

Travel Photo SIG Meeting

Jan 8-2020 – 9-11 AM Dr. Howie – Facilitator Activity Center Game Room 1-2

Agenda

Viking River Cruise – Sale – FREE International Air

10 Most Popular Pieces of Photography Gear Among Our Readers in 2019

Landscape Photography Rules and How to Break Them

Your photography resolutions for 2020: Photography ideas for the New Year

Six photography projects to try in the new year

Top 20 River Cruises. All prices are per person, based on double occupancy, and subject to availability.

PetaPixel's Cameras of the Year

Spring Cruise Deals from \$589

Panama Canal 17 Day Cruise from \$1,200

7 Affordable Alternatives to Popular Destinations around The World

Five US State Parks That Are Just As Incredible As The National Parks

Summer Never Ends on Alabama's White-Sand Beaches

Avoid These 7 Etiquette Mistakes While Traveling Abroad

How to Travel Internationally for \$1000 A Week (Or Less)

Viking River Cruise – Sale – FREE International Air



Date

Aug 4 Antwerp to
Amsterdam From \$3,599
Aug 13 Amsterdam to
Antwerp From \$3,599
Aug 22 Antwerp to
Amsterdam From \$3,499
Aug 31 Amsterdam to
Antwerp From \$3,699
Sep 9 Antwerp to Amsterdam
From \$3,599
Sep 18 Amsterdam to
Antwerp From \$3,599

Sep 27 Antwerp to Amsterdam From \$3,599

Explore the Low Countries

Sail through the inland waterways of the Low Countries—Holland and Belgium. Begin with an overnight stay in vibrant Amsterdam. Cruise through a vast network of canals and rivers, stopping in key cities to soak up Dutch, German and Flemish culture. Witness feats of Dutch engineering. See modern Rotterdam and the windmills of Kinderdijk before ending in Antwerp, Europe’s diamond capital.

VERANDA SUITE (AA) 275 SQ. FT. Q.	\$6,899 \$6,399	\$1,699 \$599	Book Now. Pay Later. Plus 2-for-1 Deposit	LIMITED AVAILABILITY
VERANDA (A) 205 SQ. FT. Q.	\$5,399 \$4,899	\$1,699 \$599	Book Now. Pay Later. Plus 2-for-1 Deposit	LIMITED AVAILABILITY
VERANDA (B) 205 SQ. FT. Q.	\$5,099 \$4,599	\$1,699 \$599		SOLD OUT
FRENCH BALCONY (C) 135 SQ. FT. Q.	\$4,799 \$4,299	\$1,699 \$599		SOLD OUT
FRENCH BALCONY (D) 135 SQ. FT. Q.	\$4,399 \$3,899	\$1,699 \$599		SOLD OUT
STANDARD (E) 150 SQ. FT. Q.	\$3,599	\$1,699 \$599		SOLD OUT
STANDARD (F) 150 SQ. FT. Q.	\$3,499	\$1,699 \$599		SOLD OUT

Day 1 - Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Day 2 - Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Day 3 - Hoorn, The Netherlands

Day 4 - Dordrecht & Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Day 5 - Kinderdijk, The Netherlands

Day 6 - Wesel, Germany

Day 7 - Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Day 8 - Maastricht, The Netherlands

Day 9 - Antwerp, Belgium

Day 10 - Antwerp, Belgium

* Ground transfers are included with Viking Air purchase.

10 Most Popular Pieces of Photography Gear Among Our Readers in 2019

<https://www.thephoblographer.com/2019/12/31/10-most-popular-pieces-of-photography-gear-among-our-readers-in-2019/>

Perhaps the biggest surprise in this list of photography gear is the Canon 5D IV. The workhorse DSLR did have a fantastic sale price towards the end of the year that helped boost its numbers, but it shows that the desire for well priced, pro-grade DSLR's is still strong. The X-H1 sold like hotcakes too, even though the camera is a couple of years old now. And the Canon EOS R picked up steam towards the end of the year as well. Perhaps the tasty line-up of RF mount glass is starting to bring photographers back toward team Canon. The Sony 35mm f1.8 FE is one of the most popular lenses of the year thanks to its top performance and low price, and the Flashpoint eVOLV 200 found its way into the hearts of many photographers too. Check out the ten best selling pieces of photography gear below.

Fujifilm X-H1

Pros

- Great image quality
- The best autofocus of any APS-C camera on the market
- Film styles
- 4K 24p 200MB/second video is fantastic
- Weather sealing
- Pretty good battery life if you switch off all connectivity
- Easiest setup and connection to a mobile phone that we've experienced
- The top LCD screen is nice
- Dual card slots
- Versatile images
- Fantastic EVF

Cons

- Fujifilm Eterna is overrated
- Bluetooth being on in the background can drain battery life on top of the IBIS
- The grip and the size overall make it difficult to reach the shutter dial and it's very difficult or nearly impossible to reprogram the exposure functions due to how their lenses work
- The vertical grip isn't necessary, but we see how and why folks would like it

Buy now: From [\\$859](#)

Canon 5D Mk IV

Pros

- Great image quality. Though we still feel we can do MUCH more with Sony and Fujifilm files when it comes to color, Canon's dynamic range is pretty darn good
- Ergonomic feel reminds us more of the old 5D Mk II than the Mk III, and we like that.
- Fantastic autofocus
- Touchscreen, finally
- The quiet shutter is nice
- Weather sealing

Cons

- Price point

Buy now: [\\$2,499](#)

Fujifilm X Pro 3

Pros

- Superia is beautiful (Classic neg)
- We love the lack of no major screen
- Autofocus can be fine-tuned for different situations, but still isn't perfect
- You can push the shadows for forever and get details – the highlights not as much, but they're still there

- The screen helps you stay focused and aware
- USB C charging ensures that you can keep using the camera
- Video features deliver pretty video
- Arguably, you don't need to edit the RAW files because the JPEGs let you do so much
- For street and documentary shooting, the hidden screen will keep you in the zone
- Face detection is fantastic when not trying to track erratic movements
- Acros and clarity enhancements are going to make you fall in love with Fujifilm all over again
- The Chrome effect for skies is very nice, but sometimes very subtle
- Autofocus is fantastic for events and most professional work
- Fujifilm's collection of small primes pair wonderfully with this camera
- The best camera on the market to embrace high ISO noise
- Using the OVF will prolong battery life at the expense of slower autofocus
- This is less of a street camera than it is a documentary and event shooter's camera
- The wider lenses make zone focusing easy. This is imperative for street photography
- Multiple exposure mode is a very welcome addition
- Very good battery life

Cons

- Has problems keeping subjects in focus when they're continuously moving
- When you need the screen, it's a bit of an annoyance, like when photographing a portrait subject in motion
- This camera desperately needed Blackout Free EVF shooting
- Touchscreen menu navigation should be on this camera, but it isn't
- Autofocus needs improvements still. Face detection and tracking autofocus in street situations isn't as fast as Sony
- When we rate images in-camera, the rating isn't brought into Capture One Pro. This is critical for the photojournalist
- Enhancing the clarity makes the camera take extra time to render the image
- The battery life in long term use is about on par with the new Sony Z batteries. We wish it were longer, but it's also a much smaller battery.
- For street shooting, the wide and tracking AF area still lets you select a zone, and it shouldn't. This can throw off shooting in real-life street situations
- Shooting from the hip? You may accidentally hit the function button and not the shutter release
- Exposure dial needs a locking mechanism
- Multiple Exposure mode saves the final images only as JPEGs
- The addition of image stabilization could have meant this camera has a better chance at becoming the perfect camera for street photography

Buy now: [From \\$1,799.95](#)

Canon EOS R

Pros

- Build quality
- Weather sealed like crazy
- Autofocus is good
- Protects the sensor when off
- Canon's menu system is still simple
- Ergonomics feel nice
- With a lightweight lens, it feels just as nice as a Sony camera
- These are some of Canon's best RAW files that I've seen in years
- Good battery life
- Fast Wi-Fi transfers, though not as simple as Sony's

Cons

- Needs Dual SD cards
- Needs a joystick

- The magic touch bar is odd and could use refinement
- Optimizing the way the ISO, aperture, and shutter speed dials work, such as the automatic metering for ISO, not cool
- Canon needs to improve or change their face and eye detection.
- Bigger than Sony, but the L lenses are about on par with their G Master glass

Buy now: [\\$1,799](#)

Sony A7R IV

Pros

- Improved ergonomics
- Blazing fast autofocus
- Excellent weather sealing
- Anti-flicker shooting
- Dual UHS-II SD card slots
- More resolution than most photographers will need

Cons

- Limited touchscreen functionality: you still can't navigate the menus or interact with the display
- Large file sizes (to be expected)

