

LONELY PLANET'S GUIDE TO

TRAVEL
PHOTOGRAPHY

Richard l'Anson

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THE AUTHOR

Richard l'Anson is a freelance photographer who has built a career on his twin passions for travel and photography. Over the past 30 years he has travelled the world amassing a substantial and compelling collection of images of people and places in more than 90 countries on all seven continents.

Richard received his first camera as a gift from his parents when he was 16 and has been infatuated with photography ever since. After studying photography, film and television for two years at Rusden State College in Melbourne, he worked in a camera store and minilab before going freelance in 1982.

His work is published worldwide in books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, calendars, posters, cards and websites. He has published numerous books: *Chasing Rickshaws* (1998) and *Rice Trails* (2004), both collaborations with Lonely Planet co-founder Tony Wheeler; *Travel Photography* (2000, 2004 and 2009 editions) and *Urban Travel Photography* (2006); and the large-format pictorials *Australia: 42 Great Landscape Experiences* (2006); *Nepal: Kathmandu Valley, Chitwan, Annapurna, Mustang, Everest* (2007) and *India: Essential Encounters* (2010).

Richard is a double Master of Photography with the Australian Institute of Professional Photography (AIPP) and was judged top travel photographer in *Capture Magazine's* 2007 Australia's Top Photographers Awards.

Lonely Planet has been using Richard's photographs for 21 years and his work has been featured in over 500 editions of Lonely Planet titles. When he's not on the road Richard lives in Melbourne, Australia. To see more of Richard's images log onto www.richardianson.com and www.facebook.com/richardiansonphotography.

FROM THE AUTHOR

It's a pleasure to be able to share what I've learned and seen in more than 30 years of shooting travel photographs. Thanks to the rapidly evolving developments in the world of digital photography, it's a serious challenge for all of us involved in the imaging industry to keep up to date with equipment and software offerings. Writing this book gives me the opportunity to gather, assess and present a relevant snapshot of this information alongside the more creative and timeless elements of the art, subjects and practicalities of travel photography.

It's also a great opportunity to thank again the people who have played a significant part in my journey and contributed in various ways to my body of work from which I draw the contents of this book. Thanks then to Tony and Maureen Wheeler, Lonely Planet founders, Nick Kostos and Sue Badyari at World Expeditions, Peter Cocklin at Kodak Australia, Lothar Huber and Doug Porter at Bond Imaging, Rick Slowgrove at Canon Professional Services and Rik Evans-Deane at Camera Action Camera House in Melbourne.

At Lonely Planet, Ben Handicott and Ryan Evans made significant contributions to this edition.

THIS BOOK

USING THIS BOOK

Travel is an exciting experience and your photography should reflect that. *Travel Photography* introduces you to every aspect of the picture-taking process and the wide range of subject matter that you'll encounter on your travels, to help you produce vibrant and meaningful images. It aims to increase the percentage of good photographs you take and to lift your travel photography to the next level of creativity. No matter where you're going or what camera you use, you'll find the information you need to make the most of the picture-taking situations that come your way. It will help you create photographic opportunities and to make your travel experience more photo friendly, with practical advice, tried-and-tested tips and inspirational images sure to get you thinking about both your photography and your next trip.

With film cameras no longer being manufactured, every new camera these days is a digital model. Although film still has a loyal following, the book assumes readers will be travelling with a digital camera. And although there is a substantial amount of technical information, the heart of the book lies in the images. The advice and suggestions are just as applicable whether you capture your experiences on the pixels of a sensor or the silver halides of a film emulsion.

Although the focus of the book is on capturing great still images on digital cameras, digital technology has opened up other possibilities for recording images. In the (not so) old days, you needed a camera for taking photos, a phone for making phone calls, an MP3 player for listening to music and a video camera for taking videos. Now you can do all of these things on one device. This is called technology convergence and it is leading to some truly exciting innovations. The most relevant examples to image-making are the camera phone, allowing both still and video images to be captured on a device made for making phone calls; video-capture mode on digital still cameras; and still-capture mode on video cameras. The introduction of video mode on digital cameras and mobile phones has introduced many people to the world of video-making for the first time. This book follows the convergence trend and offers advice about making photographs and videos with camera phones, digital cameras and video equipment.

Part 1 will bring you up to speed with digital photography, discussing all your gear options and the many features and functions you need to know about to buy the right camera and get the most out of your gear (note that prices are given in US dollars throughout the book). It shows how research, planning and practice will enhance the experience of travelling with your camera. Part 2 looks at the art of photography and will give you the tools to create images that reflect your own vision of the world. Part 3 is an in-depth look at the subjects you'll encounter, providing all the information you'll need to successfully capture them, and is packed with inspirational images from around the world. Part 4 deals with photography post-trip, including digital workflow, image editing, sharing and selling your pictures, as well as an insight into the business of travel photography.

