

CHUDLEIGH CAMERA CLUB

Basic Skills 5 Focus Sheet.

Landscape & Seascape Photography shooting the Dramatic and the Serene

Camera settings for landscapes

Keeping everything sharp, from the closest foliage or rocks right into the far distance, is a classic landscape photography technique. Choosing a small aperture, such as f/16, and manually focusing around three metres of the way into the scene will allow you to keep everything from around a metre away from the camera to the far distance in focus.

Although it's not critical for this technique, you should also make sure that the shutter speed set by the camera is fast enough for you to hand hold the camera steady enough to avoid camera shake.

If the shutter speed drops below 1/30sec you'll need to put the camera on a tripod, or increase the ISO setting to 200 or 400. the camera is fast enough for you to hand hold the camera steady enough to avoid camera shake.



Exposure mode:

Aperture Priority (A or Av)

You need to set the Exposure mode to A or Av, and then select a small aperture such as f/16. Going for this small aperture will ensure that there is plenty of depth of field when using a wide-angle lens.

Focus mode:

Manual Switch to manual focus, and then carefully focus on a subject which is around three metres from the camera. This will mean that everything from around one metre to infinity will be sharp in your shot

Basic Landscape camera settings.

Shutter speed: Set by camera, Aperture: f/16, ISO: 100, Lens: 18 to 24mm, Drive mode: Single shot, White balance: Daylight

Capturing a beautiful, colourful sunrise or sunset is one of the most popular landscape subjects.

The first setting you'll need to use to retain the colours of the sky is to change the white balance to the daylight preset, rather than automatic.

Once you have set the white balance, the biggest challenge is keeping detail in both the bright sky and the dark foreground when shooting.

Because there is too much contrast for your camera to capture, you will either end up with detail in the sky and a dark foreground, or detail in the foreground and an overexposed sky.

If you choose an exposure so that the foreground is slightly dark, and shoot in raw mode, you can recover much of the shadow detail when you process the image.

The traditional approach to correcting this is to use a neutral density graduated filter. One half of an ND grad filter is dark, which you position over the sky to reduce the contrast between this and the foreground.

Another way is to take at least two shots, one with the correct exposure for the foreground and another for the sky, and combine the correctly exposed sky with the correctly exposed foreground in Photoshop CS or Elements.

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If the shutter speed drops below 1/30sec then you'll need to put the camera on a tripod, or increase the ISO setting to 200 or 400.



How to set up your camera for shooting sunset or sunrise

White balance: Daylight, to retain the colours, select the Daylight or Sunny preset.

Exposure mode: Manual, Set your camera to Manual. Adjust the aperture to f/11 and the shutter speed so you just keep the highlight detail in the sky.

Shutter speed: Set according to lighting

Aperture: f/11

ISO: 100

Lens: 18 to 24mm

Focus mode: Manual

Drive mode: Single shot

Seascapes / coastal photography

Seascapes

With its clear horizons and open sea there are few locations that can match the wide views that you get around the coast. Making the most of these vistas takes a little planning and an eye for detail, though.

The first thing to think about is the best time of day to visit your chosen location. If you're after sunrises you need to be on an east-facing beach; if you're after sunsets you need to be on a west-facing beach.

Even during the day the angle of the sun will play a huge part in the look of your images.

Try to plan a visit when the sun is reasonably low in the sky and will provide some side lighting to bring out the detail and textures of the landscape.

Once you're there, it's all about photo composition. Remember some of the simple rules, such as using foreground interest and lines to draw in the eye, and you won't go too far wrong, but don't be afraid to experiment with new viewpoints.

Getting down low among the rocks or sand will make the most of interesting foreground subjects and cloud formations, while getting up high on cliff tops will give you a much more comprehensive view of the beach and sea.

A polariser filter is pretty much essential for making the most of blue skies and water. By rotating the filter you can darken blue skies, making the clouds stand out and adding impact to your shots.

You'll also find the polariser useful for reducing the glare from the sea, making it look darker and more colourful.

One potential problem you need to be aware of is when using extreme wide-angle lenses you can get uneven blue skies. Watch out for dark bands if you're shooting with a lens shorter than 18mm on a Four Thirds or APS-C sensor, or 24mm on a full-frame sensor.

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Getting big, dramatic seas!

Watch out for dark foregrounds and bleached-out skies
Choose a small aperture such as f/16 to maximise depth of field

Switch to manual focus, then focus around a third of the way into the scene to ensure that the entire scene is sharp from front to back

Look out for objects and textures in the foreground to add depth and balance to your wide-angle shots

For a well-balanced composition, try to position the horizon around a third from the top of the frame if there's

strong foreground interest in the scene, or around a third from the bottom of the frame if there's a dramatic and interesting sky
Linear features such as rocks, patterns in the sand or clouds can be used to give your landscapes a sense of depth that seascapes often lack.

Without a recognisable object it can be difficult for the viewer to get an idea of the scale of a seascape. Try to include figures on the beach, a house or a ship to give the viewer a better sense of the vastness of the landscape.

Experiment

Dont limit landscapes/seascape photography to daylight or just sunny days as night time or twilight can be just as effective to shoot, also, try catching approachin/departing storm fronts for really dramatic results.



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