



IndieTravelPodcast.com
Sweet travel advice for independent travellers

Travel photography for beginners

Transcript 031

September 2007

Linda: Hi, I'm Linda

Craig: And I'm Craig

Linda: And this is the Indie Travel Podcast episode 31.

Craig: 31 seems so old.

Linda: Though 31 weeks isn't quite the same as 31 years. Maybe we'll get there.

Craig: I guess so ... Anyway, this week we're coming in from Linz, in Austria and we're talking about some camera tips.

Linda: It seems that photography is almost synonymous with travel, you have to take a camera with you, but the advice out there can be both confusing, misleading and treacherous. We want to give you some simple tips just to help you take some better photographs while you travel.

Craig: Digital cameras are ubiquitous; I mean, they're everywhere. They're lighter and cheaper to get memory for compared with film. They're cheaper to process. Archiving and back-up is a little bit more technical than film cameras - like, stick them all in the drawer - but, with a little bit of learning and a little bit of TLC, your photos are going to be available for a lot longer and they're much easier to share.

Linda: Right, well let's get into our six tips for successful travel photography then.

Craig: Firstly, make sure you have a spare battery. We just lost our spare battery and we were almost caught short during our trip to the monastery at Melk. The place is fantastic - if you've seen or read "The Name of the Rose" the Umberto Eco book, Sean Connery film, that's the montastary that they're talking about, and it is beautiful. But, we'd just lost our spare battery and the one that was in our

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camera was almost out. I was racing around the place, turning the camera on, taking a quick photo, turning it off again. A camera is no good if it hasn't got any power!

Linda: The second tip is similar: carry spare memory or spare film. Our camera uses an SD card, which we also use for other electronics like my PDA. We've got several of the SD cards, We usually try to have an extra card with us when we've got our camera, just for emergency photos. Our main card is 1GB, which will fit about 500 photos on it, at high quality, but it's better to be sure!

Craig: Yeah, we were sitting across the aisle from a couple on the train a little while ago, and they were talking about their new-fangled digital camera which they didn't understand. And this woman was saying "you know, film's much cheaper, I've got this card, and I went to buy a new one, and it was going to cost me 40 euros." And I had to interrupt her at that point and explain that she could take that card into a photo shop, and get them to copy it onto a CD for her, and she'd be able to use that card over and over again, hundreds of times.

Linda: Although you can get cheap cards online, so if you do need a spare one, go for it.

Craig: Tip three is equally simple, but will bring a HUGE impact to your photos. Not only is it simple, but it's free. I like free.

Linda: Free is good.

Craig: Clean your camera lens. Yup, simply clean the dust and the rubbish and the oil off of your camera lens. We've had some wonderful shots ruined by dust mites fuzzing things up or light reflecting strangely off an oily fingerprint on the glass. I'd suggest using a cloth from your local optometrist - the same type you'd use for cleaning reading glasses or sunglasses. The corner of shirt or your dress will work in an emergency, but it is not a good idea, and it might scratch the lens if you've got any rubbish caught in it.

Linda: Yeah Craig, you definitely shouldn't be using your dress.

Craig: Umm...

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Linda: Anyway, we're half-way and we're not too technical yet!

Craig: Yeah, we'll try and continue that way. Let's talk about flash photos ... Have you ever been to a big stadium event?

Linda: I have.

Craig: For example a rugby world cup game?

Linda: No.

Both: Go the All Blacks!

Craig: In these big stadiums you see flash bulbs erupting everywhere, but you know what, they're completely useless. The point and click camera flashes won't illuminate much more than a few meters in front of you. All you're doing is wasting your camera battery, illuminating the head of the person in front. And taking all your shots out of focus.

Linda: And distracting the players.

Craig: I'm sure they wouldn't notice.

Linda: It's possible.

Craig: Okay, so keep the flash off, especially in those.

Linda: Yeah, but you've got to use it sometimes, don't you?

Craig: Yeah, but try and make the most of natural light when you can though. And experiment with the soft flash option, if your camera has one.

Linda: All right, well, let's play devil's advocate then.

Craig: Okay. This is our eternal argument. I recommend taking as many photos as you

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can. Because you know at least half of them - in my case, probably about 90, 99 percent of them - are going to be completely rubbish anyway - and camera memory is next to free. I mean, take the time and the effort to remember your trip! You're having an amazing time wandering around an old city centre -- interesting nooks and crannies, amazing brickwork, little piazzas and alleyways. They're visual memories, and you want to have a good visual record, not some fuzzy, out-of-focus picture that might have been taken in your back yard, but a decent shot!

Linda: Yeah, or, you could take your time, wander around these gorgeous little piazzas and alleyways and actually enjoy it, and not see it through a camera. Then you'd probably have a much better time.

Craig: Oh come on, look your mind is fickle, you've got a terrible memory. I mean, I look at photos that I took two or three months ago and go "ohh, that's where I was."

Linda: Oh, yeah, I definitely agree with you, you definitely need to have some photos, but I think there need to be a bit more balance. Especially in your case, Mr 99 photos a day. You need to find a bit of balance, walk around first. Maybe if you've got a couple of days in a place, go out without your camera, just walk around -

Craig: Without your camera?

Linda: Or, at least put it in your bag. Pull out your camera just for the most spectacular shots. I mean, is it really worth being a tourist over? Do you want to be the person standing taking the photo that everyone takes, with your big camera around your neck, looking just completely useless?

Craig: Yeah well, so that's two sides of the travel photography coin. So, take what you want from it!

Linda: Before we go, we want to let you know about three new ways you can interact with us and with the rest of the indie travellers out there.

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- Craig: The first one's really on topic. We've started a group on flickr that you can add digital photos to! Flickr is an online photo-sharing site, so if you're looking for our recommendation for an online photo tool this is it www.FLICKR.com, that's flickr with no E.
- Linda: Once you've signed up and uploaded some photos you can add them to the Indie Travel Podcast pool - just search for it within flickr or come and find the link from www.indietravelpodcast.com.
- Craig: Secondly, we've started a facebook group - so if you're on facebook come and show your support for the show by joining up - once again there will be a link from www.indietravelpodcast.com.
- Linda: And, the third thing, we've got 100% positive feedback for the newsletter idea, so come along to the site and sign up for it. To begin with we'll just be sending out a monthly email with the shows from the month and we'll also be sending out the occasional email with extra goodies, like newsletter-only tips and articles and maybe even a competition or two. I think the first edition will be coming out at the end of this month, so drop by the site and leave your email address with us on the homepage.
- Craig: So, finally, from our old supporters to our new listeners - thanks for coming along for the ride! So far, it's been fun and we look forward to growing the site and providing more resources and indie travel ideas for you all. So kapai.
- Linda: And till next week, travel well.

[trivia - kapai means good or well done in NZ Maori]

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