Buy now: [\\$3,498](#)

Flashpoint eVOLV 200 TTL Pocket Flash

Pros

- Affordable price point
- TTL built-in
- Compact and lightweight
- Modular head design
- Excellent battery life
- Compatible with almost all camera systems on the market as long as you've got the corresponding remote

Cons

- Only 200 watt-seconds of power

Buy now: [\\$299](#)

Flashpoint XPLOR 400 Pro TTL Rechargeable Monolight

Pros

- Easy to use
- Built-in TTL
- Can be used with Fujifilm, Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus, and Panasonic with the correct radio transmitter
- Excellent build quality
- Great battery life
- Ultra-fast recycle times
- Quality, consistent lighting
- Big, bright, easy to read LCD display
- Can work with multiple modifier types

Cons

- When the Bowens adapter is attached, the fastener for the light stand mount almost doesn't have enough clearance to loosen and tighten the mount.
- The included beauty dish comes pre-installed with a Godox mount adapter, and it takes tremendous force to remove the mount and reveal the Bowens mount
- Replacement flash tubes are pricey

Buy now: [\\$649](#)

Sony 35mm F1.8 FE

Pros

- Small
- Cost-effective
- Weather sealing
- Sharp; very sharp
- Beautiful bokeh
- The best colors we've seen from a Sony lens
- Can focus very closely
- Fast aperture
- With AF-C on the Sony a7r III, it is fast enough for street photography

Cons

- Though this is minor, we wish Sony gave us a working distance and zone focus scale for street shooting

Buy now: [\\$748](#)

Sony 24-70mm F2.8 G Master

Pros

- Excellent image quality
- Well built
- Lots of versatility
- Sharp output
- Fast autofocusing abilities
- Fairly compact for what this lens is

Cons

- We've seen better bokeh, but this isn't horrible
- Tends to be heavy, though not as heavy as Nikon's and above everyone else's offerings

Buy now: [\\$2,198](#)

VEO2 235CB Tripod

Pros

- Solid build quality
- The rubber sections for the legs feel really good
- If you're on the sand, they will keep dust and dirt from getting into the legs
- All the versatility that most photographers will need providing they adjust carefully
- Lightweight
- Fits onto the side of most backpacks

Cons

- We wish there was a hook at the bottom to weigh the tripod down

Spring Cruise Deals from \$589

<https://www.expedia.com/Cruise-CabinCategory?sailing-token=AQoCcmMSAmVuGICoq8SJLiAEKgNnbHMyAnVzOgNnbHNCAVz&cabinType=inside&adultCount=2&childCount=0>

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Mar 2, 2020

Enchantment of the Seas

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from \$278

per person* Price is starting from \$278 per person asterisk

Pick your cabin experience -Inside



Compact cabin located in the interior of the ship with no view.

Price is: \$278 per person

Oceanview

~~\$855~~ Price was: \$855 per person

\$298 Price is: \$298 per person

Balcony \$624 Price is: \$624 per person

Suite

~~\$1,755~~ Price was: \$1,755 per person \$651 Price is: \$651 per person

<https://visualwilderness.com/fieldwork/landscape-photography-rules-and-how-to-break-them>

Landscape Photography Rules and How to Break Them

January 1, 2020/[0 Comments](#)/in [Equipment & Fieldwork](#) /by [Jay Patel](#)

Landscape Photography Composition Rules

Composition rules might make a photo more appealing, and it's important to know the rules in landscape photography. However, are there times when it's perfectly acceptable to break the rules? Nature and landscape photography is an art form. You need to be able to find the beauty in the scene before you and present it in your own way.

The Rule: Reflected light should never be brighter than its source.

Why we broke it: In reality, the reflected light in the pool wasn't as bright as the light in the sky. Although, I made an



V A R I N A P A T E L

WWW.PHOTOGRAPHYSTYALINA.COM

artistic choice to let it go a little brighter because I wanted to draw the viewer's attention toward that area of the image.

The Rules: Never use direct flash and always place your point of interest off-center.

Why we broke them: Let's start with the flash. For this shot, I needed bright light inside the cabin in order to



match the exposure indoors to the exposure outdoors. I used the flash on my camera to light the interior of the cabin. Then, in post-processing, I reduced the contrast inside the cabin in order to reduce the extreme lighting. I broke the direct flash rule because I didn't have any other light available. As for the centered point of interest – that came down to personal preference. I felt that a centered composition worked well in this case.

V A R I N A P A T E L

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The Rule: Never center the horizon. Use the rule-of-thirds to place it in the top or bottom third of the composition.

Why we broke it: For this particular shot, I wanted to capture both the reflection and the sky. By placing the horizon at the top third or the bottom third, it would have been necessary to sacrifice either part of the reflection or part of the sky.

Landscape Photography Rule Borden: Placing the horizon at the center.

Shoot what feels right to you.

Rule: Shoot at Midday



How many times have we heard that the best time to shoot photos is during the golden hours? While this *is* correct, it's not the *only* time to shoot. **Sometimes the best time to take a photo is during the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead.** This is exactly what we did on our trip to Mana Island in Fiji. We used the midday sun to bring out the deep blue and turquoise colors in the water.

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Landscape photography at midday
by Jay Patel – Sunset Beach, Mana
Island, Fiji



**Using humans in
landscape
photography** – Sunset
Beach, Mana Island, Fiji

The image on the right was taken during the golden hour. Notice that the colors on the water take on the warm tones seen during that time of day. The image on the left (taken on the same beach during midday) brings out the deep blue and turquoise colors in the water.

Rule: Capture Out-of-Focus Photos

Make sure your photos are sharp! Focusing is one of the first technical skills that you learn and for a good reason. After all, you want to be able to see your photos' sharp details and textures. This is especially true if you are using a wide-angle lens to capture the images. But there *are* times when out-of-focus photos create a dreamy or artistic effect.



Creating a dreaming look using selective focus setting – Sunset Beach, Mana Island, Fiji

Above, we used a high speed out-of-focus approach to capture the seashell on the shore. By keeping the background blurred, I was able to give the viewers a sense of place.

Rule: Use High Shutter Speed

When we think about landscape photography, the first thing that comes to mind is slow shutter speeds to smooth the flow of the water. Photos taken with a high shutter speed rarely enter the mind of a landscape photographer. But a little out-of-the-box thinking allows you see that high shutter speeds can be used to get some awesome and creative shots.



High speed landscape photography at Sunset Beach, Mana Island, Fiji

Above is a photograph on the left of a crab sitting on the rock, which is a rather boring shot. **It felt only a little more than a snapshot. But when I used a high shutter speed to capture the same crab with waves about to crash down on him**

(right), it transforms the snapshot into something more interesting that holds the viewer's attention.

RULE: Include Man-made Objects

Yes, we all know many competitions and camera clubs do not allow the inclusion of man-made elements in landscape and nature photos. However, including people and/or man-made elements can add a strong point of interest. Below is a photo of Moulton Barn near Grand Tetons National Park, Wyoming. By including this barn in the shot, I created a point of interest in the photo that was lacking.



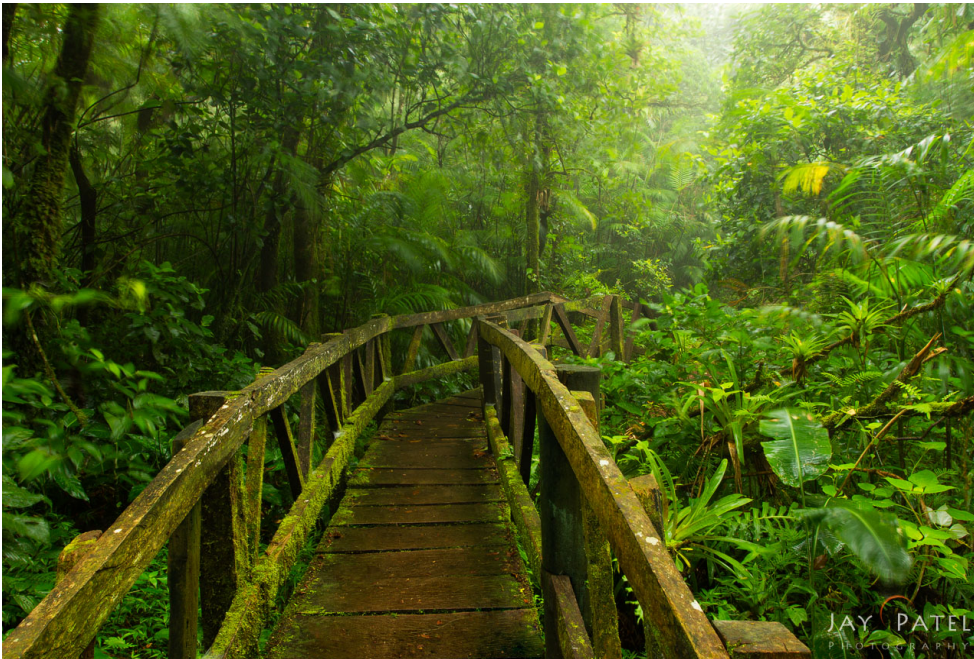
Using man made objects – Moulton Barn, Wyoming

•

Using man made objects in Mombacho, Nicaragua

You can also use man-made elements (such as fences, trails, boardwalks) to create leading lines in your image like I did in the photo from Mombacho's cloud forest in Nicaragua.

