **shutter speed** or **aperture**, but at the cost of increased **noise** and contrast. **ISO** (formerly ASA & DIN for film) is a standard sensitivity to light defined for digital and **film** cameras by the *International Organization for Standardization (ISO)*. Most digital cameras have a lowest ISO setting of 50, 80, 100, or 200 and increase by steps:

ISO 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200...

Each doubling of **ISO** increases sensitivity by a **stop** of light, but can make the image **noisy** (grainy) at **ISO 800+** for **DSLR** cameras with APS-C size **sensors**. **Noise** is most noticeable in uniform areas such as **shadows** or blue skies at **ISO 1600** and higher. Compact cameras (having small **sensors** such as *type 1/1.6"* or *1/2.5"*) usually record significant noise at **ISO 400** and higher, with images very blotchy at **ISO 1600** and higher. **DSLR** cameras with APS-C size **sensors** can record images using at least a 4 to 6 times higher **ISO** number (2 to 2.5 **stops** better sensitivity) for a given **noise** level compared to **compact cameras** with a *1/2.5 inch type* sensor.



Shoot with ISO 200 for bright sunny subjects. ISO 100 is a **stop** slower and helps reduce **noise** for many **compact cameras**

but doesn't improve quality for **DSLR** cameras. For dim daylight conditions, increase ISO sensitivity to 400. In darker light, when you choose not to mount the camera on a tripod to steady the image, you may need

Metric conversions

1 meter (m) = 3.2808 feet = 39.37 inches (in)

1 meter = 100 centimeters = 1000 mm

1 centimeter (cm) = 0.3937 inches

1 millimeter (mm) = 0.1 centimeters

1 ounce (oz) = 28.35 grams (g)

to set the camera to higher ISO such as 800, 1600, or 3200. Beware of ISO 400-800 or higher on compact cameras and ISO 1600 or higher on DSLR cameras, where blotchy **noise** impacts the *maximum effective print size* (discussed on page 68). But if too slow of a **shutter speed** blurs the hand-held shot, and you are already using the lens' brightest **aperture**, then choosing a higher **ISO** may be the only choice (aside from underexposing) to invoke a faster **shutter speed** and reduce the risk of blurring due to hand-held-shake. If no *tripod* is available, try steadying the camera against a wall, surface, or tree.

For tripod mounted exposures longer than 5 seconds at night, use **ISO 200** (and no higher), in order to avoid *random hotspots* created by **sensor** imperfections on

all cameras including DSLR models. A black shot with lens cap on can be used to digitally subtract hotspots using a *Layer* in Photoshop with Blend Mode=Difference. The Noise Reduction feature in some cameras can automatically do the same thing, but may smear image appearance test to find out.



Left: The sun sets near winter solstice at Three Arch Rocks, Oceanside, Oregon. (2006)



El Capitan (9846 feet/3001 meters) is a granite tower of the 50-millionyear-old Sawtooth batholith, in Sawtooth Wilderness Area, Idaho. (2007)

JPEG or .JPG file format

the default, compressed image file format most commonly recorded by digital cameras. Be sure to change your camera's default recording quality to the biggest and finest JPEG quality (Low Compression, which is virtually as good as an 8-bit TIFF file). Reliable, fast memory cards can inexpensively handle the extra volume. JPEG is compatible with all web browsers, image viewers, and editing software, and allows photographs to be compressed by a factor 10 to 20 with little loss in image quality compared to the camera's original RAW version. However if you later edit image tones, RAW files let you better optimize images. JPEG is an acronym for Joint Photographic Experts Group. See Dynamize JPEG on page 62 and RAW in Glossary.

How is a **JPEG** photograph recorded? The camera shapes the **RAW sensor** data into a medium *contrast curve*, gathers the **shadows**, **midtones**, and **highlights** between calculated *black* and *white points* on the **histogram**, and writes the image to an 8-bit JPEG file with *lossy compression* on your **memory card**. By shooting JPEG files, you give up control of *RAW conversion* to the camera's defaults, which usually don't render the image as well as you could using a *RAW converter* program on a computer.

