



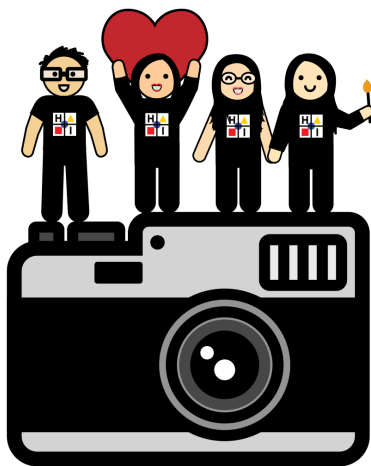
TRAVEL NOTES

SAY HELLO TO YOUR TRAVEL COMPANION

Buy experiences, not stuff. Travel is one of the best ways to open up your mind, to re-spark creative curiosity, and to create more artwork.

We at HAPTIC created TRAVEL NOTES as a way to motivate you to travel more, challenge yourself more, and to utilize your travels in a meaningful way. Jot down notes and responses in a separate notebook or note-taking app. Feel free to skip around in this book, and let the ideas in this book motivate you to step outside of your comfort zone and to grow as a visual artist.

Adventure awaits!



CHAPTERS

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**BEFORE
YOUR
TRIP**



1. ADOPT A TRAVELING MINDSET

Why do you travel? What do you philosophically want from your travels? How do you desire to grow, develop, and challenge your own beliefs through traveling?

Before and during your travels, I encourage you adopt a **TRAVELING MINDSET**, which means: reflect on *why* you want to travel and use travel to broaden your mind. This is why I intentionally avoid researching a place before I travel there. Traveling gives you a unique opportunity to see the world afresh with new eyes.

My philosophy is that traveling helps us become more empathetic, loving, and open-minded. Every culture has its own way of life. In my experiences, traveling has helped me rewrite my notions of what is considered 'normal.' Through travel, I have adopted many new cultural ideas and practices which have changed my life for the better.

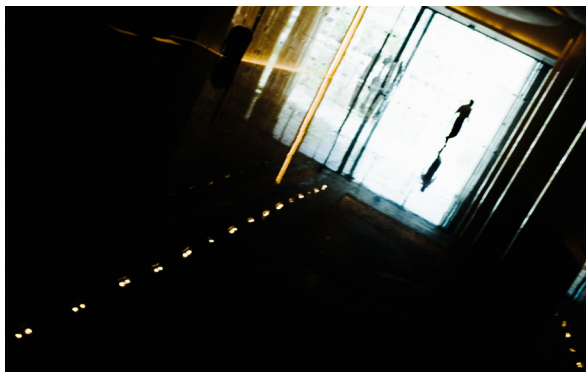
QUESTION: What are some personal fears I have about traveling, and what do I desire to gain from traveling?

2. WHY TRAVEL FOR PHOTOGRAPHY?

Travel is one of the best creative stimuli we can do for our photography. You will explore more, interact with more people, and build your creative muscles to the next level.

We must also consider that photography is not the end goal – we are the end goal. Travel photography guides us to better understand ourselves and our life dreams, as well as our own artistic direction in life.

You do not need to travel in order to discover inspiration to make new images. However, traveling is often the intense visual reboot you need to continue to evolve as a photographer and visual artist.



TRAVEL TO LEARN

There is a saying in Vietnamese: *Đi cho biết*.

Đi means "to go."

cho means "for."

biết: means "to understand/know."

I believe the greatest benefit of traveling is having the opportunity to disconnect yourself from home in order to reflect on your personal life. While on the road, I discovered deeper inner truths about myself. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to reflect on what epic life goals I desire to pursue.

Through traveling, you can better know yourself.

DIRECT EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST EXPERIENCE

"Direct experience" is a Zen concept that argues that only through direct experiences can you truly learn and understand yourself and the world around you. In other words knowledge is gained through direct experiences.