So next time you are out in the field... don't be afraid to experiment by tossing out some of the typical landscape photography rules. You might just come away with something unique and wonderful.




About Author [Jay Patel](#)

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Roundtrip Ft. Lauderdale

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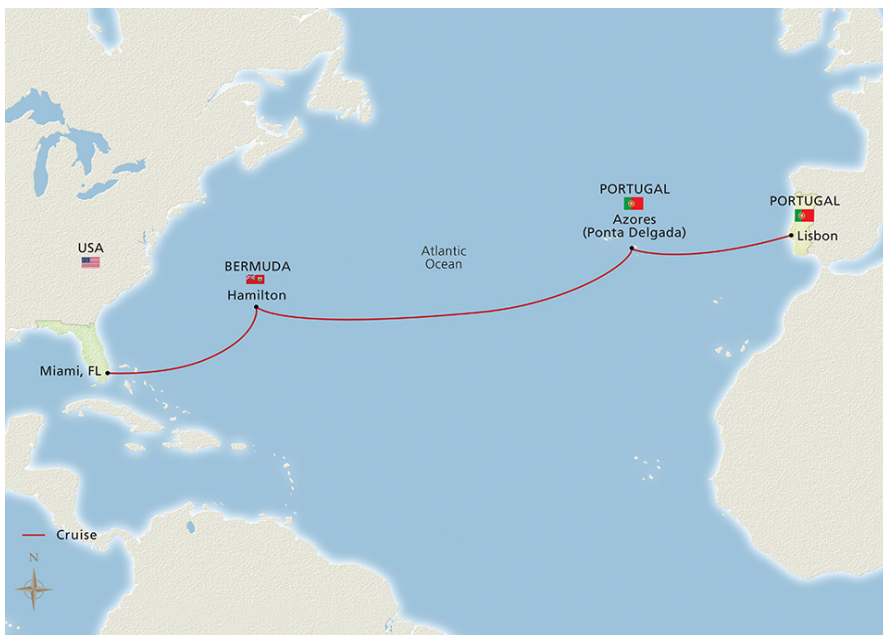
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Trans-Atlantic Cruises



Mid-Atlantic Crossing-Viking Ocean Cruise
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Interior Stateroom from \$1,479 per person (double occupancy)

14 Night-Atlantic Crossing



Leaving: Miami

Visiting: St. Maarten, Madeira ... [see more](#)

Cruise Line:

Viking Ocean Cruises [\\$2,999 * pp](#)

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11 Night

Mid Atlantic Crossing

Leaving:

Lisbon

Visiting:

Ponta Delgada, Hamilton ... [see more](#)

Cruise Line: Viking Ocean Cruises [\\$2,199 * pp](#)

13 Night-West Indies To Spain

Leaving: San Juan

Visiting: Santarem, Madeira ... [see more](#) Cruise Line: Viking Ocean Cruises [\\$2,799 * pp](#)

13 Night-West Indies To Spain

Leaving: San Juan

Visiting: St. Maarten, Madeira ... [see more](#)

Cruise Line: Viking Ocean Cruises [\\$2,999 * pp](#)

14 Night-Transatlantic Crossing



Leaving: Lisbon

Visiting: Lisbon, Ponta Delgada ... [see more](#)

Cruise Line: Viking Ocean Cruises [\\$2,999 * pp](#)

This week's Top 20 River Cruises. All prices are per person, based on double occupancy, and subject to availability.

- 1) [Venice & the Gems of Northern Italy](#), 8 days with Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection. Begins and ends in Venice. **Save up to 30%. Plus receive an additional \$500 per couple discount.** Starting at \$3,849. Departures from April 5 through August 23, 2020.
- 2) [St. Lawrence Seaway Exploration](#), 11 days with Victory Cruise Lines. Begins in Halifax and ends in Buffalo. **Save 45%.** Starting at \$1,799. Departs May 4, 2020.
- 3) [Antebellum South](#), 8 or 9 days with American Queen Steamboat Company. Travels between Memphis and New Orleans. **Save up to \$2,200 per couple, plus receive free shore excursions.** Starting at \$2,099. Departures from January 19 through November 29, 2020.
- 4) [Cruise through the Aquitaine Region from Bordeaux to Royan](#), 7 days with CroisiEurope. Begins and ends in Bordeaux. **Companion saves 50%.** Starting at \$2,362. Departs April 11, May 22 and June 3, 2020.
- 5) [Columbia & Snake Rivers](#), 9 days with American Queen Steamboat Company. Travels between Vancouver and Clarkston or Spokane. **Save \$400 per couple, plus receive free shore excursions.** Starting at \$2,399. Departures from March 22 through November 15, 2020.
- 6) [Danube Delights](#), 8 days with Emerald Waterways. Travels between Budapest and Munich or Nuremberg. **Fly for free or save \$2,000 per couple when you book a suite, or fly for \$295 per person or save \$1,400 per couple when you book a standard stateroom. Plus, receive an additional \$250 per couple discount.** Starting at \$2,895. Departures from April 4 through November 1, 2020.
- 7) [Paris & Normandy](#), 8 days with AmaWaterways. Begins and ends in Paris. **Save up to \$1,000 per couple.** Starting at \$3,299. Departures from April 9, 2020 through November 4, 2021.
- 8) [Mekong Discovery](#), 8 days with Avalon Waterways. Travels between Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh. **Save up to \$2,000 per couple.** Starting at \$3,339. Departures from January 16 through December 31, 2020.
- 9) [Holland & Belgium at Tulip Time](#), 8 days with Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection. Travels between Amsterdam and Brussels. **Save up to 30%. Plus receive an additional \$500 per couple discount.** Starting at \$3,449. Departs March 22 & 29, 2020.
- 10) [Majestic Mekong Discoverer Cruise](#), 13 days with Emerald Waterways. Travels between Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap. **Fly for free or save \$2,000 per couple. Plus, receive an additional \$250 per couple discount.** Starting at \$3,495. Departures from February 5, 2020 through May 20, 2021.
- 11) [Enticing Douro](#), 8 days with AmaWaterways. Begins and ends in Porto. **Save up to \$1,000 per couple.** Starting at \$3,899. Departures from June 27, 2020 through August 28, 2021.
- 12) [Gems of the Danube](#), 8 days with Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours. Travels between Budapest and Nuremberg. **Save \$2,600 per couple.** Starting at \$3,995. Departures from April 1 through October 21, 2020.

- 13) [Cruise the Heart of Europe](#), 15 days with Riviera River Cruises. Travels between Budapest and Cologne. **Save \$300 per couple. Book a cabin on the middle or upper decks and save up to \$2,000 per couple.** Starting at \$4,039. Departs July 18 and October 26, 2020.
- 14) [Budapest to the Black Sea - Gems of Eastern Europe River Cruise](#), 15 days with Riviera River Cruises. Begins and ends in Budapest. **Save \$300 per couple. Book a cabin on the middle or upper decks and save up to \$2,000 per couple.** Starting at \$4,299. Departures from April 27 through October 2, 2020.
- 15) [Grand European Tour](#), 15 days with Viking River Cruises. Travels between Amsterdam and Budapest. **Fly for free and save \$1,000 per couple. Plus, deposits are reduced by 50%.** Starting at \$4,399. Departures from May 8, 2020 through November 14, 2021.
- 16) [Lower Mississippi River Cruise](#), 8 days with American Cruise Lines. Travels between Memphis and New Orleans. **Save up to \$1,200 per couple.** Starting at \$4,515. Departures from March 1 through July 12, 2020.
- 17) [Waterways of the Tsars](#), 13 days with Viking River Cruises. Travels between Moscow and St. Petersburg. **Fly for free and save \$1,000 per couple. Plus, deposits are reduced by 50%.** Starting at \$5,999. Departures from May 6, 2020 through October 10, 2021.
- 18) [Jewels of Europe](#), 15 days with Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours. Travels between Amsterdam and Budapest. **Save \$2,900 per couple. Receive an additional \$1,600 per couple discount when you book a suite on the Diamond Deck, plus get free private roundtrip airport transfers valued at up to \$450.** Starting at \$6,795. Departures from March 30 through November 4, 2020.

