

# BALANCING TRAVEL & PHOTOGRAPHY: ENJOY THE MOMENT & STILL GET THE SHOT

## Presentation Notes

*by Erik Kuna*

### Mindset First

1. You don't have to shoot everything.
2. Not every trip needs to be a portfolio builder.
3. Set an intention for each trip—relax, explore, or create?
4. Decide: Are you the photographer *on* the trip, or is this a photography trip?
5. You can do both—but not at the same time.
6. Be present first, photographer second.
7. Look before you lift the camera.
8. Chase the feeling, not just the photo.
9. Practice “visual journaling” over “perfect shots.”
10. Let go of FOMO—it's travel, not work.

### Planning Smart

1. Do some pre-trip photo research.
2. Build a loose shot list.
3. But leave room for spontaneity.
4. Check sunrise/sunset times in advance.
5. Know when golden hour *actually* matters for your location.
6. Avoid cramming a full itinerary *and* expecting great photos.
7. Identify 2–3 priority shoot locations per trip.
8. Focus on fewer, better shots.
9. Scout ahead if possible—on foot or via Google Maps.
10. Build buffer time into your schedule.

### Gear Choices

1. Bring less than you think.
2. You don't need your full kit.
3. Pick one lens that does most of the job.
4. A travel zoom beats lugging four primes.
5. iPhone + small mirrorless is a winning combo.
6. Leave the big tripod—bring a Platypod or tabletop tripod.
7. Use lens hoods over filters when traveling light.
8. Think dual-purpose gear—bags that don't scream “camera.”
9. Quick-release straps help you switch between casual and serious.
10. Pack backups only for essentials: cards, batteries, charger.

## **Shooting in Real Life**

1. Shoot quickly, then rejoin the group.
2. Scout during the day, shoot during the golden hour.
3. Take the shot, then enjoy the view.
4. Bracket if unsure, fix later.
5. Trust Auto ISO if light's changing fast.
6. Use burst mode for motion without fuss.
7. Use "Record" mode instead of photo when under pressure.
8. Grab a wide establishing shot, then a few details.
9. Travel photography is about story, not perfection.
10. Shoot in RAW, edit when you're back—not during dinner.

## **In the Moment**

1. Don't miss a sunset holding a histogram.
2. Let your eyes adjust before you shoot the stars.
3. Sometimes, the best memory is just that—a memory.
4. Take a break from your viewfinder.
5. Be intentional with when you "switch on" as a photographer.
6. Give yourself permission to not shoot.
7. Leave the camera in the hotel... at least once.
8. Watch the light *without* shooting—train your eyes.
9. Share experiences before sharing photos.
10. Your travel partners will thank you.

## **Family & Friends**

1. Communicate your photo plans in advance.
2. Don't hold up the group—shoot efficiently.
3. Ask for a few dedicated photo blocks.
4. Involve others in the photo story—ask for ideas.
5. Let them be part of the moment, not your assistant.
6. Hand them a phone cam—get their POV.
7. Capture candids of the people you're with.
8. Don't just shoot the scenery.
9. Make some memories just for them.
10. One posed group shot is enough. Move on.

## **Efficiency Hacks**

1. Use Airplane Mode for quick access to camera.
2. Shoot with exposure preview ON.
3. Lock in daylight WB and fix later if needed.
4. Tag best shots in camera—saves time later.
5. Review quickly at night, delete obvious fails.

6. Use one camera profile and style across shots.
7. Sync presets in Lightroom Mobile for consistent editing.
8. Use PhotoPills for precision, but don't overthink.
9. Favorite your best shots daily to avoid backlog.
10. Save full editing for when you get home.

### **Creative Flexibility**

1. Shoot scenes that *feel* like the place—not just postcards.
2. Tell a visual story with 3 shots: wide, medium, detail.
3. Let light lead your creativity.
4. Embrace imperfect light—it's real.
5. Capture textures, colors, locals—not just landscapes.
6. Look for humor, contrast, culture.
7. Use reflection, shadow, negative space.
8. Try shooting vertical for social formats.
9. Break “rules” when the moment feels right.
10. A quick iPhone pano can be all you need.

### **Post-Trip Workflow**

1. Import with structure: by day or location.
2. Back up before you edit.
3. Don't post on the plane. Give the trip time to breathe.
4. Build a highlight gallery—not every shot needs love.
5. Share to remember, not impress.
6. Write a few notes about what each photo meant.
7. Consider printing your favorites.
8. Create a short slideshow or recap for yourself.
9. Ask: would I shoot it the same way next time?
10. Save your RAWs, but don't hoard them.

### **Final Thoughts**

1. Balance isn't about less—it's about being intentional.
2. Photos are proof you showed up.
3. But moments are the reason you went.
4. You can be in the shot *and* take the shot.
5. Great trips > great photos.
6. Don't chase perfection—chase presence.
7. A single, meaningful frame beats 100 random ones.
8. Travel light—shoot lighter.
9. Make space for serendipity.
10. Enjoy the trip... and you'll love the photos more.

If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me at [erikkuna.com](http://erikkuna.com) or in the KelbyOne community at [community.kelbyone.com](http://community.kelbyone.com)

If you want to learn more about night photography make sure to check out my book from Rocky Nook, The Night Photography Book and classes at [KelbyOne.com](http://KelbyOne.com) and join me on Photography Workshop adventures at [milkywayworkshops.com](http://milkywayworkshops.com) or [scottkelbyworkshops.com](http://scottkelbyworkshops.com)