This 4th edition of *Travel Photography* is also full of new images and insights from the road. Since the 3rd edition was published in 2009 I've been to India (10 times), China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Bosnia, Montenegro, Hungary, Italy, Iceland, England, Ireland, France, Malaysia and Myanmar, as well as to every Australian state.

Even though this book is about travel photography, it could be said that all photography (outside the studio) is travel photography. One person's backyard is another's dream destination. Although this book is packed with images taken all over the world, you don't have to have immediate plans for the ideas and techniques to be useful. You can put into practice much of what's discussed here next time you photograph your family, your pets, go on a day trip and certainly on a holiday in your own country. In fact, I highly recommend that you do just that. Study the resulting photographs, and then go back out and take some more. You'll learn a lot from your own successes and failures and reap the rewards in better photographs on your next trip to someone else's backyard.

THE AUTHOR'S APPROACH

I've had the privilege of photographing all over the world and, most importantly from a creative perspective, had many opportunities to return to some countries three, four, 10 (China) and even more than 20 times (India and Nepal). And even after all these years, the thrill of arriving at my destination, dropping the bags at the hotel, grabbing the cameras and getting out there hasn't waned. In fact, I enjoy it more now because I'm confident I'll be able to capture the pictures I've come to take.

Photographing travel for a living is an intense, exciting, tiring and thoroughly rewarding endeavour. I often walk 5km to 10km a day, shoot between 300 and 400 images and get very little sleep. But by the end of my trip I'll have a comprehensive collection of images that capture a good cross-section of the places to see, things to do and people who live there. You can read more about my own travel photography practices on p350.

The way I go about taking travel photographs has developed over the years and I am constantly assessing my methods and images in an attempt to make the results of each trip better than the last. I capture all my images digitally and now wonder how I ever lived without some of digital imaging's most useful features: at the capture stage, the flexibility of changing the ISO from frame to frame, and the ability to instantly review the shots. Seeing the pictures immediately is helpful when shooting but, just as importantly, it allows me to make accurate decisions regarding completion of a subject shoot. At the post-capture stage, it is easy and quick to label large quantities of images and find them again when you need them, thanks to workflow software. Finally, although the digital workflow has pushed a lot of work back onto the photographer that was previously performed by photo labs and photo libraries, the gain in control over the entire imaging process, from capture to output, means the pictures will always be seen how they are intended to look.

But that's just the technical stuff. What hasn't changed is my aim to capture the reality of a place (as I see it) through strong individual images that build on each other to create a comprehensive coverage of a destination or topic, so that viewers get a sense of what it's like to be there. My own interpretation – my style – is expressed through choice of camera format, lens, aperture and shutter-speed combinations, what I choose to photograph, the composition I settle on, the light I photograph in and, finally, the images I choose to show.

I take the same gear on every trip and it consists of the following items:

- Two Canon EOS 5D MkIII DSLR camera bodies
- Canon EF 24–70mm f2.8 L USM zoom lens
- Canon EF 70–200mm f2.8 L USM image stabiliser lens
- Canon 300mm f4 L USM image stabiliser lens

- Canon 1.4x teleconverter
- Canon Speedlite 430EX II
- Hoya multicoated skylight 1B filters (permanently attached to all lenses for protection)
- Hoya circular polarising filter
- Gitzo G1228 carbon-fibre tripod with Induro ball head. (I photograph landscapes, cityscapes and interiors, where possible, on the tripod; everything else is hand-held.)
- Assorted 8 GB, 4 GB and 2 GB Compact Flash II memory cards totalling 24 GB capacity
- Laptop computer with 15-inch screen loaded with Adobe Lightroom, an image-processing and management program
- Two 750 GB portable hard disks
- Memory card reader
- Crumpler 7 Million Dollar Home soft shoulder bag – holds everything bar the tripod and 300mm lens
- Crumpler Whickey and Cox backpack for carrying gear onto planes and when trekking.

Day to day, I keep my gear as simple as possible but, to cover the range of subjects I know I'll encounter and to work as fast and as efficiently as possible, I always carry the two DSLR cameras, one with a



24–70mm lens and the other with a 70–200mm lens. I only carry the tripod, 300mm lens and flash unit when I know I'll need them for specific shots. All images are captured in the raw file format. My default sensor sensitivity setting is ISO 100.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

This book contains images taken with the equipment listed above, and also images shot on various other cameras I've owned or loaned over the years, including both digital and film cameras.