Avoid These 7 Etiquette Mistakes While Traveling Abroad



Travel Tips

By Liza Weisstuch

©Jonathan Stokes/Lonely Planet

Different cultures follow different rules and traditions. Here's what not to do when you travel.

Exploring new places and cultures is part of the thrill of travel, but it's important to keep in mind that, just like when you're a guest in

someone else's home, when you're overseas, you're a guest in someone else's homeland. The same rules may not apply.

[By Blake Snow](#)

We've put together this handy guide to help you navigate foreign etiquette. If you can be sure to avoid these faux pas, then you'll certainly be welcomed back.

1. India: Your right hand is the right hand

Sorry, lefties, but if you're heading to India, you've got some preparing to do before you leave. In India, custom dictates that the left hand is used for cleaning your feet and other parts of your body typically covered with clothes. When it comes to eating, shaking hands, and all other social events, the right hand is, well, the right hand. Also bear in mind that the left hand is used for removing your shoes, which is a must when you enter someone's home, a mosque or temple, and even some stores.

2. Greece: Beware the toilet paper trap in Greece

Arguably the biggest attractions in Greece are the Parthenon, the Coliseum, and all the other ancient architectural marvels. The ancient Greeks were as advance in their plumbing capabilities as they were with their building savvy, what with a Minoan king of Crete inventing the first flushable toilet about 2,800 years ago. But the technical know-how in that department has not kept pace. **Toilets throughout the country today are equipped with pipes that are about two inches in diameter, about half that of pipes in the U.S. Toilet paper easily clogs them, so bins are supplied in every loo for paper waste.**

3. Germany: Mind your hands

Germans may not be known for speaking with their hands the way Italians are, but you still have to mind them when you're around others. **Don't talk to someone with your hands in your pocket. It's considered quite rude.** It's also customary to keep your hands on the table when you're eating. And Germans are big on shaking hands, too. Whenever you arrive to meet or depart from a group of people, shake hands with each and every individual or consider yourself and outcast.

4. France: Don't split the bill

Here's a term you should know before you head to Paris: *La note separee* (say-pa-RAY). That's how to ask for separate checks when you're dining out in the City of Lights. **In France it's considered vulgar to talk about money, so to get into a whole who-owes-what deliberation when you're out with friends would be the ultimate indiscretion. Play it safe and ask for individual checks.** If you're out to ingratiate yourself to someone, just say "*Ce soir, c'est moi qui vous invitons.*" (Tonight, it's on me.)

5. Japan: Keep it clean

Walk through any U.S. city and you'll spot countless pedestrians hurrying down the street with a coffee cup in one hand and their phone in the other. **That's precisely what not to do in Japan. In Japan, cleanliness is truly next to godliness.** Even the subway's public bathrooms are as immaculate as a five-star hotel's. Keeping cities spotless is instinctive to every citizen, which is why nobody drinks coffee, eats, or even smokes when they walk. It lowers the risk of making a mess – of your surroundings and yourself. **And smokers, beware: lighting up in some public spaces is illegal, so make sure to check for signs first.**

6. Chile: For best results, use a fork and knife

Got Chile on your bucket list? Here's what you need to know before you get there: finger food does not exist here. Yes, of course restaurants serve appetizers and fries and such, **but it's considered extremely uncouth to touch your food.** It's said that Chileans get this from a strong cultural link with Europe, so pick up your knife and fork before digging into those fries.

And here's a bonus tip: Mexico has the opposite etiquette. You'll be deemed unworthy of your taco if you eat it with a knife and fork.

7. Thailand: Keep your hands to yourself

If you accidentally touch someone's head in Thailand, be sure to apologize. According to Thai Buddhist spiritual beliefs, the head is considered a very sacred part of the body so making contact with someone's head is disrespectful. Of course, this doesn't count in privacy when you're with a loved one, but it does hold for children, so be sure not to pinch the cheeks of any cute kids you encounter.

The 30 Biggest Cultural Mistakes Americans Make Abroad

How to be a better, smarter traveler. By [Diana Bruk](#)

As exciting as it is to travel to a foreign country, anyone who's ever stepped foot on new terrain knows that it can also be a cultural minefield if you don't know the rules. Generally speaking, being polite and observing what the natives do will go a long way in your quest to avoid offending your hotel manager or that cute girl at the bar. But what about those unique social customs that you couldn't possibly know about without doing some research beforehand?

For those, we've compiled a handy list of some of the most crucial mistakes that people make when traveling abroad below. So print this out along with your boarding pass—and for more travel tips, don't miss these [35 Brilliant Travel Hacks Only Experience Globetrotters Know](#).

1 Tipping in Japan

In America, leaving anything other than a 15% tip can seem rude—even if your waiter just spit in your face. In Japan, however, it's the opposite. Trust me: waiters will chase you down the street to give you back that \$1.50.

2 Wearing your shoes indoors

In America, it's pretty common to waltz around another person's house in your outdoor shoes. But in Russia, Norway, Malaysia, Japan, and many other countries, it's like taking a bucket of dirt and mud and casually sprinkling it around your host's apartment.

3 Sitting on a bed in your "outdoor clothing"

One of the biggest questions that I receive from people when I travel is, "Why do Americans sit on their beds in their outdoor clothing?" They see teenagers do this on the Disney channel and are absolutely dumbfounded. Why would you soil your bed, your sacred haven of sleep, with the hobo residue that your pants are carrying from your commute back home?

4 Kissing or holding hands outside

You might be accustomed to public displays of affection out west, but in India, kissing in public can get you jailed for "public obscenity." Same goes for a lot of Muslim countries, even the progressive ones like Morocco, where you'll notice that even at 3 am at a nightclub no one is making out.

5 Dressing provocatively

This seems like an obvious one but it's amazing how many American girls can be seen wearing short shorts and a tank top in India, Africa, and Muslim countries in the Middle East, where it's expressly frowned upon. There's no reason to go full burqa, but covering the shoulders, chest, and knees goes a long way.

6 Wishing someone a happy birthday before their actual birthday

This one might seem strange, but wishing someone a happy birthday before the date of their birthday is a bad omen in countries like Russia and Germany, where you're basically jinxing someone and encouraging bad spirits to kill them before their actual birthday.

7 Shaking hands with your left hand

In Indonesia and other countries with large Hindu populations, your left hand is used to clean your bottom, so it's considered quite rude to use it to shake someone's hand. Just use the right one to be safe. And for more on proper etiquette, here are [23 Old-Fashioned Etiquette Rules That Still Apply Today](#).

8 Waiting for the rice in China

In the U.S., we're accustomed to enjoying white rice with the nice, greasy goo of our meal. But, in China, the rice shows up last, and eating it means you were still hungry after your dinner.

9 Giving umbrellas or clocks as gifts in China

Chinese people are very superstitious when it comes to homophones. The number 8, for example, is considered good luck because it sounds very similar to the word that means "wealth" or "fortune." The word "umbrella," however, sounds like "separation," and the word "clock" sounds like "paying last respects," so those are not good presents to give.

10 Wearing a bathing suit in a sauna

In places where the sauna is used for actual bathing—like Turkey, Russia, and other Scandinavian countries—it's weird to be anything other than nude in a sauna. If the thought of that makes you uncomfortable, you can always wrap your naked body in a towel.

11 Using the bidet the wrong way

America is one of the few countries in the world that somehow hasn't caught on to the miraculous contraption that is a bidet. Even in third-world countries like India and Morocco, you'll find them in virtually any hotel room, and you may at first be perplexed by their appearance. To be clear, they are for washing the derriere post-bowel movement, not before.

12 Raising your arms to wave in Greece

In Greece, extending all five of your fingers while waving your arms is an insulting gesture that's called a *mountza*, not what you do when you think you see your next-door neighbor crossing the street outside the supermarket.

13 Blowing your nose at the table

This one should be kind of obvious but it's a particularly intense faux pas in China, where it's perfectly acceptable to hawk out your excess phlegm on the street outside, but not into a tissue at the dinner table.

14 Failing to notice that your date's wineglass is empty

It's always gentlemanly to top up a woman's glass when it's running low on wine, but in a lot of countries you would do this even if you weren't on a date. In Russia, for example, it's considered vulgar for a woman to just grab a bottle of wine and pour it for herself, so she waits for the man closest to her at the table to do it for her. Don't make her wait too long!

15 Asking for an Irish Car Bomb in Northern Ireland

A favorite among frat boys, the Baileys and Guinness concoction is pretty popular in the U.S. But in Northern Ireland itself, the name is offensive—since they've got quite a tragic history of terrorism attacks via actual car bombings.