I encourage you to be skeptical of what others tell you about foreign places. Through traveling and direct experience, you will have a unique opportunity to form your own opinions about yourself and the world. Traveling can be a great opportunity for you to open up your heart, mind, and soul to the rest of humanity!

TRAVEL TO CREATE

Traveling can often be a consumptive experience. Many believe the sole purpose of travel is to consume: consume good food, consume interesting sights, and consume novel or exotic experiences.

I believe traveling could be a combination of *both* consuming and **CREATING**.

Therefore, I suggest:

1. Travel in order to create more.
2. Create *while* traveling.

Create a photobook of your travels and share them with your friends. Create a visual poem to encapsulate your feelings in a certain place. Create a slideshow of your favorite images. Create an introspective essay on your life goals and dreams.



Assignment: Why travel for photography?

Date	
------	--

Reflections

1. Why do I want to travel and make photos?
2. What do I hope to capture through my photography?
3. How will traveling help me understand myself and my own culture?
4. What will I create during and after my trip?

3. PLANNING YOUR TRIP

How do you decide on a destination? Here are several things to consider:

- Reflect on *why* you want to travel
- Determine the type of photos you want to make and what kinds of experiences you want to have
- How long will your trip be?
- What is your travel budget?

You do not need to travel far to have a fulfilling photo experience. As an American based in California, I enjoy traveling to Mexico City (my second favorite city in the world), New Orleans (my favorite destination in America), and Pacific Northwest (Seattle and Portland). Places which have also been extremely affordable and fulfilling include Saigon and Hanoi in Vietnam.

You can also travel on a tighter budget and focus on the simple everyday experiences of a new place. **When in doubt, take the more economical option.**

Travel close to home if you do not have the money/opportunity to go overseas.



Neighboring
City



Closest
Mountains



Within
Yourself

Assignment: Budget and plan your trip.

Travel date(s)	
Instructions	
MY BUDGET is... _____ List 3 potential destinations that fit my budget. Then, list 3 reasons to travel to these destinations based on my reflections on why I travel. Decide on a destination and write why I will travel there.	
Destination #1	1. 2. 3.
Destination #2	1. 2. 3.
Destination #3	1. 2. 3.
I will travel to _____	because...

4. SETTING GOALS

When you are traveling, should you set goals for yourself? Goals are tricky – in some ways they can encourage you to do more and create more. On the other hand, goals can often depress us, because we feel like failures when we do not meet our goals.

Ultimately whether to have goals or not is up to you. Here are some practical goals which have helped empower me during my travels:

1. Learn a few phrases in a foreign language

The best way to learn about foreign cultures is through talking about food, family, and explaining what your passions and dreams in life are.

To start off, just remember how to say “hello,” “thank you,” and “goodbye.” Keep the phrases simple. Better to remember 3 phrases by heart than to carry around a guidebook with more complicated phrases.

The goal is not to sound ‘fluent.’ By attempting a few phrases in another language, you signal that you admire and respect others’ culture, history, and language.

2. Set a number of ‘keep’ photos I want to create

If I can take 1 good photograph in 1 week of traveling, I am happy. What is your personal ‘hit rate’ that you desire to attain? Our photographic ‘batting average’ is different for all of us, but even if you can make 1 good photo in every 1,000 photos, you are doing well!

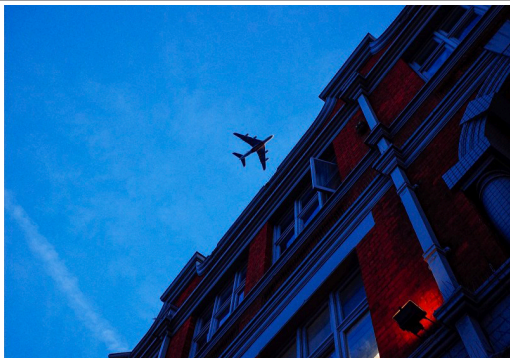
Assignment: Set goals for your travels.