Each time you edit and resave a JPEG file on your computer, the *lossy JPEG compression* loses image quality. To uphold quality, always save your original/master JPEG image to a TIFF (.TIF) file before editing. Better yet, instead of creating an extra .TIF file, use a *non-destructive* editor such as Adobe Lightroom which saves edits in a compact database instead of in a bulky new file.

LCD, Liquid Crystal Display

a screen that presents a live image or plays back photos recorded on a digital camera. An *articulated*, *flip-out-and-twist*, or *vari-angle* display is desirable

for easier **macro** photography and better creative and candid shooting at arm's length. Look for new superior, thinner *AMOLED* displays such as by *Samsung*. LCD technology is common on televisions and computer monitors. Standard monitors, printers, and many **LCD** screens use *24-bit sRGB* (*Truecolor*) color space—with *8 bits*, or 256 shades of **color**, for each of the three channels of *primary color* (red, green, or blue), representing 16.7 million colors for each **pixel**.

macro, close focus

Compact digital cameras usually require a special close focus mode or **Macro** button (often marked with a



flower symbol) to focus on objects nearer than about 50 centimeters or within 20 inches. Focus closely to enlarge a delightful unseen world—see *Magnify your world* on pages 46-47 in *Chapter 1*. A **DSLR** camera usually requires a screw-on *diopter filter* or special *macro lens* to focus closely.

megapixel, mp

1 million pixels or colored dots resolved by a camera sensor, stored on a memory card, or displayed on a glowing computer monitor. For example, the Nikon D5000 DSLR camera records images 4288x2848 pixels, which equals 12.2 megapixels. Megapixels are commonly arranged in a width:height aspect ratio of 3:2 for film and DSLR cameras, 4:3 for compact cameras and television, and 16:9 for HD, High Definition TV. Image quality and actual resolution are more closely related to the physical size of the sensor than to a camera's total effective megapixels. Caution: In compact cameras, increasing the number of megapixels beyond about 8 mp is a marketing device that consumes more memory card space but doesn't help image quality—see Chapter 3 for recommendations.

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memory card, flash memory

reliably stores recorded digital image files in your camera or other compatible device, even when power is shut off. For widest compatibility and economy, get a camera that uses Secure Digital (SD or SDHC) or CompactFlash memory card format. Note: SDHC (SD High Capacity) cards support 4 to 32 gigabytes, require an SD 2.0 card reader, and won't work in an SD 1.0 reader.

Memory cards handily carry large amounts of data from cameras to computers and other devices. To avoid compatibility problems, download and backup the card's data, then reformat the card in the camera before shooting, especially if writes or deletes were done from a different device.



Buy extra memory cards. After each photo shooting session or trip, put a removable label on the card(s) and rotate them through

your backup scheme in coordination with your main image storage and backup on large external hard drives.

metering area

the portion of the *frame* (seen through a *viewfinder* or on a live **LCD**) where a camera reads light intensity to determine the **exposure** before capturing an image. *Matrix/Evaluative*—the default on most cameras—meters light based upon the whole frame and often improves flash photography. *Center Weighted* averages light intensity in the central area of the frame, giving the best control and predictability. Finicky *Spot meter* measures light from a tiny center area.

midtones

middle or medium brightness values of light falling between **shadows** and **highlights** on the **histogram**.

mm

an abbreviation for *millimeter*. One thousandth of a *meter* (1/1000 *m*) distance. See also **focal length**.

noise

random mottling (appearing like **film** *grain*) in an image, especially noticeable in **shadows** or uniform areas such as blue skies. **Noise** usually comes from using a high **ISO** setting, such as **ISO**≥400 in **compact cameras** or **ISO**≥1600 in **DSLR cameras**. **Noise** affects maximum print enlargement size, discussed on page 68.

High-end **DSLR** cameras with APS-C size **sensors** such as the *Nikon D300* (2008), *Nikon D5000* and *Canon EOS 500D* (2009) introduced the ability to record good images at **ISO 3200** with less **noise** than any **film camera**—even their ISO 6400 can be useful.