16 Taking photos without asking for permission

This can be a faux pas even in America, where the Amish, for example, refuse to be photographed because it is considered immodest. Native Americans and Australian Aborigines are also wary of being photographed, as they believe a snapshot can capture the soul. Even in the souks of Morocco, you'll find that people can get very offended if you photograph their shop without asking for permission or offering a couple of dirhams. Never hurts to ask first!

17 Making the OK sign with your fingers

When traveling in a country in which you don't speak the languages, you might be hoping to rely on gestures to get you around. But be aware that, in Turkey or Brazil, for example, making a circle with your pointer and thumb usually indicates to someone that you are quite literally comparing them to your rear end.

18 Touching someone's head

In Buddhist countries, the head is considered the most sacred body part, so patting someone on the head is a major no-no. So, no matter how cute that little boy is, resist the urge to tussle his hair.

19 Talking or eating during a toast

In Eastern European countries, a toast can last for ages, and include lots of crying. No matter how tired you are of holding your shot glass up in the air, and no matter how much you want it, you must persevere and wait until the toast is over to clink glasses and drink to the bottom.

20 Making the "sign of the horns."

While in the U.S. it's used to show that you're jamming to a piece of awesome rock music, in many Mediterranean and Latin countries it's used as a way of telling someone that they are being cheated on.

21 Giving the lady of the house a bouquet of yellow roses

Again, you'd never expect it, but in France and Germany giving the hostess a bouquet of yellow roses indicates that her partner is cheating on her.

22 Taking a business card in Japan and immediately putting it in your pocket

The Japanese take business cards very seriously, to the point where presenting them is a ritual known as *meishi koukan*. The highest ranking person gives his/her card first face-down. The other person receives the card with both hands, carefully studies it, and keeps it in their hands for the remainder of the conversation. Then you must guard it with your life, because how you treat the card symbolizes how you'd treat the person. It's not like the U.S., where you just take one and shove it in your pocket, only to throw it away on laundry day.

23 Forgetting to take off your toilet slippers

In Japan, people often have special slippers to wear when they use the bathroom, but it does not do to wear them once you've done your business and walked out.

24 Making the "peace" sign

Beloved by hippies all over, making a V-sign with your index and middle finger is generally considered to indicate that you are all warm and crunchy granola inside. But in Ireland and the U.K., it's equivalent to flipping someone off.

25 Arriving on time in China

In China, arriving on time means you're late, so it's good to always show up at least 15 minutes before expected. In a lot of Latin countries, the opposite is true.

26 Entering or exiting the room first

Asian culture has a huge focus on respect toward the elderly, so they are always allowed to exit and enter the room first. Unless you're the oldest one, stay back!

27 Pointing with your feet

Just as the head is considered the most sacred part of the body in Buddhist cultures, the feet are considered the least sacred, and pointing with them or showing off the soles in Southeast Asia is extremely offensive.

28 Chewing gum in Singapore

Little known fact: chewing gum is illegal in Singapore, except for dental or nicotine, and spitting gum on the street can be punished with a \$700 fine. Honestly, though, unless you're a teenager hanging out in front of a diner, chewing gum is best to be avoided in general.

29 Giving a Russian date a bouquet of a dozen roses

In the West, it's considered a mark of old-world gentlemanliness to greet a lady with a bouquet of a dozen roses. But while Russian women love getting flowers, only an odd number will do. An even number is what you give at funerals.

30 Giving the thumbs up

Again, you'd generally think that pointing both of your thumbs upwards is an internationally recognized symbol of "Everything is great!" But in parts of Iran, Greece, and other countries, it's actually the equivalent to a middle finger, so leave those thumbs in your pockets!

Your photography resolutions for 2020: Photography ideas for the New Year

01. Set yourself a goal (but make it realistic)

It can be very easy to spring up on January 1st with a twinkle in your eye and declare to yourself dramatically, "this year, I'm going to travel the world, take hundreds of incredible pictures and gain thousands of Instagram followers". However, it's probably not going to be quite as easy to actually fulfill that fateful declaration. The problem with setting yourself such an optimistic goal is that it can quickly become both unwieldy and intimidating.

We're all for 'shooting for the stars and landing on the moon', but don't set yourself such an extravagant goal that you feel overwhelmed just thinking about it.

However, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't think big! To help yourself decide what your photographic goals for this year should be, think about these following questions:

- What do you want to achieve by the end of 2020? (Do you want to improve a certain skill, or photograph a particular location, or perhaps bring your work to new audiences?)
- How can you realistically work towards this goal? (Whether you're obsessed with step-by-step plans, or you prefer a more laissez faire approach, give yourself some action points to help start you on your journey).
- What incentives can you give yourself for achieving this goal? (Whether it's a swanky new lens, or perhaps even just a nice meal out, make sure to plan in a reward for smashing your goal out the park).

02. Invest in a kit

While it's certainly not true that the kit makes the photographer, we would argue that there's definitely something to be said for shaking up your routine and trying something new. We're not necessarily recommending that you invest in a shiny new [camera](#) (although there's certainly nothing wrong with that if that's what you think you need). Indeed, something relatively inexpensive such as the [Lensbaby Omni Creative Filter system](#) could be just the ticket to kickstart your creativity.

You might want to check out some of our most popular buying guides below for more inspiration:

- [Best camera for beginners](#) in 2020: we help you choose the right camera
- [Best mirrorless camera](#) in 2020: we pick the best compact system cameras
- [Best instant camera](#) in 2020: instant photos perfect for the party season!
- [Best camera drones](#) in 2020: these are the best drones for photography
- [Best camcorders](#) in 2020: which is the right one for you?
- [Best DSLR](#) in 2020: DSLR cameras for beginners enthusiasts and pros
- [Best camera backpacks](#) in 2020: carry camera gear, laptops and more

03. Step outside your comfort zone

We hear you, it's awful cosy in that comfort zone there, shooting predictable situations and getting pleasant results. However, if you want to take truly great photos, the only way to do that is to push yourself.

Identify your areas of weakness, create a battle plan, and then forge fearlessly ahead to improve your photography. Hate flash? Invest in a cheap [flashgun](#) and watch some YouTube tutorials. Scared about photographing people? Ask a sympathetic friend to model for you so you can get a little bit of practice.

Even if your chosen mountain to climb feels insurmountable, remember that no photographer is perfect. Everyone has something left to learn, no matter how good they are. And, in fact, just imagine you knew absolutely everything about photography - what a boring world that would be with nothing new to learn...

04. Find new inspiration

Inspiration can come from anywhere - the soft twinkle of the morning sun over the sea, or perhaps some drops of dew on a solitary blade of grass. These are both worthy inspirations, and have inspired thousands of incredible photos.

However, sometimes the very best inspiration comes from some solid technical advice. Armed with your newfound knowledge, you're free to explore your chosen photographic genres with ease and aplomb. Obviously, we'd recommend that you check out our vast range of [tutorials](#) on Digital Camera World first, but there is a huge range of information out there for you to sink your teeth into.

From YouTube videos, to Annie Leibovitz Masterclass tutorials, there are plenty of sources for you to take advantage of. However, if you'll allow us our shameless plug, one of our favorite ways to learn new techniques is through one of our [fantastic magazines](#). With fresh tutorials, techniques, interviews and gear reviews each month, there's always plenty to learn. Plus, you can subscribe for as little as £3.38 per issue!

