

Digital Photography in the Backcountry

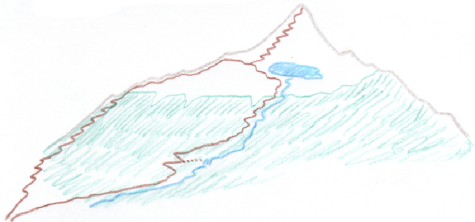
**10 Tips for
Better Outdoor Photos!**

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Tip #1: Be where the views are

- Plan your trip so you're in the right place at the right time.



Tip #2: Plan for the weather & season

- **Be flexible! Change your plans at the last minute if the weather changes.**

- **Thick clouds = Forest & Waterfalls**
- **Sun = Mountaintops**
- **Spring = Flowers**
- **Autumn = Leaves**
- **Sleet = Stay home**

Tip #3: Light!

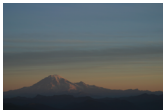
- **All photographs are impressions of light.**
 - Good lighting can make a mediocre scene dramatic.
 - A bad lighting choice will make most anything bad.
- **Before you click, determine your light source.**
 - Front light
 - Side light
 - Back light
 - Overhead light
 - Indirect light
 - Artificial light
 - Moonlight...
- **Can you move your position for more favorable light?**
- **Should you take a different photo because of the light?**
- **Would the light be more favorable at a different time of day?**

Tip #4: Use a Tripod.

- You won't need it for every shot, but many photographs are just not possible without a tripod.
- “Tabletop” tripods are not very useful.
- Use a timer or cable release for tripod shots
- If you're a “point & click only” person, you may not need one.
- Tripod too heavy? How about a monopod?

Tip #5: Get a Polarizing Filter

And learn how to use it correctly - very simple



No filter



Polarizing Filter



On a cloudy day, a polarizer will reduce glare.

This brings-out natural colors

And “sees through” water

Tip #6: Stop!

- Many potentially good photos are missed because someone just didn't want to stop.



- If you see a good shot, take it!
- Make your camera accessible - make stopping easy.

Tip #7: Film sees differently than you do.

- Film shows the world with the contrast turned way up.
- Beware of big shadows
- Beware of big bright spots
- In other words, generally avoid:
 - Sunlight forests (when you're in the forest)
 - Shadow-lines on mountainsides
 - The sky on an overcast day
 - Dark trees with snow underneath

Note: This is just a rule of thumb... There are times when any of these situations may lead to a good photo, but it's uncommon.

Tip #8: Understand Exposure.

- Your camera is stupid.
- You have to tell it how bright the scene is before you click.
- Everything in the frame gets the same exposure
- Use that “half-click” feature...



Exposed for the sky



Exposed for the foreground

Tip #9: Think before you click

- Visualize the printed photo before you click.
- Consider only what's inside the frame, not what's outside it.
- Be picky
- Experiment
- Some easy ideas...
 - Put your main subject off-center.
 - Walk around, and try a few different angles.
 - Pose your human subjects (i.e. talk to them)
 - Tilt your camera downward.

Tip #10: Learn from others

- **When you see photos you like, ask yourself questions:**
 - Where was the camera set up to take this photo?
 - What time of day was it?
 - What time of year was it?
 - What was the weather like?
 - What might have been just outside the frame?
 - What exactly is the subject of the photo?
 - Where are different items positioned in the photo?
 - Why was this angle chosen?
 - What might have made the photo better?
 - What could you have done differently?

- **Imagine you took that photo, and after a while, you'll realize you could have taken it.**

- **Read some books on Photography - you are at the library...**
...see section 770