Travel date(s)	
Destination	

1. What do I wish to accomplish during my travels?

2. How many hours will I spend shooting per day? How many photos per day?

3. How many 'keep' photos do I expect to create during my trip?



5. GEAR & EQUIPMENT

To pack for your trip, think:

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.

Packing lighter and with fewer things will give you a superior traveling experience. Only pack what you need in order to achieve your goals for the trip. If you accidentally forget something, you can pick up a replacement locally. Here are some suggestions:

1. CLOTHING

Merino wool is a great option for travel clothes. It is very comfortable, handles moisture well, and is odor resistant. I also prefer all black clothing since it hides stains. For underwear, ExOfficio has great options.

2. TRAVEL WITH A LAPTOP OR A PHONE

A laptop allows you to process, edit, and share your photos while you are on the road. Start your own photography blog and email updates to your friends and friends back home, while your memories are still fresh. Bring the lightest laptop possible or use your phone in airplane mode.

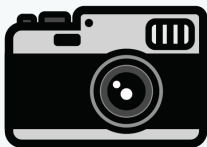
3. CAMERA GEAR

Keep it simple: one camera and one lens. I would encourage a RICOH GR III camera or just use your phone. With a lighter and simpler camera setup, you will shoot more, walk more, and enjoy your time more.

For photography equipment always optimize for lightness.

Assignment: What do I desire to do while traveling?

Travel date(s) and Destination	
Instructions	
<p>My primary goal for this trip is to _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>The items I need in order to achieve this goal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	



Leave heavy photography equipment at home. All you need to bring is one camera and one lens.

**DURING
YOUR
TRIP**



6. PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS

I encourage you to start a personal photography project during your trip which is focused less on tourist landmarks, and more of your own personal interests.

Here are some different approaches to developing a photography project for your travels:

1. Shoot anything that interests you during your trip. You can figure out how to choose your photos and organize them when you get back home.
2. Before your trip, choose a general theme or photo project idea, then loosely pursue it during your trip. Be flexible during your trip and gradually focus your project.
3. Travel with no plans. Figure out what type of photography project you want to pursue while you travel.

There is no right or wrong method. Simply pursue the path that suits your personality and works best for you! Here are some ideas of creative constraints for your photography project during your trip (flip the page).



PROJECT 1: Shoot your trip on 35mm/one type of film.

Travel date(s)	
Destination	
Instructions	
<p>Before your trip, load up on some 35mm film. If you want to shoot color, I recommend Kodak Portra 400. For black and white, I recommend Kodak Trix 400 film. Pick up FILM NOTES for a guide on how to shoot film.</p> <p>How much film should you bring? My suggestion: expect to shoot up to 3 rolls of 35mm in a single day. Thus if you travel for 7 days, buy 21 rolls of 35mm film. For two weeks, 42 rolls of 35mm film. When in doubt, bring more film than you think you need.</p> <p>It is okay to x-ray ISO 400 film at the airport scanners; it will not damage or ruin your film (trust me, I have done this all around in the world, with no damage to my film). Just avoid ISO 1600 film for X-Ray scanners.</p>	

✓	REMINDERS
	When in doubt, over-shoot a scene.
	Write notes with a sharpie directly onto your film.
	20 rolls of film for a week of traveling is sufficient.
	Just bring one type of film for your whole trip.

PROJECT 2: Stick to one neighborhood.

Travel date(s)	
Destination	
Instructions	
<p>Focus on only one neighborhood you find interesting while abroad.</p> <p>I believe it is better to get to know one area or neighborhood very well instead of superficially knowing many. You will almost become a local at coffee shops and restaurants; folks in the neighborhood will probably recognize you as well. This will help you gain confidence.</p> <p>Title your project the name of the neighborhood. Curate 10-12 photos of the neighborhood, and share the photos on your website/blog, print them, and share the images!</p>	



PROJECT 3: Take photos while in transit.