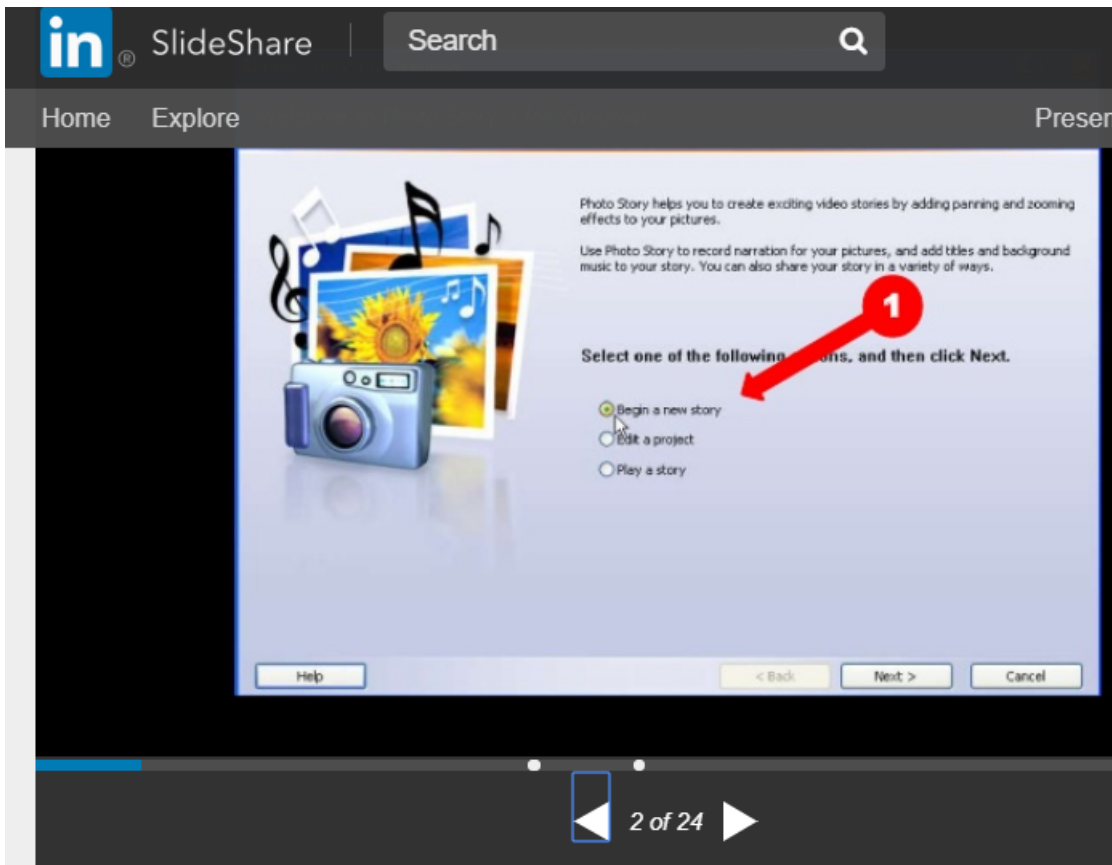
05. Join a community

While investing your time in formally learning new skills is a very worthy pursuit, you can often find yourself learning even more when you're part of a photographic community. Whether that means joining a camera club, meeting up with a couple of similarly snap-happy friends, or finding a forum online, your fellow shooters are a wealth of information.

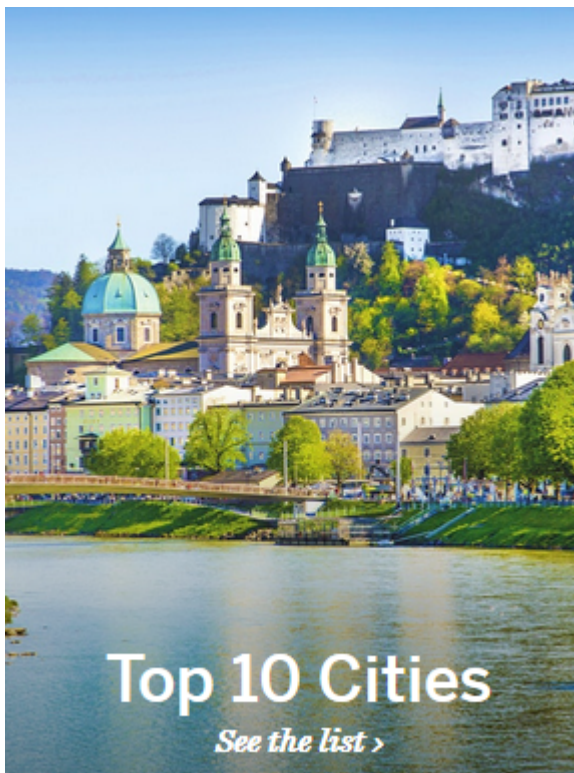
One of our favorite places to visit on the web is the new [Digital Camera World forum](#). We've got plenty of topics to discuss, including mirrorless cameras, DSLRs, and analog cameras.

However, there are also plenty of other digital spaces to explore as well. Personally, we've found that Facebook groups can be a fantastic place to learn from working pros. Some of our favorites include:

<https://www.slideshare.net/fionabeal/how-to-use-photostory-3-for-windows>



How to use Photostory 3 for Windows



Best Travel 2020

1. Salzburg, Austria



Drumroll
, please:
the
[Salzburg Festival](#)
is
turning
100, and
this
heart-

stealer of an Alpine city is singing about it at the top of its voice. One of the world's greatest classical music shindigs, the festival is always a riotous feast of opera, classical music and drama – and never more so than in 2020. [Salzburg](#) will be pulling out all the stops for the centenary, with special exhibitions and events taking place all over the historic centre – concerts, plays, readings, Mozart matinees, you name it. Top billing, as always, will go to Hugo von

Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*, based on a medieval morality play and performed in all its glory in Domplatz. So dust off your dirndl or lederhosen, book your tickets months ahead, and get ready to rock into the summer like Amadeus (perhaps minus the wig).



2. Washington DC, USA

All eyes will be on [Washington, DC](#), this year, as the city celebrates the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment – the law that granted women the right to vote. Iconic museums like the National Portrait Gallery, the [National Museum of American History](#) and the [National Museum of Women in the Arts](#) will have special exhibitions related to this major milestone in human rights. Tie this in to the

excitement for this year's presidential election and DC will be one of America's most dynamic cities in 2020. Politics aside, Washington's renaissance is in full bloom, with a revitalised waterfront, celebrated new museums and an exploding food scene. Green roofs, hundreds of newly planted trees and an innovative floating wetlands system have the city looking greener than ever.



[National Museum of African American History & Culture](#)



3. Cairo, Egypt

Egypt waved Tutankhamun's treasures off on a globetrotting tour in 2018, declaring it the last time the pharaoh's burial-booty would leave its shores. Want to gawk at ancient Egypt's wealth in the future? You'll need to visit [Cairo's](#) Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). The year 2020 is set to be the date – *inshallah* (God willing) – this state-of-the-art museum in Giza throws open its doors. Head here to marvel at a mind-boggling collection in what will be the world's largest museum entirely committed to one civilisation.

For Red Sea and Luxor holidaymakers, a Pyramids and GEM add-on will also become a doddle with Giza's newly inaugurated Sphinx Airport set to operate domestic flights.

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A perfect day in Cairo



4. Galway, Ireland

Brilliantly bohemian [Galway](#) is arguably [Ireland's](#) most engaging city. Here brightly painted pubs heave with live music and cafes offer front-row seats to watch buskers perform. And this year all that creative exuberance is being supercharged by events marking the Galway region's role as a 2020 European Capital of Culture – the city's calendar is as packed with activity as the bars are with locals on a Saturday night. Expect street spectacle, live and digital art as well as world-class music, theatre and dance. Sleep might have to wait – in Galway even the buskers play late into the night. Vivid and vibrant, brimful of imagination, Galway in 2020 is home to a year-long, city-wide, arty party. And you're invited too.



Dos and don'ts in Ireland



5. Bonn, Germany

Once capital of West Germany, [Bonn](#) slipped off the radar when [Berlin](#) reseized the reins in 1990. But it's back in the spotlight with a cymbal roll in 2020, as the city gears up to mark Beethoven's 250th birthday. What's the score? Well, you can expect a year-round

line-up of concerts drawing world-famous orchestras, soloists and conductors (among them Sir Simon Rattle and Daniel Barenboim). Theater Bonn is staging *Fidelio*, the composer's only opera. Beyond this, there are installations and competitions tuning into Beethoven's musical genius, picnic performances, and 'home concerts' where local musicians fling open their doors to the public.

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A joyous ode to Bonn: Beethoven turns 250

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6. La Paz, Bolivia



Perhaps it's the Jetsonian capsules gliding over [La Paz](#) along the world's largest cable-car system that are the most obvious signs of its new-found ambition. There were just three lines in 2014, but there will be 11 in 2020. Down below, the once-drab city is racing towards a more radiant and inspired future. Everyone from a flamboyant self-taught architect to the budding chefs leaving new culinary schools is thriving here – not because of some borrowed ideas and global trends, but rather due to a renewed sense of pride in Bolivia's

indigenous roots. It's not hard to see why an increasing number of tourists are now sticking around in La Paz before they venture further afield.

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How to awaken your 5 senses in La Paz



7. Kochi, India

This nicely chilled city in southern India has seen the light. Grafted onto the tropical Malabar Coast in [Kerala](#), [Kochi](#) has become a shining example in renewable energy in recent years, launching the world's first fully solar-powered airport, which snagged it a UN Champions of the Earth award. But that's just tip-of-the-iceberg stuff. With boho cafes, intimate homestays hidden away in lazy, colonial-era backstreets, and a raft of forward-thinking galleries, this city keeps a tight grip on its heritage while wholeheartedly embracing its newfound cool. In 2020, street art comes to the fore at [Kochi-Muziris Biennale](#), putting India firmly on the contemporary arts festival map.



