

Pre-Shoot Checklist

PHOTOGRAPHY · PRINT AND TICK

Ten minutes of checking before you leave prevents most ruined shoots. Run down this list the night before, then again at the door.

CAMERA

- ☐ Batteries fully charged and one spare in the bag.
- ☐ Memory card formatted in the camera, not on a phone or laptop.
- ☐ Clock and time zone correct — otherwise sorting by date is misery later.
- ☐ Sensor clean; check at f/16 against a white wall and blow off any dust.
- ☐ Lens clean, cap off, hood on, filter free of smears.
- ☐ Focus mode, drive mode and metering set for the job.
- ☐ White balance set manually (or a card photographed for reference).
- ☐ Image quality set to RAW + JPEG if you need same-day previews.

BAG

- ☐ Second body or a backup camera in case of failure.
- ☐ Lens cloth, blower and a spare filter.
- ☐ Tripod with head tightened, plus a small weight hook.
- ☐ Torch or phone light for dark locations.
- ☐ Batteries, cable release and spare cards in labelled pouches.
- ☐ Rain cover or a shower cap for the lens.
- ☐ Notebook and pencil — pencil works in the rain.

BEFORE THE FIRST FRAME

- ☐ Walk the location and find three backgrounds you like.
- ☐ Decide your exposure recipe and write it in the notebook.
- ☐ Shoot one test frame, zoom to 100% and check focus and noise.
- ☐ Check the histogram, then check the edges for tilt.
- ☐ Agree a signal with your subject for when you need a moment.

DURING THE SHOOT

- ☐ Re-check exposure every time the light changes.
- ☐ Format cards only after backing up twice, on separate drives.
- ☐ Shoot a few frames wider than you need for cropping later.
- ☐ Keep the histogram in view, not the blinking highlights warning.

AT THE END

- ☐ Count cards, batteries and lenses out loud before leaving.
- ☐ Back up to two places before you delete anything.
- ☐ Flag your ten best frames the same day while the intent is fresh.

FIELD NOTE

Write the settings that worked on the back of your hand or in the notebook. Reviewing the numbers that made your keepers is faster than any tutorial.