

Travel Photography Gear: What to Bring & Why It Matters

Presentation Notes

by Erik Kuna

Big Picture First

1. I love gear.
2. Gear isn't essential—but it sure is helpful.
3. Travel forces you to be strategic about gear.
4. You just can't bring everything.
5. Better yet... you don't *want* to bring everything.
6. Keep it light. Keep it simple.
7. Enjoy your trip.
8. Still get the shot.

Let's Start with the Obvious

1. It starts with a camera.
2. Or a phone.
3. Either can work—if you know your tools.
4. Beyond that, it's about convenience and photographic requirements.

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1840289-REG/canon_6536c002_eos_r5_mark_ii.html

Tripods (The Real Talk)

1. A tripod just holds your camera steady. That's it.
2. It's essential for long exposures, low light, and interior shots.
3. But... the Tripod Police are real.
4. High-ISO & stabilized sensors changed the game.
5. So, what do we do?

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1833047-REG/falcam_t00a4301_treeroot_quick_lock_travel.html

Alternatives to Full Tripods

1. Enter: the Platypod.
2. Delta or Extreme are great for travel.
3. You'll need a ball head—compact and lightweight.
4. Platypods are *Tripod Police* approved.
5. They're built for tight or restricted areas.
6. Want something for your phone?
7. Pocket Tripod Pro is brilliant.
8. Or mount your phone to a Platypod with a MagSafe or clamp grip.

My Gear Link: <https://www.platypod.com/>

Memory Cards

1. Don't cheap out on memory cards.
2. You'll spend \$5,000 on a camera... and trust a \$20 card?
3. Go with decent speed, reliable brand, and reasonable capacity.
4. SanDisk or Lexar are solid bets.
5. Stick with 64–128GB. Smaller cards = lower risk.
6. Avoid putting your whole trip on one giant card.
7. Use the dual-slot setup wisely.
8. SD for primary, CFexpress for backup (if supported).
9. CFexpress stays in the camera.
10. SD gets backed up, then replaced.

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1860632-REG/sandisk_sdsdxdm_128g_gn4in_128gb_extreme_pro_uhs_ii.html

SD Card Management

1. Bring an SD card holder.
2. Label your cards.
3. Flip used cards upside-down in the case.
4. Backup every night—don't wait.

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1304724-REG/pelican_009150_0100_110_0915_case_for_12.html

Backups & Drives

1. Always backup to an SSD.
2. I use small, fast drives like SanDisk Extreme or Samsung T7.
3. Keep your SD card copy.
4. That's 2 copies.
5. I also back up to the cloud.
6. Three places = peace of mind.
7. I even separate my SSD from the cards—just in case.
8. Paranoid? Maybe.
9. But data loss ruins a trip faster than bad weather.

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1742972-REG/samsung_mu_pe4t0s_am_4tb_t7_shield_portable.html

Bags & Backpacks

1. A good travel bag is key.
2. I prefer a backpack—but it's personal.
3. Comfort is king.
4. Don't carry more than you can walk with for an hour.
5. Laptop slot is a bonus—great for plane edits.
6. Easy access to camera is a must.

My Gear Link: [https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/859421-REG/Think Tank 483 Airport Essentials Backpack Black.html](https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/859421-REG/Think_Tank_483_Airport_Essentials_Backpack_Black.html)

Lights (Yes, Sometimes You Need Them)

1. Bring an LED panel light.
2. Great for portraits, food, or indoors.
3. I love USB-C rechargeable lights.
4. Bonus: most are app-controlled now.
5. Bring a compact light stand—travel size.

My Gear Link: [https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1848861-REG/ulanzi I052gbb1 I3 cob rgb led.html](https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1848861-REG/ulanzi_I052gbb1_I3_cob_rgb_led.html)

Reflectors & Diffusers

1. Pop-up diffuser is great for harsh light.
2. Reflector works wonders in golden hour or shade.
3. A 5-in-1 foldable is perfect for travel.

Power & Charging

1. Bring a phone charger—USB-C if possible.
2. I like magnetic cables for convenience.
3. USB-C is on nearly everything now: cameras, phones, drives.
4. Bring a multi-port charger.
5. Don't forget a power bank.
6. Bonus: charge your camera via USB-C if compatible.

My Gear Link: [https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1781429-REG/tessan ts wta 04 100w travel adapter.html](https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1781429-REG/tessan_ts_wta_04_100w_travel_adapter.html)

Rain & Weather Protection

1. Bring a rain cover.
2. It buys you peace of mind.
3. Some of my favorite images came in bad weather.
4. Rain = mood, drama, and amazing light.
5. Pack a microfiber towel, too.

Straps & Carry Options

1. Use a camera strap that's comfortable.
2. I prefer QD crossbody straps.
3. Crossbody = harder to grab, easier to carry.
4. A sling strap can be great for mirrorless bodies.

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1628085-REG/leofoto_sp_01_dc_22q_sp_01_push_button_quick.html

Clothing for Photographers

1. Wear clothes that support photography.
2. Cargo pants or photo vests = mobile gear storage.
3. Pockets for batteries, cards, filters, Platypod.
4. Dress for the weather you *shoot* in—not just walk in.
5. Hat for sun or rain.

Cleaning Kit (Non-Negotiable)

1. Bring a blower—every trip.
2. Lens wipes or microfiber cloths—always.
3. Sensor swabs if you're shooting mirrorless.
4. Don't forget lens pen or brush.
5. You'll be shocked how fast lenses get dirty.

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1250331-REG/visibledust_18512947_ez_sensor_cleaning_kit.html

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/259157-REG/Giottos_AA1900_Rocket_Air_Blower.html

Triggers & Remotes

1. For long exposures—bring a Bluetooth or cable trigger.
2. Phones can trigger via app—check before your trip.
3. Intervalometer if doing time-lapse or star trails.

My Gear Link: https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1074687-REG/miops_miops_camera_trigger.html

Apps I Actually Use

1. Google Maps + Google Earth for location scouting.
2. PhotoPills for sun, moon, and Milky Way planning.

3. The Photographer's Ephemeris for light angles.
4. Planit Pro for maps and advanced overlays.
5. Windy for wind/sunset/cloud cover forecasts.
6. Astrospheric for clear sky prediction.
7. Reeheld—simulate handheld shutter stability.

Software for On-the-Go

1. Lightroom Mobile or Desktop.
2. Photoshop if you need to go deep.
3. On1 NoNoise AI—for fast, clean high-ISO shots.
4. Don't edit everything on the road—just quick selects.

Final Thought

1. Bring the gear that serves your vision... and leave the rest.
2. You'll never regret packing light—but you will regret overpacking.
3. Choose gear that helps you travel better—not just shoot better.
4. A great photo doesn't require a full kit.
5. Just the right gear... at the right moment.

If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me at erikkuna.com or in the KelbyOne community at 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 and join me on Photography Workshop adventures at milkywayworkshops.com or scottkelbyworkshops.com