Travel date(s)	
Destination	
Instructions	
<p>When traveling, take public transportation as much as you can. Photograph on the subway, the bus, while in transit at the airport, or even from a taxi or ride-share.</p> <p>Create an entire photo project titled "transit." Photograph local commuters, urban landscapes, and portraits of people that you meet!</p>	



Assignment: Develop your travel photography project.

Travel date(s)

Destination

Step 1: Potential Photography Project Ideas

Project Idea #1: _____

Project Idea #2: _____

Project Idea #3: _____

Question: Which of these project ideas do you believe to be the most feasible and meaningful during your trip?

Step 2: Final Photography Project Ideas

Final Project Idea: _____

Location: _____

Creative Constraints: _____

Purpose: _____

Backup Project Idea: _____

7. WHERE TO SHOOT

Congratulations, you have made the epic journey to your destination! You are probably exhausted, perhaps jet-lagged, but excited to travel! What comes next?

ASK LOCALS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

If you desire to explore more local places, ask the hotel staff or host what they personally like to do for fun. Also ask them: “What should I *NOT* visit while here?” (in order to avoid tourist traps). This will give you a better filter on your activities, especially when you have limited time and resources.

CHECK OUT THE LOCAL CAFE

If you are not sure what to do in a new city, walk to a local cafe and shoot photos along the way. When you arrive, take a break and enjoy a nice cup of coffee or tea. Talk to the barista and photograph the eclectic mix of people there.

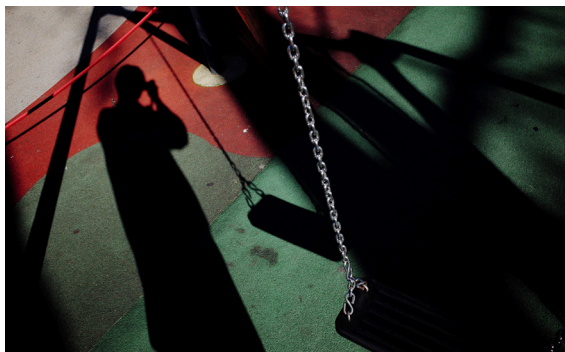


Here are a few suggestions on locations:

1. Train or bus stations
2. Markets
3. Downtown walking areas
4. The mall: especially in hot climates, where there are not a lot of people walking the streets
5. Local bars: bring your camera and keep it on your wrist or around your neck. Chat with the locals or offer to buy them a beer. Ask them for their life story, or dreams or passions in life. Go back several times and make photos of the people there!

MY FAVORITE PLACE TO SHOOT: THE PARK

Parks are one of the best places to shoot, especially if you are traveling and on the road. Photograph families, old folks, young kids, and anyone else you encounter in the park. Shoot with a smile, no need to be stealthy. If you want to photograph kids, ask their parents for permission and offer to email them the photos.



MY FAVORITE PLACES TO SHOOT AROUND THE WORLD:

1. Tokyo (Shibuya)
2. Kyoto (near the Kamo River)
3. Saigon (my favorite city to live and work)
4. New York City (Lower East Side)
5. San Francisco (Mission district)
6. Dubai (Deira and Gold districts)
7. Manila
8. London (East London, Shoreditch)
9. Hanoi (near the Hoan Kiem Lake)
10. Hong Kong (TST area, where Kai and Digital Rev used to shoot a lot)
11. Singapore (Arab Street)
12. Beirut (one of the most underrated cities in the world)
13. Berlin (Mauer Park and the flea markets)
14. Marseille (near the old port – study Yves Vernin, Pierre Belhassen, and François Constant)
15. Lisbon (along the water and markets)
16. Amsterdam (beautiful light)
17. Istanbul (near the water, also epic light)
18. Vienna (any of the hipster neighborhoods)
19. Sydney and Melbourne (Both are excellent for street photography and light. Study the work of Jesse Marlow, Oggsie, Greg Marsden, and Trent Parke)
20. Mumbai (Study the work of Kaushal Parikh and Swarat Ghosh)

Assignment: Create a list of specific places to shoot in your destination.

