

Waterfall Photography: Camera Settings Cheat Sheet

ESSENTIAL CAMERA SETTINGS

Setting	Recommended Value	Why It Matters
Mode	Manual (M) or Shutter Priority (S/TV)	Shutter Pri: Camera controls exposure Manual: You control exposure
Shutter Speed	1/2 to 2 seconds (for silky effect)	Captures motion blur in flowing water
	1/500 sec or faster (to freeze water)	Freezes individual water droplets
Aperture	f/8 to f/16	Ensures deep depth of field and overall sharpness
ISO	100–200	Minimizes image noise in long exposures
Focus Mode	Manual or Single Point Autofocus	Ensures precise focus on a key element
White Balance	Cloudy or Shade AUTO works too	Warmer, more natural tones in waterfall scenes

OPTIONAL BUT HELPFUL TOOLS

- **ND Filter (3–10 stop):**
Allows long exposures even in daylight
- **Tripod:**
Essential to avoid camera shake
- **Remote Shutter / Timer:**
Prevents vibration from pressing the shutter
- **Lens Cloth:**
Water spray happens—keep that lens clean!



BEST CONDITIONS TO SHOOT

- **Overcast Days:**
Soft, even lighting reduces harsh shadows
 - **Golden Hour (Sunrise/Sunset):**
Warm tones + better lighting control
 - **After Rain or in Spring:**
More dramatic water flow and scenery
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QUICK TIPS

- Use **live view** mode to compose your shot
 - Variable neutral density can help with exposure
 - Decade tripod (Platypod knockoff from Amazon) can help get low angles
 - Expose for the sky then take several exposures that increase the light until you get the waterfall properly exposed... combine photos in post-processing
 - Use a **histogram** to check exposure—avoid blown highlights in water.
 - Peaks to the far right indicate possible areas that are blown out (far right is pure white in image)
 - Compose with **foreground interest** (rocks, logs, leaves).
 - Try different **angles and heights** to vary the perspective.
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Happy Shooting! 

Capture the movement. Embrace the light.

LEARN, CREATE & SHARE

Thanks for joining us!

Melissa Bilotta

Flagpole Photographers Camera Club:

<https://flagpolephotographers.com/>

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