For better night images, deactivate Noise Reduction, record RAW files, and

use **ISO 200**. For tripod mounted exposures longer than 5 seconds at night, use **ISO 200** and no higher, in order to avoid random *hotspots* (created by **sensor** imperfections on all cameras including **DSLR** models). Also, a black shot with lens cap on can be used to digitally subtract *hotspots* using a *Layer* in *Adobe Photoshop* with *Blend Mode=Difference*. Your camera's *Noise Reduction* may do the same thing for long exposures but may smear pixel appearance—test it.

pixel

a dot whose **color** is determined by a combination of red, green, and blue values detected by a camera **sensor**. **Pixels** are stored in a grid of rows and columns (like an accounting *spreadsheet*), and can be displayed on a monitor or printed on paper at various resolutions expressed as *pixels per inch* (PPI) or *dots per inch* (DPI). A camera with bigger pixels (a larger **sensor** surface area per pixel) tends to capture higher quality **pixels**, which can make sharper/bigger *print enlargements* of better quality (as discussed on page 68). See also **LCD** in the *Glossary* and *Color Theory* on page 34.



Geirangerfjord, a World Heritage Site, is the epitome of Norwegian fjords. Photographed on Kodachrome 25 color slide film. (1981)

RAM, Random Access Memory

integrated circuit hardware used by a computer processor to load and run programs and store data (usually referring to the main volatile memory which is lost when the power is turned off). Computer RAM is traditionally measured in gigabytes defined as 1,073,741,824 bytes (or 1024 to the third power). But in the context of disk or memory card storage capacity or data transmission, a gigabyte means one billion (1,000,000,000) bytes.

RAW file or format

the native, unprocessed image format recorded directly from a camera's **sensor** (before the camera has built a **JPEG** file). Before **RAW** files can be printed or used, they must be converted to a standard format such as **JPEG** or **TIFF** on a computer, using special *RAW converter* software which also serves as an advanced editor (such as **Adobe Lightroom** or the freeware *FastStone Image Viewer*). The *filename extension* for a RAW file can be .NEF for Nikon, .CRW for Canon, .RAW for Panasonic, or other names unique by brand.

All consumer digital cameras can record images in JPEG files on a memory card, but only advanced cameras write images in their native RAW file format. If you want to later adjust the appearance of images with greatest flexibility, set your camera to record files as RAW instead of the default JPEG. But if you prefer not to spend much time editing images, and you prefer a simpler workflow with no RAW conversion step, then you may prefer shooting JPEG.

JPEG shooters must carefully set exposure and white balance at the risk losing highlight or shadow data, but RAW shooters can recover image data brighter than the camera's default white point and darker than default black point, to retrieve up to three stops of dynamic range better than JPEG on advanced cameras (page 186 box). RAW format better preserves highlight and shadow detail when editing, with 16 times more tonal leeway (4096 bits per color channel per pixel for 12-bit RAW files compared to only 256 for JPEG, which is 8-bit). When capturing RAW file format, the camera records unmodified 12-bit RAW sensor data to a file (or 14-bit overkill in advanced DSLR cameras).

sensor, or image sensor

measures photons of light like a bucket collecting rainwater, and allows a digital camera to record images sized in **megapixels** (**mp**). Generally, camera **sensors** with larger surface dimensions record better image quality, reduce **noise** recorded at sensitivities above **ISO 400**, and require larger diameter lenses:

- A. **Full frame** sensor measures about 36 x 24 mm— the size of a 35mm **film** frame—requiring *Nikon FX* and *Canon EF* lens mounts.
- B. **APS-C** size or **1.8 inch type sensor** measures about 24 x 16 mm. Balances good image quality

- with lightweight camera design, e.g. *Nikon DX* format and *Canon EF-S format* lens mounts.
- C. 4/3 inch type sensor measures about 18 x 13.5 mm. Instead of using a 4/3" type camera model designed in a DSLR style with a mirror, consider the smaller, mirrorless Panasonic Lumix DMC-G2/G10/GH1 camera designed for lighter weight Micro Four Thirds System lenses.
- D. 1/1.6 inch type sensor captures high quality for subcompact and compact cameras. Similar 1/1.7 inch type is slightly smaller, 7.6 x 5.7 mm.
- E. 1/2.5 inch type sensor is tiny, 5.76 x 4.29 mm, and noisy above ISO 200. Best small travel compact superzoom: Casio Exilim FH100 with 24-240mm lens. With similar 1/2.3 inch type sensor: bigger Canon PowerShot SX20; Panasonic FZ35, FZ28, & small ZS7; Samsung HZ35W; and bargain Kodak EasyShare Z950.

