

VACATION PHOTOS

How to capture the moment, while living in it



Picture this: You've just arrived back home after the trip of a lifetime. You whip out your camera or smartphone to relive those precious moments, but there are so many photos, you end up flicking through them mindlessly. Worse still, you realize you were so focussed on trying to get that perfect photo, you weren't living in the moment in the first place.

Maintain the balance between capturing those special moments and really experiencing them with the following tips.

Snap & stow

When you're visiting a new place, the desire to record your journey increases with each new experience you encounter — whether it's an exotic animal you've never seen before or a busker crooning on a street corner. These moments are fleeting and if you spend every second snapping photos (and reviewing them as you go), you risk missing out. Take your photo, but then put the camera away and enjoy the ride as it unfolds in real time.

Take time off

Give your camera, and your inner photographer, a break by alternating camera days with non-camera days. On the days you leave your camera behind, bring a notebook instead. Soak in your surroundings with all of your senses and write down what you see,

smell, taste, touch, and hear. Afterwards, when you're back home reminiscing, you might be surprised at how many of the day's details you can recall — without even having a photo to remember it by.

Be selective

These days, virtually everyone has a camera in their pocket, so it's easier to take photos (and endless numbers of them) than ever before. But just because you can, doesn't mean you should. Remember, less is more. Try designating specific times for photos, like the first day of your trip (when everything is new and exciting) or the last (when you know where to get the best photo opportunities). And don't waste your time on mediocre shots. Avoid taking photos from moving vehicles or at dimly-lit restaurants, for example, where you'll wind up with images that are blurry or dark. When it comes to photographing people, the first time is often the charm. The longer you get them to hold their poses, and smiles, the less authentic the shots feel. There's something to be said for spontaneity.

Take turns

If you're travelling with family or friends, take turns being the designated photographer. This way, everyone has the chance to enjoy the trip without being bogged down by camera gear the whole time (and you'll actually get to be in some of the photos too). Everyone sees life through a different proverbial lens, so you'll end up with a variety of shots from perspectives you may not have considered. Services like Google Photos make creating and sharing albums a snap. At the end of your holiday, host a picture-viewing party and enjoy some good-natured ribbing as you crown the best (and worst!) photographer.

Leave it to the pros

If you have some money to spare, consider booking a professional vacation photographer through a service like Flytographer, Shoot My Travel, or Local Lens, just to name a few. Or hire a tour guide and pay them extra to take some photos for you. No one knows the lay of the land, or where to get the best photos, like a local and while they're busy capturing you and your adventures, you can focus on being in the here and now without having to look through a viewfinder. ■

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