

8 Essential Winter Photography Tips

Winter does not have to mean that you should hibernate and only resume taking great photographs when the snow melts. You might be sitting in front of the computer looking at some great shots of winter scenes and think that you couldn't take the same amazing photos. Because you can!



Aside from the cold, which you could easily overcome by wearing warm and comfortable clothes, there is no reason why you should not go out and give it a try! So, what do you need to remember when doing some winter photography?

1. Protect your equipment

Winter is not just about snow. Sometimes you can have fun with fog, rain, and even get great shots of the sea, landscapes and other subjects. Be sure to protect your camera by using a UV filter. The UV filter would not affect your pictures, but it will protect the lens.

Also, keep your camera and lens dry. If you are entering a warmer room, make sure that your camera warms up slowly. This means that if you need to get back into the house, you can leave your camera and equipment someplace a little bit warmer than the temperature outside, let it warm up there before taking it into a much warmer interior of the house.

Another way to fight condensation and prevent it from fogging up your lens or destroying your camera is putting your camera inside a Ziploc bag and sealing your camera in. The bag will help keep away the condensation allowing your camera to slowly adjust to the temperature. It should be common sense, but it is worth repeating here. Do not breathe into your lens. A blast of hot breath could mean some cleaning delays.



You might want to bring spare batteries with you as cold temperatures can reduce your battery's capacity. That said, you might also need to keep these spare batteries close to your body as your body heat would be able to keep them warm. Use a shoulder strap. Extreme cold may numb your fingers, making it easier for your camera to slip out

of your hands.

Further, take note that not all memory cards might be able to withstand extreme cold, so choose one that is better suited to extreme temperatures.

Lastly, keep your lens cap in your pocket, rather than putting them somewhere where it can get wet. Covering your lens with a wet lens cap may cause condensation and spots to appear on your photos.

2. Dress for Success

Be sure to bundle up in warm clothes. Not only will this help keep you warm, but this will also offer you protection from the extreme cold outside.



Wear gloves that can help you grip your camera securely. In fact, you might want to wear a thin glove under thicker ones so that you could take off the thicker gloves when it is time to shoot, giving you warm hands to work your camera with.

3. Forget setting your white balance to auto

For most of the year, you will have set your camera's white balance setting to Auto. During winter however, the snow can play tricks on your camera. The result? Snow will come out more greyish or bluish than white in your photos.



Find out the best white balance setting for your camera by taking a number of shots of the snow, each time adjusting the white balance until you get the setting where snow looks closest to white.

4. Overexpose a little

Even if you are outdoors in broad daylight, you will find that your winter scenes might come out a little under exposed. On top of the gloomy skies, which are prevalent during winter, the whiteness of the snow and its reflective surface will cause your camera to misread the white balance. The resulting photograph will be less vibrant than how you want it.

This problem is even more evident if you do not have enough ambient light to correct it. If this happens, try overexposing your photos starting at +0.3 EV to around +1.0 EV. Be sure not to overexpose to the point that you cannot see much of the details.

5. Shoot subjects up close

During winter, you might have better chances of getting great photos with your subject up close. A half body shot would work better than a full body shot. A facial shot would work better than a half body shot.

The trick here is to put as much of your subject inside the frame as possible. This will help your camera get accurate readings and could give your photos more details. If you do not do this, you run the risk of getting only silhouettes of the subject.



Another technique is to turn on the flash. Not only will you get more details on your subject, but it may add some sparkle to the winter scene you are taking. The only downside is that you may lose some details in the background.

6. Consider adding colour

While snow proves to be a very pretty subject, it can get boring. Why not add some colour to your winter scenes by including something colourful in the frame? For example, instead of just photographing snow in the park, why not include the green park bench?



7. Grey skies? No problem!

For one thing, not all photographs need to be sunny and postcard perfect. Grey skies can help you get more dramatic pictures.



But if your photos are coming out dull because of the grey skies, consider using filters. You might want to get a polarizing or a neutral density filter or even a graduated neutral density filter that would help counter the lacklustre landscape that you get.

8. Action shots need higher ISO



If you want to take photos of a snowboarder or wildlife running through the forest in the winter, you might have problems because of the lower light conditions. Increase your ISO to help offset the darker ambience. If you are taking photos while it is snowing, use a higher ISO to compensate.

Some winter photo ideas

Winter photography does not have to be all about snow. There are a lot of things that you could photograph that are only available during winter.

The winter months also have a lot of holidays in them. Perhaps you could take a photo of a grand Christmas tree amidst the snow? Or if you live south where most birds migrate during the winter, you might have a grand time photographing these visitors as well. You can also look for interesting branch patterns from all the bare trees and leave less plants all around you.



Also, the colours of the sunset or sunrise may give you great lighting and colours during winter. You will definitely want to try getting photos during these times. Remember, however that the sun rises much later and sets much earlier during the winter months than in any other time of the year.

