What to carry along with you on your photo outing, to include what goes in your camera bag? Each outing can warrant what you carry along with you. On a quick Field Trip, you may carry very little with you. However, if you’re outdoors for a longer event or outing or if you’re on a hiking trip, you’ll want to carry along many more items. You can get as elaborate as you want here or as simple as simon says! Remember, on those long days out, the gear you carry with you will get heavier as the day goes on.

Below is a list of items to consider. While this article states what to carry in your camera bag, on those hiking trips, several of these items will probably go in a backpack versus your camera bag. Nevertheless, keep these in mind and strongly consider them. The list of items shown is in alphabetical order and not in any order or importance or preference.

Have you more items to add to these lists? Send us an email of the item and why you think it’s important to have in your photo bag or backpack.

**Camera Bag:**

Batteries

A day of shooting will eat away at your battery life, especially if you overuse the LCD

screen, shoot in RAW format, and/or in cold weather. These can all drain the life from

your battery rather quickly. Keep at least one extra fully charged battery in your bag

so when you need it – you have it.

Bubble Level

Having and using a bubble level can get those pictures that are straight. There are

bubble levels for your tripod and there are those that attach to your camera. Many

cameras have a setting to turn on a level within the viewfinder. Remember, taking

the best shot in camera that you can means you’ll spend less time in post processing

doing things like leveling your pictures.

Camera(s)

Many of us will only have one camera body to take along with us, but there are

those who have more than one camera body that you can use to suit your purpose.

Cleaning Kit (to include Lens Wipes, Cleaning Fluid, and a Cleaning Cloth)

Keeping your camera gear clean, especially your lens(es) is essential to taking good

photographs. A good cleaning kit will have several items to keep your gear clean.

Filter(s)

If you’re one to use filters in your photography, you’ll want to bring these along with

you. Maybe you’re looking for a long exposure photo and can use an ND filter. How

about color filters to give those nice effects to your pictures. Maybe even special

effects filters is the way to go.

Filter Wrenches

How many times have you been out on location and you cannot get a filter off your

lens to replace with another filter or not have one on your lens at all. Then the filter

gets stuck – leaving you stuck. A good filter wrench can save the day.

Flash

A flash is excellent for adding additional light to your shot. If you haven’t tried before,

you’ll quickly see that it will add a whole new depth and dimension to your

photography. Even in bright sunlight, a flash can help eliminate those unwanted

shadows in your pictures. And don’t forget to use a diffuser for even more effects.

Flashlight

A flashlight can be used in an emergency, like if you need to shine it for responders

trying to find you at night. How about having a flashlight to find your way on a trail

at night. Then, there are times you’ll want to have a flashlight to get those pictures

using Light Painting techniques.

Intervalometer or Cable Release

An intervalometer is an essential piece of camera gear that every landscape

photographer should own. This device allows the photographer to trigger their camera

without touching it. These devices are a must for anyone who is interested in night or

time lapse photography as they allow you to shoot for longer times and in timed

sequences.

Lens(es)

If you’re using a camera with a changeable lens, it is vital to have at least one extra lens.

This is to give your greater choice with your focal length and will also be a backup lens

if anything happens to your primary lens.

Manual

Keeping your manual in your bag might just save you one day. It can be used to sort out

a camera problem or a setting you are struggling with. It can sometimes be difficult to

remember the variety of settings on your camera, so always keep it handy! In lieu of

having a hard copy manual with you, a .pdf version on your smartphone or tablet works

great too.

Memory Card(s)

There’s nothing worse than having the perfect shot, going to take your picture, and your

camera displays that your memory card is full. To avoid going through all your pictures

on the spot and deleting pictures you may think you’ll not need – keep at least one

spare memory card in your bag at all times. Plus, memory cards can sometimes fail. That

doesn’t happen often, but you’d hate to be in that perfect location and find your

memory card isn’t working.

Notebook & Pen/Pencil/Sharpie

Having materials to take notes with can save you trying to remember a setting you used

on your camera or a certain location you found very interesting or a subject that is

worth noting. You may also need to jot some type of note for emergency responders

should you be able to and then place it in a location where it can be found.

**Backpack:**

Binoculars

You see an object in the distance. What is it? Is it worth trying to use the zoom lens

on your camera? Will that zoom lens be powerful enough to see that object? A pair

of binoculars can come in very handy spotting something. And let’s face it, not

everything needs to be photographed. You may just want to view something far away

and having binoculars with you makes that easier to do.

