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Photography Tips and
Ecuador photo tours

Night photography & long exposure.

Just because the sun goes down doesn't mean you should put camera away, there are so many opportunities to photograph after dark that you should really give it a go. It will also help you understand light.



Church in small village of highlands Ecuador. 1/15sec. f4.0 ISO 1000 HANDHELD

First of all you'll need to understand your camera, whether it is a DSLR or a bridge camera or a simple point & shoot you should understand the limitations and how to use it properly to get the most out of it.

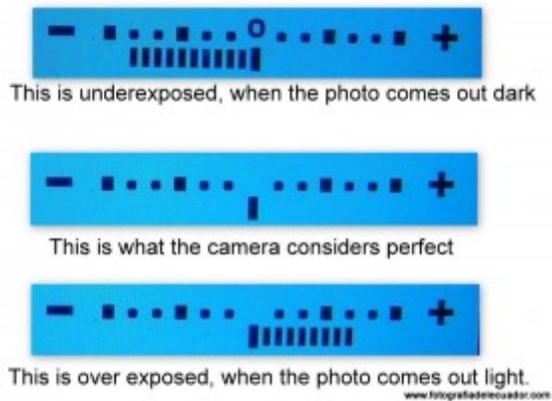
Can you control it manually, (manual, aperture, shutter speed settings), if not find an option for night photography in the presets.

Can you change the ISO?

Can you use a remote release, if not there is always a setting for TIMER, this allows the camera to settle down before taking the photo therefore eliminating camera shake.

When you are taking the photo you will need to determine the amount of light there is and set the camera to the correct settings (for p&s shooters choose night mode in the presets and click away).

The light meter does a great job at this, so press the shutter button halfway down and on the screen or through the view finder you'll see a little chart.



Make sure you point the camera at the darkest part of the scene, or something midway towards the darkest part. If the lines are too far away from the center line you'll need to adjust slightly the settings on the camera, but sometimes try the photo, see what comes out. It may be way to dark or black or way to light or white even, so change the setting appropriately and take another photo.



Church in Baños-Ecuador. Settings- 5 secs f5.6 ISO 200

Do your very best to only use the lowest ISO you have available to you. I have 200, but there are also a couple of lower settings on my D90 L1.0, L0.7 and L0.3, you may want to use this is you have the option.

Aperture, this determines how much of your subject is actually in focus. So it mainly depends on your subject, so think about what are you taking and how much *you* want in focus.

Remember: smaller f numbers = less in focus = more light is let onto the sensor
larger f number = more in focus = less light is let onto the sensor



New Cathedral in Cuenca, Ecuador. 1/4sec. f4.0 ISO unknown????

Shutter speed. As you are taking the photo after dark the chance is you'll need a longer shutter speed than normal, right, so remember a tripod, or if you don't have one, make sure you find something solid, like a trashcan, or even the roof of the car to get a steady shot. One thing I took across Africa with me as a tripod was out of the question was a bean bag. Think about making one of these, with some left over material, beans, rice or anything similar. When you half press the shutter button you'll see the meter on screen (if you don't see this you may need to change you camera settings) As you have already chosen your aperture then you'll need to change the shutter speed to be close to the center of the meter. Take a photo and see if you like it. If not change the setting and try again.



Fireworks in the highlands of Ecuador 1/4sec f4.5 ISO 200

Flash: this is entirely depend on your subject, are you taking a photo of some people, for example? If you are you'll need to use the fill in flash to illuminate them. The flash also will illuminate a few meters; this depends on the flash and the camera. (You can read the manual to find out this).



Devon – UK 1/5 sec. f2.8 ISO 200 HANDHELD. I used the car lights for this.

Remote shutter release, cable release or self-timer. As the camera is on a tripod or any of the other options mentioned, there will also be camera shake if you just press the shutter button, so use the shutter release or if you don't have one use the self-timer. I remember this from years ago, my dad, also a photographer, used to take family photo by pressing the button and running into the shot, I am sure loads of you will also have these memories, well they still work today and as far as I know every camera, even the cheapest little, simple p&s have them so put it to good use. The symbol looks like a little clock.

the best time is when there is still a little blue left in the sky, this will create the best shots.



The Coliseum, Rome 6 sec f4.5 ISO 80 I used a trashcan to steady the camera

Do you need ideas as what to take, because it's not just architecture and landscapes, try taking the kids out and having some fun with sparklers, for example, or why not try taking the car out and taking a photo using the headlights, fireworks is always a good one if you have some nearby, and we all have a church close by, if not take a photo of your own home, turn on all the lights, go out and take a photo, take a torch and write something in front of the camera during a long shutter speed.

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