Travel date(s)	
Destination	
<div>1.</div> <div>2.</div> <div>3.</div> <div>4.</div> <div>5.</div> <div>6.</div> <div>7.</div>	

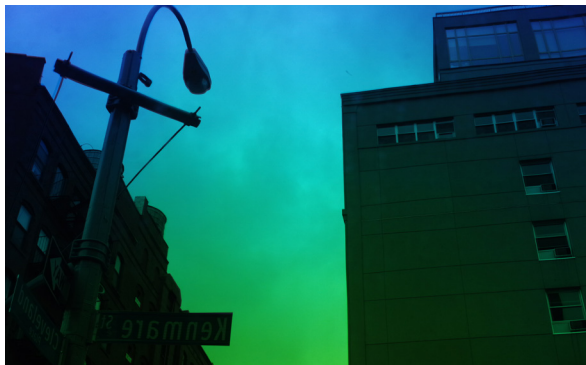


8. HOW TO SHOOT WHILE TRAVELING

While traveling, shoot as many photos as humanly possible. It is better to shoot too many photos and edit them down, rather than shoot too few photos and wish (after your trip) that you shot more.

To engage deeper with your travel experiences, photograph them! Contrary to popular belief, I believe that through photographing your travels, you connect deeper with your experiences. A lot of people might criticize you by saying, "Put away the camera! Just enjoy the moment!" But for us photographers, to photograph *IS* to experience.

Another option: You do not need to review your photos during your trip. You can focus on shooting while on the road, and then review all your photos when you get home. This is a good option if you are too exhausted to review your photos in the evening, or if you shoot all film during your trip.



Assignment: Create a photography and editing workflow.

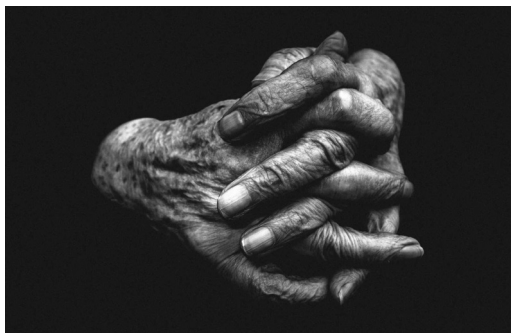
Travel date(s)	
Destination	
Instructions	
<p>Choose one:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 1: At the end of each day, I prefer to review and select my favorite photos of the day.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 2: I prefer to focus on shooting during my trip, and plan on reviewing and selecting my photos after my trip.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 3: I prefer to both review my photos everyday, but plan on doing a closer inspection once I get home.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 4: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

✓	REMINDERS
	Use Dropbox to sync your photos when traveling.
	Do not delete photos from your SD card when traveling. Only delete photos once you go home.
	The more you shoot while on the road, the more likely you are to make good photos!

9. TEN COMPOSITION TIPS

1. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Do not show too much in the frame. Get closer to your subject and fill the frame. While shooting, look at the background and edges of the frame. Then, try to subtract distractions.



2. HAND GESTURES, BODY GESTURES, & EYE CONTACT

Do not just photograph people standing still. Capture people who are moving, using hand gestures, tilting their body, or making different facial expressions. This will capture more emotions and make your photos more dynamic. Take photos of your subjects making eye contact with you. This makes your photos more intimate.



3. JUXTAPOSITION

Juxtaposition is the art of making a more powerful artistic statement by putting two elements next to one another that are similar, yet contrasting.