Bug Spray

How irritating would it be out on a walk or hike and having to deal with bugs? What if

you wander into an area of bug infestation.

Cable Ties

These can be used in a variety of creative ways. Maybe a light can be held in place for

those portrait type pictures or something breaks

Disposable Latex Gloves

There may be times you’ll find you’ll want something covering your hands while on a

photography outing. Maybe you’ll want to move some materials on the land or lean up

against a building or object and there may be things on those items you don’t want to

get on your hands. What about for emergencies? A person on the outing gets a cut (or

worse) and you’ll want to treat it. Using these types of gloves helps to prevent any

germs that could cause infection to that person.

Extra Glasses

You’re out and about and something happens to your glasses, should you wear glasses

that is. Maybe you get smacked by a branch from someone in front of you, as one

example. Now what? If the glasses are badly broken, you might be able to manage and

get back to your vehicle later. What if they are really badly broken?

First Aid Kit

Whether you’re spending a lot of time in the sun and getting burnt, you trip over a

rock while out shooting landscapes, or for other reasons, having a first aid kit for any

little mishaps that might occur during a shoot is always a good idea. They’re cheap and

will cover you for most of life’s minor incidents.

Gaffer’s Tape

There might not be another item more useful that gaffer’s tape. You should always have

some of this with you, whether to secure cables, make a quick repair, label

equipment, or quiet that assistant who won’t stop talking.

Lip Balm

On those hot and dry days, lip balm can help protect your lips from drying and chapping.

Poncho (or a large garbage bag to wear)

If it starts raining, you not only want to protect your equipment, but you’ll want to

stay dry yourself. if you have room in your backpack, a poncho will come in handy.

However, a large plastic bag can be used too. Just use your scissors and cut holes

for your head and neck and your arms.

Rain Cover

You’re out on location and it starts to rain. Even if you have a sealed camera and/or

lens, you may want to use a rain cover for your equipment.

Satellite Phone

If you’re one to get out and about in places where there may not be cell phone

service and something happens where you need to contact someone – having a

satellite phone may make a big difference to you. Note that there are ways to turn

your smartphone into a satellite phone. Look into Thuraya SatSleeve or sync your

device up to an Iridium GO! or Inmarsat IsatHub.

Scissors

There are all sorts of reasons a good pair of scissors can come in handy. Not so much

maybe for short outings, but if you on a longer hike – a pair of scissors can help in

many ways.

Smartphone

Having a smartphone with you can help in emergencies, if needed. An app can be used

on your smartphone for GPS. Maybe a quick and simple photo is needed and your

smartphone is readily available. Or maybe you found a plant or insect that you just

cannot identify. Apps on your smartphone can help you with that too.

Snacks

If you’re doing a long photo shoot while out and about or hiking, you’ll want to have

snacks along with you to keep your energy level up. Food is good, but while you’re

moving about, snacks are better for you.

Sunscreen

Tissues

Nothing to sneeze at here! Yes, you can use tissues for sneezing and/or coughing, but

how about if you need to wipe something up – on you or your gear? What if you’ve

gotten a cut and need to apply pressure to it. Tissues will come in very handy with that.

Tripod or Monopod

A tripod can be useful to include yourself in the foreground or reduce camera shake

or hold your camera steady for long exposure or low light pictures.

Water

Photography can sometimes be a physical pursuit, and physical exertion make you

thirsty. Having an ample supply of water with you – and using it – can prevent you

from getting overheated and falling victim to such things as dehydration.

Waterproof Shoes/Boots

You’re out on a long hike and your shoes or boots get wet inside. You have a long ways

in front of you on that hike. Wet socks and shoes/boots can really wreck havoc on your

feet. If you have room in your backpack, you may want to consider extra socks and an

extra pair of waterproof shoes or boots.

Ziploc Bags

There are way too many reasons that you might use a Ziploc bag while your out and

about on a photo outing. They can store open food items, trash items such as band-aid

packages or wipes or snack wrappers, or anything that could be damp or wet and you

should not be leaving in nature.

Remember that you should always plan your hike or trip and be sure you travel with someone if you can. Telling others where you’re planning on going is a very good idea too. Write a brief paragraph about yourself, your medications, emergency contact information and such. If you become incapacitated in some way and are not able to respond to someone, responders having this information will be able to help you better.

Having most to all of the items mentioned in this article and being better prepared should make your photographic outing more enjoyable. Have fun taking pictures and creating memories.