shadows

the darkest tones in an image. **Shadows** are counted by brightness value and shown as vertical lines which make a curve on the far left side of the **histogram**.

shutter release button



Half-pressing then holding the shutter release button (prefocusing) can lock focus and exposure, take care of shutter lag,

and allow you to recompose before fully pressing to record an image (except in Continuous-Servo or AI-Servo autofocus or Sports/Action scene mode, which all continuously hunt for focus, as on pages 48-52). Taking your time to prefocus with a half-press makes the subsequent full press of the **shutter button** almost instant on most cameras. Half-pressing on most **compact cameras** locks both **exposure** and focus, whereas more advanced cameras such as **DSLR**s can use a separate Exposure Lock (EL) button.

shutter speed, shutter-preferred / S / Tv

how long (in seconds) the camera's **sensor** or **film** is exposed to light when capturing a photograph. Each doubling or halving of **shutter speed** is a **stop** of light, such as from 1/15th to 1/30th second of **exposure**. Standard **shutter speeds** progress as follows in fractions of a second starting *slower* on left, to *faster*:

...1 second, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/15, 1/30, 1/60, 1/125, 1/250...

For simplicity, most cameras round off shutter speed fractions to the **full stops** shown above. **DSLR** and advanced **compact cameras** have a *Shutter-preferred* auto **exposure** mode (also known as *Shutter-priority*, S, or *Tv*) that lets you set the **shutter speed** while the camera meter automatically decides the **aperture** at your given **ISO** setting. Caution: Slow **shutter speeds** and long *telephoto* lenses worsen the risk of blurring caused by the unintentional shake when your hands hold a camera. Be sure to turn on **image stabilization** (if supported by your camera or lens) to counteract

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hand-held shake. After capturing a photograph, in your camera's *Playback* mode, magnify the image on the **LCD** to check that details are sharply focused, by pressing the zoom controls (or *magnifying glass* symbols marked + plus and - minus). See **aperture**.

stop, full stop / Exposure Value, EV

Each **full stop**, or unit of light, halves or doubles the amount of light from the previous stop. One **EV** or **Exposure Value** commonly refers to one **stop**. **Stop** usually means **aperture stop** (**f-stop**), but can also refer to a doubling or halving of the amount of light controlled by **shutter speed** or **ISO**. See also **Exposure**.

TIFF or .TIF file

Tagged Image File Format (© Adobe Systems), trusted since 1992, is now universally edited. TIFF files retain every pixel value without lossy compression. To save space on computer hard drive storage, squeeze ".TIF files" smaller using non-lossy LZW compression. I convert my best RAW image files to 16-bit TIFF in Adobe RGB color space to fine tune in Adobe Photoshop before converting to an sRGB color space file for retail printing. To better preserve image integrity, convert original JPEG files to TIFF before extensive editing. Or, simply skip the intermediate TIFF by using a nondestructive editor such as Adobe Lightroom.

Most computers and cameras come with a basic free *image editor* which can adequately modify **JPEG** and **TIFF** image files. For an excellent free editor, try the freeware *FastStone Image Viewer* from *www.faststone.org* which also imports **RAW** image files from most cameras. For advanced editing required for publications and prints, use a combination of **Adobe Lightroom** and *Photoshop CS4/CS5*.

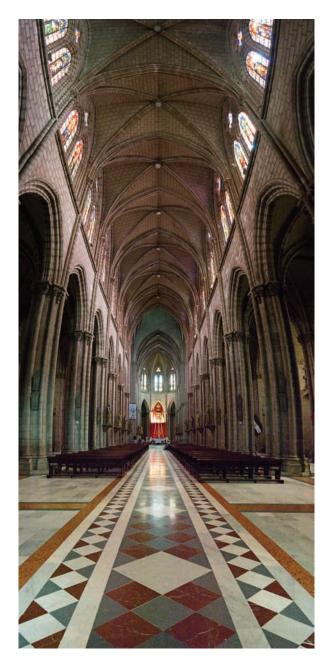
White Balance, WB, AWB

sets color balance, as explained on pages 51 and 58-59 in *Chapter 2*. Digital **Auto White Balance (AWB)** adapts (as our eyes/brain do) to compensate for off-color casts on the appearance of relatively "white" or "gray" subjects when lit by differently colored light sources, such as daylight, clouds, or light bulbs.