8. Vancouver, Canada

This natural playground – squeezed majestically between the blue waters of the Pacific and the forest-clad mountaintops of the North Shore – was the birthplace of Greenpeace, so it seems fitting that [Vancouver](#) has been trying to lead the world in urban sustainability. And for you, the environmental benefits of its longstanding Greenest City 2020 Action Plan will only enrich your stay. Take to its vastly expanded cycling and walking network, including an unforgettable 28km section along beaches and shorefront, and comfortably hop between the city's

many sights on an upgraded public transport system. Or simply catch some shade under one of the 102,000 new trees that have been planted since 2010.



Stanley Park



9. Dubai, UAE



The future is now in [Dubai](#) as the superlative-craving emirate launches several boundary-pushing marquee projects in 2020. Top billing, of course, goes to the six-month-long World Expo 2020, where 190 nations go all out in showcasing the latest visions in sustainability and mobility (think: flying cars) in architecturally showstopping pavilions. Also expected to open is the Museum of the Future, a cabinet of next-gen wonders in an eye-shaped building festooned with calligraphy. Meanwhile, two miles off-shore, a Europe-themed fantasy resort on an artificial archipelago called The World is gearing up to welcome its first guests to such

only-in-Dubai phenomena as underwater bedrooms and year-round snow.

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Taste of Dubai: the city's best Emirati eats

ARTICLE



10. Denver, USA

[Denver](#)'s elevated position as one of the USA's most charming boomtowns has reached new heights as the Mile High City enters its latest phase of growth, creative energy and damn good food. Construction cranes dot the mountain-studded horizon and empty lots turn into hip new hotels seemingly overnight, while new food halls such as Milk Market satisfy

appetites with an eclectic mix of farm-to-table and international fare. The mind-bending Santa Fe art experience Meow Wolf has installed a psychedelic ride called 'Kaleidoscope' at Elitch Gardens Theme and Water Park as a precursor to a permanent \$50-million Meow Wolf installation to come in 2021. Meanwhile, the fascinating Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art has moved into a magnetic Olson Kundig–designed building within the city's Golden Triangle Creative District.

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Willemstad (Curaçao); Kralendijk (Bonaire);
DISEMBARK New York (New York);





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Cruising through the Panama Canal, your journey is just as memorable as the destination. Departing from Miami, your first stop takes you to Cartagena's lush residential areas where you'll admire vintage mansions before cruising through the newly-expanded Panama Canal. Finally, you'll kick back in Cabo San Lucas for a scenic tour of the rugged coastline and snorkeling.



Six photography projects to try in the new year

Try your hand at something new this January.

By [Jeanette D. Moses](#)
December 31, 2019

Kickstart your creativity in the new decade with these photo projects. Benjamin Combs/Unsplash

The new year is a great time to get experimental with your photography and try out some new things. For many photographer's it can be a slow time that offers a moment to get your backups, your books, and your goals for the next year in order. All that time also makes it a great place to try your hand at photography normally outside your wheelhouse. These are some of our favorite projects to help you flex those creative muscles in the new year.

Use a reflector to make a subject's eyes pop

Topcagic exposed for 1/250 sec at f/4, ISO 100. The three settings are called "the exposure triangle" in her part of the world. Maja Topcagic

A reflector is one of the simplest lighting tools that a photographer can have in their kit—we think everyone should have one. It can work wonders when lighting conditions are just so-so. A basic white reflector can fill in shadows on a sunny day, a gold reflector will warm a subject up, while silver creates a bright and neutral fill on an overcast day. Aiming a silver reflector at your subjects eyes will give them a dramatic pop without ever having to touch [Photoshop](#). Enlist a friend to help you hold the reflector.

Abstract architecture

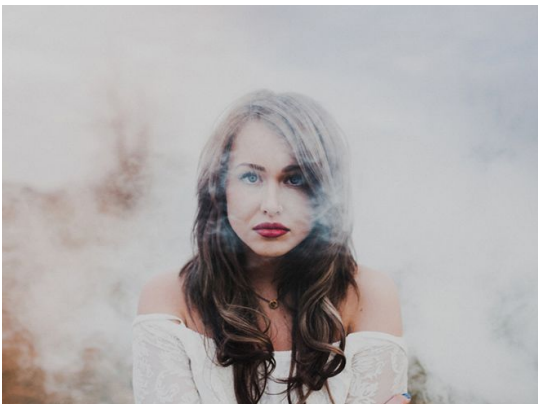
The Broad Museum, Los Angeles. Swee Oh



If you live in an urban area there are plenty of architectural structures waiting for you. Photographing buildings may seem like a bore, but this is a great way to experiment with your camera. Buildings don't move, they can look wildly different depending on the time of day that you are shooting, and most buildings have tiny hidden details that can be easy to miss. If you are just getting started with architecture photography, try to focus on one building and the smaller shapes within the structure. Focus on capturing the way

that the negative and positive spaces interact with each other.

Smoke bomb portraits



A smoke bomb can add a level of mysterious beauty to a portrait shoot. Aaron and Whitney DuRall

Adding a bit of colorful smoke to your next portrait session is a simple way to add a whimsical feeling to your frames. Although the effect is certainly cool, if you are going to be working with smoke bombs be careful. Make sure you are shooting outdoors in a well-ventilated area far away from anything that might catch on fire. You'll also want to make sure that you have water handy so you can safely extinguish the smoke bombs at the end of the shoot.

Treat your dog to a studio shoot



Self portrait of photographer Christian Vieler and his lab Lotte. Christian Vieler

Dogs make for great photographic subjects and with a little bit of lighting gear you can easily create an intriguing action shot of your pet at play. Check out Christian Vieler's ongoing series of dogs catching treats to get inspired. Although Vieler chooses to stick to high-speed flash inside the controlled walls of a studio, there is no reason you can't bring your lighting gear outside and capture your furry friend in a more natural environment.

Make a milk bath portrait

A baby in a milk bath. Tiffany Burke

Milk bath portraits have long been popular for maternity and boudoir shoots, and although the technique has a very specific feel to it, it's pretty straightforward to execute. You'll need a bathtub, some milk, pretty props to place on top of the milk, and a subject to place in the bath. If you are just getting started it's probably best to work with an adult subject rather than a baby.



How to Travel Internationally for \$1000 A Week (Or Less)

How to Travel Internationally for \$1000 A Week (Or Less)



12/9/2019 — By Marie-France Roy

If you don't need luxury, it's fairly easy to travel pretty much anywhere in comfort for

\$1000 per person or less a week, flights included!

I choose to travel economically in order to travel more. Fortunately, there are many ways to enjoy a budget trip without sacrificing comfort and enjoyment, even if you travel solo. The tips and tricks below assume that you're traveling independently, and not with a tour group. Prices are in US dollars.

Finding cheap flights

When it comes to finding cheap flights, flexibility is key. Typically, tickets are cheaper mid-week (Tuesday to Thursday) and possibly Saturday. Holiday periods are very expensive, but if you fly on the holiday itself (Christmas, New Year's Eve, Easter) you will find much cheaper prices.

Start with a flight aggregator like [Skyscanner](#), [Kayak](#), or [Momondo](#). Select ± 3 days in the calendar for both departure and return dates to see results that span a week. Skyscanner allows you to see the lowest fares over an entire month. If you must select a specific date, choose a Tuesday or Wednesday to see how low prices get.

Often, you will find the best prices on flights that depart very early or late, have a long layover, or multiple connections. **Decide what you are willing to put up with.** I personally don't mind red-eye flights. I may even select a flight with a [long layover and turn it into a stopover](#). And of course, I always fly economy.

The pricier the flight, the longer your trip should be in order to amortize the cost over several weeks. Since far-away destinations are usually more costly to reach, this also gives you more time to recover from jetlag!

For example, from Canada I may consider flying to Mexico for a week, but usually allocate at least two weeks for Europe, three weeks for South America, and four weeks or more for Asia, Australia or Africa. This way, I manage to keep my weekly flight cost to \$350 or less.

Booking accommodation

My accommodation strategy these days consists of renting a room or apartment through [AirBnB](#), which often comes out cheaper than a hotel room. Using the filters to see only listings from "superhosts" ensures a good experience. Start searching two to three months in advance for the best selection.

Another site I use is [Booking.com](#). Once registered, you get savings of 10% off various properties (called "genius deals"). In most cases, you can cancel for free up until a few days before your stay. And you don't have to make payments in advance as with AirBnB.

I can usually find a good room or even an apartment for \$45 a day or less, using the above websites. Two people traveling together can double this amount.

Read more: – [Hotel vs. Airbnb: Which Is Best For Your Next Vacation?](#)

Planning your meals

Renting an apartment or a room in someone's house, instead of a hotel room, allows you to self-cater, greatly reducing your food costs. At a minimum, it's easy to buy a few items at a nearby grocery store and prepare your

own breakfast.

