



TIPS AND IDEAS FOR SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

Ah, summer! It's a magical time, filled with endless photographic possibilities, not to mention bright light, balmy temperatures, and beautiful skies.

Of course, summer photography does come with its fair share of challenges. The sun can sometimes be a little too intense, washing out your shots and adding unwanted contrast. The heat can make it difficult to photograph outside during the middle of the day. And let's not forget the struggle of finding those perfect subjects that truly capture the essence of summer.

Fortunately, with the right approach, you can overcome all these challenges. That's where this article comes in handy; I explain how you can capture stunning summer photos, no matter your level of experience and no matter your gear.

Specifically, I share:

- My favorite type of light for beautiful summer photography
- An easy mindset change that'll quickly improve your photos
- My favorite way to find summer photoshoot locations
- Plenty of summer photography ideas to get you inspired
- Much more!

So if you're ready to create some top-notch shots, then let's dive right in, starting with:

1. Pay attention to the summer sun

If you want to capture consistently gorgeous summer photos, then you must learn to master lighting – and that starts by paying careful attention to the sun.

Before heading out for a photoshoot, ask yourself:

- 1 Are there clouds?
- 2 Where is the sun positioned in the sky?

Clouds will diffuse the light, creating soft, even illumination that's perfect for [portraiture](#), [flower photos](#), and [forest landscapes](#). Clear skies, on the other hand, will produce hard, [high-contrast light](#) that's great for [street photos](#), but bad for pretty much everything else.

However, if the skies are clear, you can still get great light by shooting early in the morning or late in the afternoon. These times – known as the [golden hours](#) – feature soft, golden light that'll create long shadows and reveal plenty of subject detail.



For that reason, wildlife photographers, bird photographers, portrait photographers, and landscape photographers all love to work during the golden hours, and I'm betting you will, too. Making this one change – that is, committing to working at sunrise and sunset – can dramatically enhance your images!

Bonus: Photographing when the sun is low in the sky is a great way to avoid the intense summer heat.

2. Shoot fireflies at night



Fireflies are a classic summer insect, but they can be hard to photograph – unless you know a handy little technique.

You see, to photograph fireflies, you shouldn't try to capture *individual* insects. Instead, you should use a long exposure to photograph many fireflies over a few minutes (or hours).

So mount your camera on a tripod and point it toward a firefly hangout spot. Set the camera to **Bulb mode** (if your camera offers it). Then choose a lengthy **shutter speed**, one that will give the fireflies plenty of time to flit around your backyard. You might start at five minutes, but you can always increase or decrease the shutter speed depending on your results.

Your first images might be a bit subpar – poorly exposed, or featuring far too few fireflies – but keep trying. It can take a bit of trial and error to get it right, but if you put in the effort, you'll

end up with an absolute masterpiece!

3. Do an underwater photoshoot

Summer and water-based fun go hand in hand, so why not put together an **underwater photoshoot**?

For this summer photography idea, you'll need an underwater housing (or a waterproof camera). You'll also need swim gear; if you're doing a lengthy underwater shoot, then a snorkel or even scuba equipment is a good idea, but you can always start by holding your breath, diving, and shooting.



Underwater photography offers up lots of subjects and possible shots, including:

- Underwater landscapes
- Fish
- Light-and-water abstracts
- Underwater portraits

You'll need to pay careful attention to your **camera settings** – it's much darker beneath the water! – and if you find that you enjoy underwater photography, you may want to invest in an underwater flash.

4. Photograph the same subject for a week

Here's a fun summer photography idea, one that'll help your photos improve in leaps and bounds:

Pick a subject, such as a type of flower, a tree, a car, a landscape, or a person. Then photograph that same subject over and over again, each day for a week.

Try to vary the time and weather so you get plenty of unique opportunities as you head out each day. And don't use the same **compositions**, lighting, and settings each day. Mix it up!



If you shoot at midday on the first day, come back around sunset on the second day. And if you use a shallow **depth of field** on the third day, then use the fourth day to experiment with deep depth of field effects. Make sense?

Once the week is up, if you've enjoyed this challenge, you may wish to continue. Try photographing the same subject for a full month. You'll be amazed by how much your images improve!

5. Shoot during the evening



While the golden hours offer fantastic opportunities for summer photography, there's something special about waiting for the sun to dip below the horizon.

You see, just after sunset, we enter the enchanting realm known as the **blue hour**. During this time, a soft, ethereal light covers the world, creating a captivating atmosphere that can elevate your portraits, landscapes, street photos, and more.

Keep in mind, though, that illumination is pretty limited during this period. To ensure your shots remain sharp, it's crucial to employ a tripod or use a camera with exceptional low-light capabilities. You might need to widen your **aperture** significantly and crank up your **ISO** to get crisp, well-exposed results.

Pro tip: Try capturing shots that include streetlights. The combination of warm glowing lights and a purple-blue sky looks *amazing*.

6. Go minimalist



Forget the clutter and try **minimalism**, which is the key to capturing stunning summer photos that exude tranquility. It's all about embracing **negative space** and leaving areas full of nothingness – empty skies, stretches of water, etc. – in your shots.