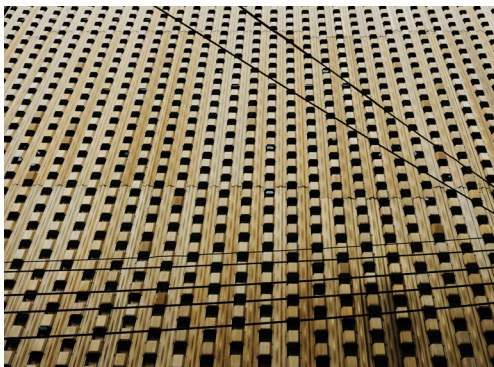
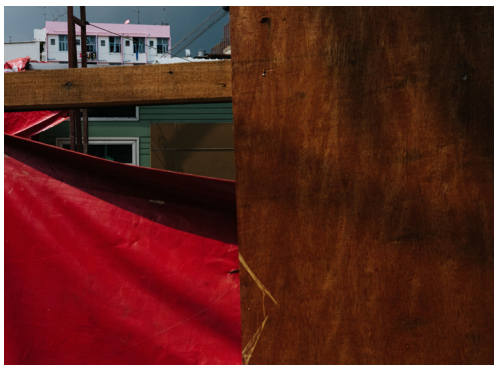
For example:

- *Youth vs. elderly*: A photo with both a young and an old person in the frame
- *Modern vs. traditional*: a new car next to a traditional building, kids on their smartphones next to elderly reading books, old buildings next to newer designs



4. PURE AESTHETIC BEAUTY

Your photos do not need to have some deep overarching statement about humanity. Aesthetically beautiful photos can be meaningful as well. This means making photos when the light is good (sunrise and sunset), or shooting beautiful scenes, colors, shadows, shapes and forms.



5. SHOOT A VARIETY OF PHOTOS

You need a variety of photos to create a good photo series.

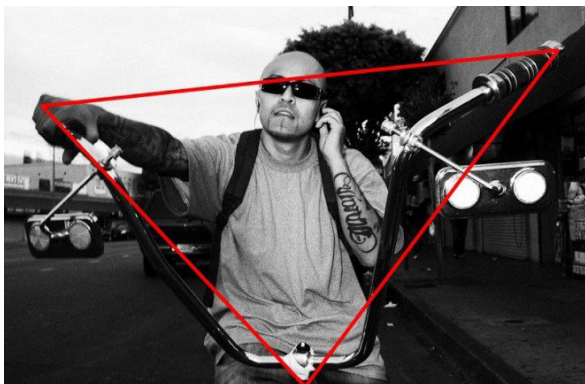
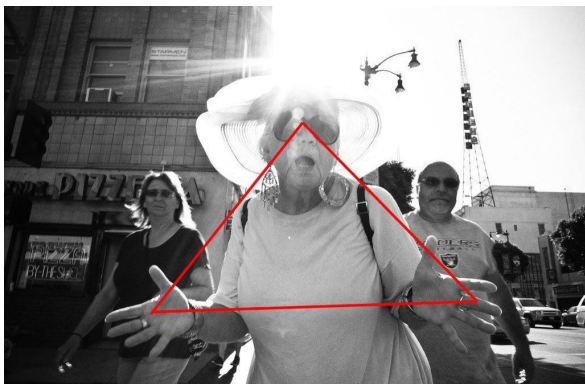
Shoot close-up portraits, urban landscapes, natural landscapes, interesting things you find, and a variety of colors, textures, and subject matter.

For inspiration, study great cinematography from directors like Stanley Kubrick and Akira Kurosawa to see how they add variety to their photos. Study the angles they shoot from, the variety of angles (high angle and low angle), and the different scenes and times of day they photograph.



6. TRIANGLE COMPOSITION

This is a simple, yet effective, composition to practice while you are shooting and traveling. Limit your photo to 3 subjects and photograph them in a rough triangle shape. Triangle composition will balance the frame, yet add visual intrigue and strength.