zoom lens (wide angle to telephoto)

has a sliding range of optical **focal lengths** to handily vary the *angle of view* of the *frame* recorded by the camera **sensor** or **film**. (A *prime lens* doesn't **zoom**.) Compact cameras by default start their **zoom lens** at widest angle when power is turned on, and a lever (or lens ring on **DSLR** cameras) lets you zoom towards telephoto to optically narrow the viewing angle. On a 10x optical zoom, the telephoto end has ten times the **focal length (mm)** of the wide angle end, and ten times narrower angle of view (which is measured in degrees of arc, usually diagonally).

Nikon and Canon DSLRs boast an 18-200mm 11x zoom with image stabilization great for travel. In contrast, compact cameras with megazoom, superzoom, or ultrazoom optical lens range (≥10x) physically



Basílica del Voto Nacional in Quito, Ecuador was built starting in 1892. Eight stitched images make this panorama. (2009)

require a smaller sensor, which often lowers image quality compared to *cropping* images from **compact cameras** with larger sensors. For better print enlargement quality, upgrade to a larger **sensor** surface area and lens with larger optical diameter.

On a **compact camera**, turn *off* the *digital zoom* setting, which usually *crops* poorly and may be *on* by default. *Cropping* (which is best done later on the computer to simplify a composition) narrows the *angle of view* like a **telephoto lens**, but reduces **pixel** count (reducing effective print viewing size, discussed on page 68).

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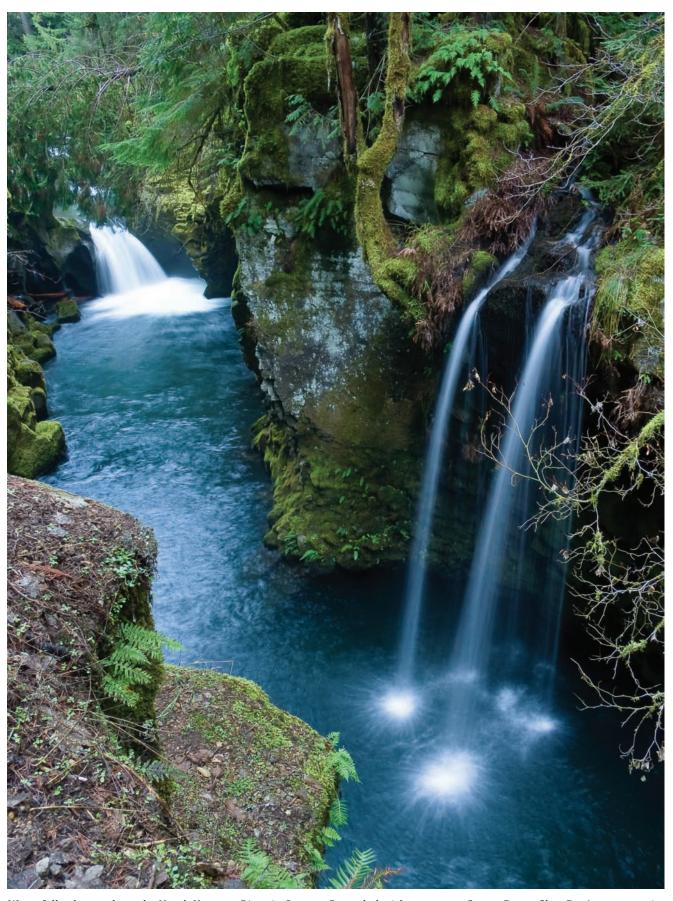
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Waterfalls plunge along the North Umpqua River in Oregon. Recorded with a compact Canon PowerShot Pro1 camera using ISO 50, lens 7.2mm (28mm equivalent in terms of 35mm film), aperture f/8, and shutter speed 1 second on a tripod. (2004)