During the summer, you have the perfect opportunity to play around with minimalist photography. Try photographing trees set against vast stretches of clear blue sky. Or head to the beach and focus on buoys or boats floating on expansive waters.

Don't be afraid to experiment with different compositions. While the **rule of thirds** can be helpful, let your creativity run wild. Play with the placement of your subject throughout the frame to give your photos a fresh and dynamic feel.

Also, be sure to shoot in all sorts of light. The golden hours are great for minimalistic summer photography, but you can get great results by working in the evening or even around noon on cloudy days.

So get ready to create captivating images that draw viewers into your tranquil summer scenes!

7. Photograph deliberately

Given the incredibly cheap cost of storage, it's often tempting to hold down that shutter button and shoot *constantly*.

But this "spray and pray" approach will simply result in hundreds – or even thousands – of photos, most of them bad. To find the good ones, you'll need to wade through all of your files, which can be a huge chore.



So instead of constantly tapping that shutter button, once you find a potential subject, take a deep breath. Ask yourself: Is my subject really worth photographing? Am I genuinely interested in this shot? Have I used the light and the composition to get the best possible results?

I'm not saying that you should never use your camera's burst mode. (In fact, as I explain in a later tip, fast shooting is highly useful if you're photographing birds, wildlife, sports, or even street subjects.)

But you should learn to work your burst mode *sparingly*. Only use it when absolutely necessary.



8. Play around with different focal lengths

The summer is a great time to enjoy the outdoors, and it's also a great time to explore different lenses.

Start by thinking about the lenses you used most frequently over the previous year. Then make a conscious effort to leave them at home.

And bring out your neglected lenses, the ones that sit on the shelf and rarely get much camera time.

Challenge yourself to take great photos with these neglected lenses. Put them in your bag, mount them on your camera, and see what you can come up with.



Working with different focal lengths is a great way to get out of your comfort zone, and it can help you produce highly creative images.

One tip, however: If you have a lot of unused lenses, just pick two or three and stick to those. Working with too many lenses will prevent you from really getting to know their specific focal lengths – and that will hold back your photos.

9. Enjoy some silhouette photography



What's the first thing that pops into your mind when you think of summer? For me, it's the mesmerizing beauty of a silhouette. So why not take advantage of the gorgeous weather and have a [silhouette photoshoot](#) or two?

You can start by capturing stunning silhouette portraits, but don't limit yourself. Let your creativity run wild! Try creating enchanting silhouettes of buildings, wildlife, people strolling down the streets, and more.

Now, here's the secret to nailing that perfect shot: Time it just right. Make the most of the early mornings or late evenings when the sun is low on the horizon. Position yourself strategically, with your subject between you and the bright sky.

When shooting silhouettes, make sure you expose for the background. That way, your foreground subject will turn out ultra-dark, while the sky will look wonderfully vibrant. And don't hesitate to click away, experimenting with different angles and adjusting the brightness levels until you achieve that magical balance. If you're shooting in RAW, you'll have even more flexibility in post-processing, allowing you to recover or remove details as needed.

10. Explore your local area



Summer weather is perfect for walking, jogging, hiking, biking, boating, and so much more.

