

7 Tips for Great Travel Photography

With tips from Michael Paluska, Emmy Award-winning journalist



MISSION DOCTORS ASSOCIATION
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Whether you are preparing for a short-term mission assignment or looking forward to a family vacation, your photos can be the opportunities to make the memories last. They also provide the opportunity to share the experience with those who don't have the opportunity to be with you on this trip.

In the case of an assignment with Mission Doctors there are some important issues that are discussed on our Retreat/Seminar weekends related to patient privacy. There are also requirements for permission prior to taking a photo and sharing it either on social networking or in print. It is essential for those who are serving with Mission Doctors that they are familiar with this policy.

With the permission of the local medical professionals and staff, ask if you can share their story and photo. Focusing on the quality of care our local partners provide always makes a wonderful story. In addition, the local community and culture can be shared without compromising people's right to privacy and respect.

Yet, the question remains. How to take a great photo that is not blurry, unfocused, and is what you envisioned?

We've compiled tips from our best photographers here at Mission Doctors, and putting them to use will ensure that the photos you take on your next mission or vacation are perfect.

We'd like to extend a special thank you to Michael Paluska for his contributions! Michael is an Emmy Award-winning journalist who has been a reporter since 2006, breaking news in front of the camera. He loves in-depth reporting and specializes in documentary journalism. Some of his work for Mission Doctors can be found on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

1. THE BEST CAMERA IS THE ONE YOU HAVE WITH YOU



Left photo by Nigel Tadyanehondo. Right photo by Warren Wong.

Today most of us use our cell phones to capture special moments, and even some that are not so special.

So is an expensive camera going to produce better photographs than your cell phone? Definitely. But that doesn't mean you need one when you first start to take photographs. Today, phone cameras produce similar images to the ones more expensive cameras can create, (at least to the untrained eye). There are plenty of [online resources](#) about the different types of cameras if you decide to invest in equipment! Keep in mind, not only cost, how you will use it, and how much room it will take and what it weighs.

When traveling, you want something that's easy to transport. A camera bag might come in handy, especially if you have removable lenses that need to be protected. No matter what kind of camera you have, you should definitely spend some time using it before your trip. You don't want to be fumbling to learn how when you need it!

The best camera for your situation is the one that you'll have available when you need it, and that you will be comfortable using. Whether that's your iPhone or a DSLR, the point is to capture your travel memories!

2. SET UP THE BACKGROUND



Left photo by Amin Edbali. Right photo by Mason Wilkes.

Have you ever seen an image that seems simple but it grabs your attention?

Most likely the focus of your story is positioned with a beautiful background.

Move your subject where you want them so you have the best background possible for your photo. If there is a pole sticking out of their head or a stop sign, slide them away from it. A few feet left or right can make a huge difference. If you can't move your subject, move your feet!

Always scan your surroundings for the background because most often that is what makes the picture.

In the photos above, which do you think of as more eye catching?

3. USE THE RULE OF THIRDS

“The key to a good photo is in the framing.”



Photo by Jacob Repko.

The rule of thirds is the first thing they teach in journalism school. Make sure everything in your photo is framed equally in thirds. You want there to be equal distance between the sky, the horizon, and the ground. Your phone may have a grid or box function that makes it easier to visually divide the image as you're taking it.

See the photo above. If the lifeguard station was in the middle of the photo, you would miss a lot of the surrounding details, like the fog and the other lifeguard station in the background. This way, it's a more eye-catching image.

4. KEEP THE SUN BEHIND YOU

“Shooting into the sun is no good!”



Photo by Aidan De La Paz.

Always try to keep your subject in full sun. This means that the sun needs to be behind you, otherwise your photos will be washed out and the subject will be dark. Some cameras can adjust for this, but the quickest fix is to move your subject into the best light.

In the photo above, the subject is in front of the sun. This is fine if it is the style you're looking for, but it doesn't show your subject well.

5. SHOOT AT GOLDEN HOUR



Left photo by Casey Horner. Top right photo by Morley Hewitt.
Bottom right photo by Mikita Karasiou.

Golden hour is a special time of day for photographers. It's a period of time shortly after sunrise or before sunset during which the daylight is redder and softer than when the sun is higher in the sky. Since lighting has a lot to do with how photographs turn out, golden hour's light is great for photographs. Try it sometime!

6. USE A TRIPOD



Photo by Tyler Feague.

With video, it is the images in front of the camera that should be moving, not the camera. When shooting on an iPhone or any camera using video you should always have a mini tripod, or find a way to set the camera down. This will allow you to get a beautiful clean video without any shaking or distortion, especially shooting time lapse landscapes. They cost about \$10 on Amazon and are great for selfies, video blogs, and quick interviews.

The memories you create will be unique to your mission trip or vacation. While it is great to have them as digital records to share, don't forget how wonderful they can look in a frame! Print your favorites and add to your desk or wall to remember your trip every day.

7. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Everyone has a different eye for beauty! Don't be afraid to get low to the ground, to a higher vantage point, or up close. It might make the shot something you never expected.



Top left photo by Trung Thanh. Top right photo by Marion Michelle.
Bottom left photo by Autumn Goodman. Bottom right photo by Artem Bali.



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Following Christ's call to heal the sick, Mission Doctors Association provides lifesaving medical care for the poor and training for local healthcare professionals around the world.

To learn more about Mission Doctors visit www.MissionDoctors.org