The photographs in *Travel Photography* are accompanied by both informative and technical captions that will help you learn about taking photographs in a variety of circumstances and give you an insight into many of the issues encountered when shooting on the road. Captions include the following information:

- Image title, location and country
- Camera type and lens
- File or film format
- Exposure (shutter speed, aperture and ISO)
- Any accessories used (tripod, filters and flash).

Note that all focal lengths are given as 35mm equivalents (see p52).

FOREWORD

Plenty of my photographs have appeared in Lonely Planet guides over the years. Some of them have been good enough to find their place in photo library collections; I can even claim to be a Getty photographer. Not because I've pulled any strings. Just being, for many years, Lonely Planet employee number one – number two if my wife, Maureen, pulls rank on me – didn't get me any favours. (I've even written a whole book on travelling across the Pacific, only to have it rejected by Lonely Planet's travel literature publisher – 'not exciting enough', she announced.)

No, my travel photographs appeared because they were good enough to make the cut. Of course, the fact that I manage to get to some pretty unusual places helps. There's less competition for photographs from, say, Saudi Arabia, Haiti or North Korea than from Italy, France or the USA. But, at the end of the day, they're still going to have to be very good photographs.

What's in front of your lens may help things along, and high-quality camera equipment is a given, but it's your skill – the quality of your photography – that is going to make all the difference. I reckon there are three secrets to getting those 'wow factor' photographs. First of all, take lots of photographs; there's no substitute for experience and that means point your lens and exercise that finger on the shutter release. Secondly, there's education, which can mean taking a photography course or reading a good book on photography, like the one in your hands right now. Thirdly, there's no better way to find how to do it than to watch and study a real expert.

I've been lucky enough to have several intensive experiences of that third element of a photographic education. I've travelled with Richard I'Anson to work on our books *Chasing Rickshaws* and *Rice Trails* and I've travelled with both incarnations of Richard: the film and the digital photographer. The history of this book has tracked the shift from film to digital photography and this latest edition reflects the current situation: it's an almost-total change; film is an endangered species.

Of course, many aspects of photography are just as relevant to the digital world as they were to the old film one. Composition, focus and exposure are all important skills which this book will help you master, but while digital photography has brought new conveniences and opportunities, it also presents unexpected new challenges.

Sometimes travelling with Richard simply confirms that the very oldest photographic clichés are still true: the light really is better at dawn, otherwise why would I have suffered so many predawn wake-up calls when I've been in Richard's company?

I've also been horrified by how much camera equipment Richard seems to carry around, and moving into the digital world hasn't made that load any lighter. Photographers no longer have to carry all that film and worry about keeping it cool, out of the sun and away from X-ray machines, but the bag is going to be weighed

down by a laptop or some other digital storage medium, and calculating the remaining gigabytes of storage capacity can be just as big a worry as how many frames of film remain.

My first digital trip with Richard, a little coast-to-coast two-week trek across England from the Irish Sea to the North Sea, brought those changes home, along with the necessity of always heading out, waiting for that unexpected opportunity to pop up. The longest and duller day of the walk also happened to be the day with the worst weather. Yorkshire weather. Our fellow walkers all decided this was the day to take the bus; Richard and I walked on, through a thunderstorm. Richard because there always might be a photograph out there. And me? Because I'm crazy, I guess.

No matter how good your equipment and how skilled the practitioner, successful travel photography can come down to sheer luck. Or sheer perseverance. Sometimes you simply have to tough it out in search of the perfect photo. On one trip to Nepal our search for rice terraces with snow-capped mountains in the background had been thwarted by day after day of nonstop rain. Finally the sun broke through just hours before our departure. We diverted our airport-bound taxi to the edge of the Kathmandu Valley and sprinted up a hill to find, on the other side, the perfect view – rice fields being harvested, picturesque houses in the foreground, soaring Himalayan peaks as a backdrop. And a river separating us from the picture. We tore off our shoes, rolled up our trousers, waded across the river, got the photographs, spoke to the farmers, and still made it to the airport in time for our flight – a little damp and rather muddy, but with the images we needed.

On another Nepal visit I staggered to the top of Kala Pattar, the Everest viewpoint overlooking Everest Base Camp. Richard was already there, wedged against a rock, hanging on in a wind fierce enough to strip the Gore-Tex off your back and the camera out of your hand. I soon decided to head back down to my tent, leaving Richard to look for that perfect sunset shot of the world's highest peak. Perseverance won out; he got it.

Equipment, expertise, luck and straightforward hard work are all only parts of the photographic story. It's travel that takes us out there and puts those amazing images, whether of people, places, nature or scenery, in front of our cameras.

TONY WHEELER
FOUNDER, LONELY PLANET