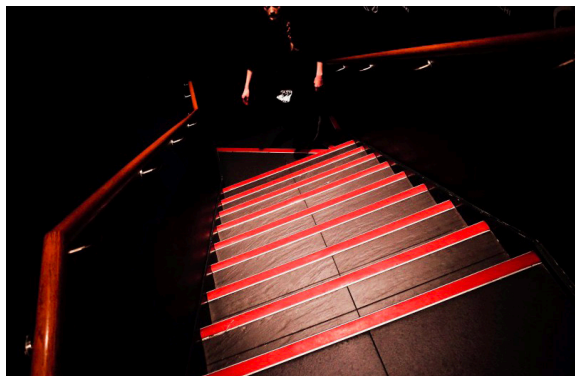
7. LAYERS AND DEPTH

Do not shoot only flat and two-dimensional photos. Capture more depth and layers in your photo by keeping your aperture at F8, and focus on what is furthest away (around 5 meters). Put subjects in your scene at different distances — some of your subjects very far away, some of your subjects super close, and others in the middle ground.



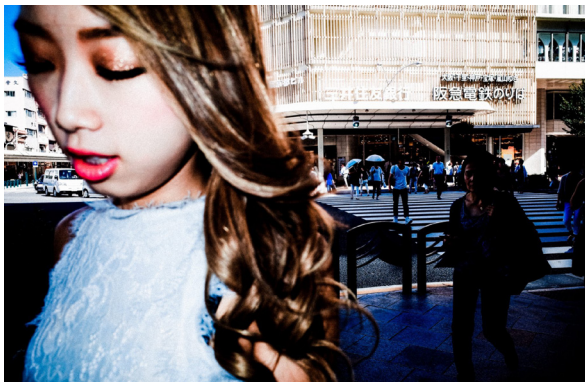
8. REPETITION & BREAKING THE PATTERN

Find a certain repeating pattern or concept, but include one thing in the frame which breaks the pattern.



9. OFF-CENTER SUBJECT

When photographing a single subject, do not always center them. Try putting your subject either to the far left or the far right of the frame.



10. SHOW SCALE

Take some photos that show a sense of scale, like photographing from rooftops that make the people look very small. Try shooting from very far away, to make the subjects look super small, but make the buildings look large and intimidating.



**AFTER
YOUR
TRIP**



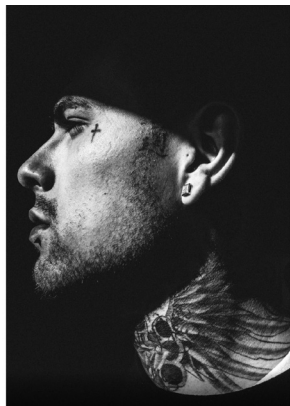
10. CHOOSE YOUR BEST PHOTOS

Here are some tips to help you cull through your images:

1. LET YOUR PHOTOS MARINATE

It is very difficult to choose your best photos after a memorable travel experience. Why? Some of the photos are associated with good memories, but are not good 'standalone' photos.

My practical suggestion is wait at least a few weeks before reviewing your photos. This will allow you to emotionally distance yourself from your photos in order to judge them more objectively.



For example, here I sketched a photograph which I liked in order to analyze the composition. Even as an abstract image, I can see clearly how the light adds drama and intensifies his features such as his tattoos and jawline.

2. GET A SECOND OPINION

It can be difficult for us to choose our own best photos because we are so attached to them. As photographers, we often get “mom goggles” with our photographs. Like our children, all our photographs look beautiful!

A practical option is to get a second opinion from a photographer whose work you admire. You can put your photos on your phone or iPad via Dropbox, or print them out as 4x6 inch prints. Ask them to choose their favorite photos. Make a note of which photos they select and ask more photographers. Your photos are like oil and water — with enough feedback, the best photos will rise to the top.



3. LOOK THROUGH YOUR PHOTOS AS THUMBNAILS

If you want to quickly and effectively choose your strongest photos, I suggest looking at your photos as small thumbnails. Use the gallery or grid view in Lightroom (hotkey "G"). This allows you to more quickly judge the strength of your compositions.



4. FOLLOW YOUR GUT

If you look at a photo and feel uncertain whether it is good or not, chances are that it is not a good photo.

Remember the saying,

WHEN IN DOUBT, DITCH.

A good photograph will spark an emotional response in you. It should almost feel like a punch to your gut. When choosing your photos, do not always over-analyze it. Listen to your intuition.



11. SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

Now you must ask yourself:

"How do I wish to share and publish my work?"

There are many possible options and you can utilize as many as you want.

- **MAKE A VIDEO SLIDESHOW:** Use iMovie or any video editing software. Experiment with the music you use, the duration of each photo, the sequencing, and total length. Follow what looks and feels good to you. Some suggestions: I like to make my own beats in GarageBand (or just Google "beats by Kim" to download my mp3 beats to use for your own slideshows), I like a duration of 2-3 seconds per photograph. Upload your video to YouTube and share it with friends and family.
- **MAKE A ZINE/PHOTOBOOK:** Use Blurb.com as an easy way to print your work. Print a softcover book, or a zine (magazine) format. You can send a PDF file to a local printer in your city, and ask them to print the book or magazine for you. Design the book with iBooks author on Adobe InDesign. Have fun while designing your book and experiment with different formats.
- **BLOG ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AND POST YOUR PHOTOS:** Blogging can be an outlet to process your thoughts and meditate on the experience. You can easily start a blog on WordPress. Share your photos and reflect on your travels. You can create the blog first for yourself as way to archive and document your experiences and also share them with your close friends and family.

✓	REMINDERS
	Research photographer's rights for your destination.
	To minimize jetlag, try two options: 1) do not eat anything on the flight and eat a dinner at 6PM at the timezone of your final destination) 2) do not sleep on the flight and sleep at a regular time in your final destination. Also, walk around and get lots of sunlight and exercise.
	Travel with merino wool or quick dry clothing.
	Pack an eye mask and earplugs.
	Download ebooks, podcasts, movies, and music for your device during your trip.
	Notify your credit card companies to unlock your account to be used while traveling.
	Do not forget your camera or device chargers.
	When in doubt, throw it out (do not over-pack).
	Switch your phone to airplane mode to avoid incurring international data charges and distractions.
	Stick to one camera, one lens for your trip.
	Before traveling internationally, see if you can travel meaningfully close to home.
	For film photography, pack 3 rolls of film per day.
	Learn how to say "hello" and "thank you!" in the language of the place you are visiting.
	Photocopy your important ID information, and keep it in a secret compartment in your bag.
	Remember to pack your passport, tickets, and other identification!

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY LOG

Travel date(s)

Destination

My favorite photo spots:

What I learned during this trip:

For my next adventure...

TO DO

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

NOT TO DO

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

WHY TRAVEL?

Traveling the world is engrained in culture as “the thing to do”.

But we never question:

WHY TRAVEL?

REASONS TO TRAVEL...

- 1** To open your mind to new experiences, people, cultures?
- 2** A form of self-discovery by distancing yourself from the comforts of home/familiar people?
- 3** Give yourself a break to relax or to disconnect from work?

OR IS IT...

- 1** Escape from reality/boredom?
- 2** Show off to your family/peers?
- 3** Reach "enlightenment"?
- 4** Travel for the sake of traveling
AKA "just to see things"?



If you said yes to
the reasons above

...

Take a moment to reflect
if traveling will solve
your life problems

.....

LEARN MORE

Staying inspired in street photography is one of the most difficult challenges we face. My suggestion: always treat yourself like a beginner, and retain your innocent “child’s mind.”

Also keep in touch, and we can both stay inspired in street photography together, with these resources:

- [Newsletter](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [ARS Beta](#)

ERIC KIM Blog

- [Travel Photography](#)
- [On Travel and Street Photography](#)
- [How to Travel](#)
- [How to Shoot Street Photography While Traveling](#)

HAPTIC Books & Tools

- [Ultimate Beginner’s Guide to Mastering Street Photography](#)
- [Creative Every Day](#)
- [Photo Journal](#)
- [MASTERS](#)
- [Free Street Photography Visualizations](#)
- [HAPTIC products on Amazon](#)

Video Course

- [Ultimate Beginner’s Guide to Mastering Photography by Eric Kim Complete Online Course](#)



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