If spending time in a costly destination, eating either lunch or dinner at “home” will also help save money. Fortunately, expensive regions like Northern Europe and North America have grocery stores that provide decent prepared sandwiches, salads, and even meals that you can reheat in the microwave, if you’re not keen on cooking.

Of course, sampling the local cuisine is part of the fun of visiting a new destination. Having at least one meal out every day should still fit within the \$1000/week budget. Local markets and small eateries offering set meals (usually lunch) are cheap options. Stay away from overpriced tourist restaurants near heavily trafficked areas, and instead use your guidebook to find something off the beaten path.

I try to limit my food expenses to \$20-25 a day. This may not seem like much, but it’s easy to do in countries like Mexico, Thailand, or Serbia, even if you eat out for every meal. Iceland and Japan are more challenging of course.

Also remember that tipping at restaurants is mostly a North American custom. In much of the world, 5 to 10%, or just rounding up the check, is sufficient. In Japan, tipping is considered an insult!

Sightseeing economically

In order to save money, focus on free attractions. It’s surprising the number of things you can do for free (or almost free) in a given city: walking tours, markets, exhibits, wine tastings, beaches, music performances, churches and other public buildings.

Walking around parks and other green spaces is always free and a good way to relax. Most museums have a free day or evening, while some never charge admission. Check their website in advance.

Take along a good guidebook (I always use [Lonely Planet](#)), and search the web for “free things to do in [destination]”. Drop by the Tourist Office to find out about free walking tours and upcoming cultural events. While there, also look for discount coupons on restaurants and activities.

Choosing transportation at your destination

Avoid taxis as much as possible and learn to use public transit. Besides being more expensive than other options, cars posing as official taxis are sometimes unsafe at worst, or a ripoff at best. If you must use a taxi, look for a taxi counter at the airport and only take licensed cabs.

Many cities have good public transit, including trains or shuttle buses that go directly to the town center from the airport. Every country has buses or trains linking its main cities. In developing nations, even small towns and villages are served by buses as few people have cars. When safety is an issue with public transport, tourist shuttles usually exist.

Traveling slowly helps save on transportation costs, so consider staying in each location three or more days. If traveling with a few others, renting a car may be an option worth considering.

The budget

Here is how I would allocate a budget of \$1000 a week:

- \$350 on flights (\$50 a day)
- \$315 on accommodation (\$45 a day) per person
- \$175 on food and drink (\$25 a day)
- \$70 on sightseeing (\$10 a day)
- \$70 on public transportation (\$10 a day)
- \$20 on miscellaneous (souvenirs, gifts, etc.)

Marie-France Roy is a Canadian freelance writer based in Toronto, who has been exploring the world mostly solo over the last 27 years. She has traveled to 65 countries on every continent and is especially fond of sunny destinations with good coffee. Her blog bigtravelnut.com focuses on affordable solo travel for the 40+ crowd.

7 Affordable Alternatives to Popular Destinations around The World

12/16/2019 — By Jeanette Zinno



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Beat the crowds and save some money this year by visiting altogether different (yet still amazing) cities.

Second-city travel refers to cities in a country that don't come to mind when first planning a vacation. For example, when going to Thailand, tourists

typically book a trip in Bangkok, instead of Chiang Mai, a city in northern Thailand. This trend has Americans dodging major cities for their smaller, alluring counterparts that offer lower price tags, fewer crowds (so long, traffic!) and a truly authentic experience.

Second cities are not necessarily the second most-populated city in a country – when speaking about the trend in the travel sense, it means any city that might not be the first choice for tourists. So what could be better than a more authentic experience at a more affordable price? Here are seven second-city destinations to consider.

[By Blake Snow](#)

1. Lille instead of Paris, France

Paris is a romantic city that foreigners swoon over and for good reason; however, France has countless cities that are more affordable and just as lovely. So skip the hustle and bustle of Paris and travel an hour north to the town of Lille, a cultural hub that sits on the crossroads of Paris, London and Brussels. Don't worry, the croissants are just as good!

Lille has been named a World Design Capital for the year 2020 and is a mecca for not only design, but also a

robust food scene, museums and art fairs galore and beautiful modern architecture. With more affordable prices, your hotel stay can get an upgrade to chic Parisian style at [MAMA Shelter Lille](#) – a new boutique hotel with a welcoming vibe and a quirky design made for comfort. Plus, just a few steps from the hotel are two major train stations, making it a convenient option for exploring too!

2. Lafayette instead of New Orleans, Louisiana

Less than three hours from New Orleans, [Lafayette](#) has been dubbed the “Austin” of Louisiana and the true heart of Cajun culture. Food is the heart of Louisiana and music is the soul – and there's an abundance of both in this charming Cajun town. With fresh seafood, jambalaya, crawfish and gumbos, no wonder this town has been dubbed the "Happiest City in America." Anthony Bourdain even visited once, enough said.

If you're coming to party Cajun style, Lafayette has that too. Home to Grammy-winning Cajun musicians, an epic Mardi Gras celebration and famed music halls – you really can't go wrong with this second city. Plus, lodging is inexpensive with hotels under \$100. Now you'll have more cash for all the mouth-watering restaurants. Bring on the po'boys!

3. Catskills instead of New York City, New York

New York City is one metropolis that everyone must visit at least once in a lifetime to experience the glorious city that never sleeps. But what about the rest of The Empire State? The Catskills are a three-hour drive from the Big Apple and offer a peek into the great countryside of New York.

Tucked away upstate lays the town of Windham, now a popular ski destination and all-year escape. This area offers a small-town vibe with inviting locals, every outdoor sport you can imagine, local cuisine and quaint hotels worthy of your next Instagram post. Check out the [Eastwind Hotel](#) – this cozy, chic hideaway has Lushna cabins (A-frame wooden structures) as well as a wood-barrel sauna and fire pit for après-ski delights.

4. Eilat instead of Tel Aviv, Israel

If the crowds in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are not appealing to you, consider the less-traveled city of [Eilat](#) as an exciting Israeli adventurer's paradise. Located on the southern tip of the country, Eilat offers a sunny oasis on the Red Sea with stunning beaches and jaw-dropping coral reefs.

Whether you want to hike the desert mountains, relax beachside or snorkel in its remarkable Coral Reef Nature Reserve, this resort town has it all. Hikers can trek the Eilat Mountains Nature Reserve, which offers some of the most breathtaking views and spectacular desert routes in all of Israel. And now it's easy to get to, in January 2019, Israel opened the Ramon International Airport, which is a 20-minute drive from the city.

5. Milwaukee instead of Chicago, Illinois

Situated two hours north of Chicago and located on the western shore of Lake Michigan, [Milwaukee](#), is a lively urban Midwest city filled with approachable and affordable arts, culture and culinary experiences. And if you're into beer, this city is for you. Wisconsin is the third-largest producer of beer in the US and Milwaukee is home to Miller Brewing, now MillerCoors, which offers a number of brewery tours and tasting experiences for travelers.

Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward is a must-visit neighborhood that is considered the arts and fashion district – comparable to New York's Brooklyn neighborhood, but without the crowds. Here you can find the Milwaukee

Public Market, which features Wisconsin-made and must-try products like homemade chocolates and artisan cheeses. The Third Ward is also home to some of the best shopping and unique boutiques.

6. Ponce instead of San Juan, Puerto Rico

San Juan is most commonly known as the hub for Puerto Rico's vibrant culture, but, guess what? This extends beyond the metro area and throughout the entire island. Puerto Rico's second-largest city is Ponce, known as "La Perla del Sur" (Pearl of the South) due to its location in the southern region of the island.

With towns that maintain remnants of colonial life under Spanish rule, beautiful historic buildings and cultural attractions, Ponce is overflowing with rich history and culture. Immerse yourself in Ponce's art scene at the [Ponce Museum of Art](#) – boasting over 4,500 European works of art. Or if you're an explorer, take a ferry boat ride to Isla Caja de Muertos off the coast of Ponce, where you go hiking or simply relax in the turquoise water.

7. Spokane instead of Seattle, Washington

Skip Seattle and head straight to [Spokane](#). Located in eastern Washington, Spokane has everything Seattle has (except the Space Needle, of course), but on a smaller scale. Unlike its counterpart, Spokane is affordable and sunny. Plus, the city has a symphony, shopping, great theater, an exciting culinary scene – with 21 wineries and 40 craft breweries – that can rival Seattle and all the urban entertainment you could ask for.

In addition to city culture and urban delights, Spokane is an outdoor recreation dream with five ski resorts and two state parks located right in Spokane. With 17 direct flights and over a hundred daily flights, it's actually easy to get to Spokane. So what are you waiting for?