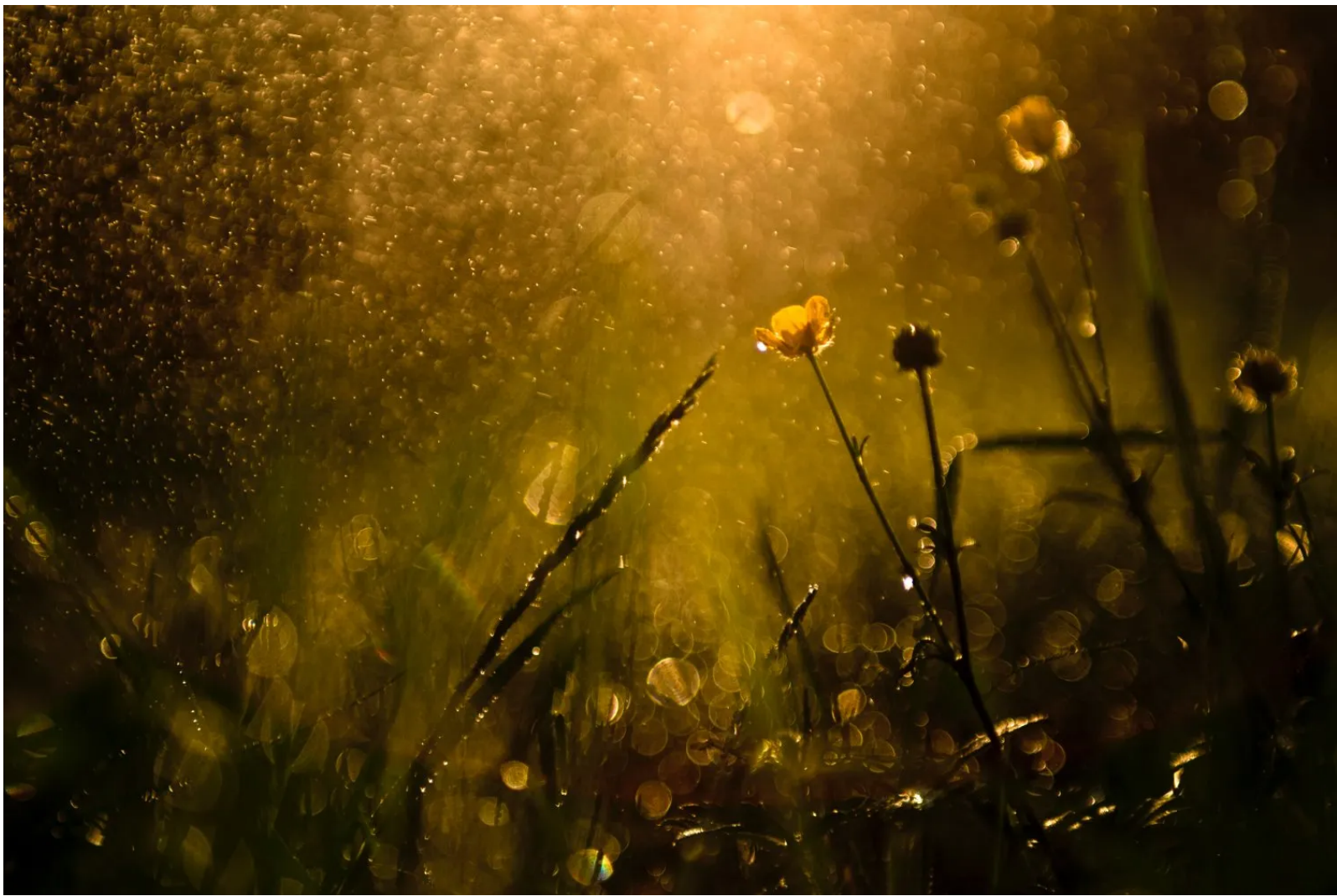
In other words, summer is the best time to head outside, have fun under the sun, and appreciate the power of nature.

That's why I recommend you spend at least half an hour every day exploring the area around your house. You might start by going on a walk or a bike ride. Then see where you end up!

If you have good parks in your area, consider taking a weekend camping trip. Be sure to take plenty of photos, and dedicate some time to getting off the beaten path.

Pro tip: If you're looking for places to photograph near your house, check Flickr, 500PX, or Instagram. You can simply search for your location, then scroll through the photos until you find something interesting. (If the location isn't fully disclosed in the image caption, you can always try messaging the photographer.)

11. Photograph in bad weather



Bad weather can be a bummer – if you were planning a summer cookout, that is. But if your goal is to do summer *photography*, then bad weather can actually be very helpful.

You see, bad weather causes the crowds to disperse, which means you can visit places that are normally bustling with people. It's a great way to get tourist-free shots of national-park classics, plus it can make for a more enjoyable experience.

Bad weather can also create interesting puddles, plenty of cloud drama, powerful light, and more – so the next time you sense bad weather, be sure to head outside!

Unfortunately, bad weather does tend to darken the sky, so you'll often need to shoot with a wide aperture, a high ISO, or a tripod. Otherwise, you'll risk camera blur.

Beaches are a great place to go right before or after a storm; the ominous clouds and rolling fog create ultra-dramatic scenes. You'll need to prepare for rain and/or strong winds, though. Consider carrying a waterproof cover – or using a DIY cover – to keep your gear dry. (And

whatever you do, don't change lenses in sandy, windy, or wet conditions! You don't want to end up with debris inside your camera or lens.)

12. Shoot the action



Summer is all about energy and adventure, with sports, swimming, and outdoor fun taking the stage. So why not have some fun capturing those thrilling events?

To achieve the best results, it's crucial to get your camera settings just right. Start by using a fast shutter speed to freeze the movement of your subjects. And shoot in **burst mode**; it'll let you fire off a rapid succession of shots.

With burst mode, you'll be able to capture those split-second instances that make your heart race. But don't go crazy and spray shots indiscriminately. Time your bursts carefully to capture the perfect compositions.

Keep in mind that while modern cameras are impressive, they have limits, and your unit probably can't capture an unlimited number of photos in a single burst; therefore, it's important to make sure you don't go overboard!

13. Do summer-themed portrait photoshoots



If you're into portrait photography, why not kick it up a notch and dive into the world of summer-themed photoshoots? You'll need to find a willing model – like a family member or a close friend – and I'd recommend thinking carefully about your location to really hone in on that summer theme.

Beaches are an obvious choice, but don't worry if you don't have one nearby. Parks can be just as fantastic. Alternatively, if you're up for it, you can explore the urban jungle by heading downtown.

Now, here's the secret sauce: Bring along a handful of props that scream summer vibes. Think sunglasses, flowers, colorful umbrellas, or even everyone's favorite treat: ice cream! These props will give your photos that extra oomph and help you capture the summer feeling. Imagine your model rocking a stylish pair of shades, playfully twirling an umbrella, or taking a delicious bite out of an ice cream cone. These little details can bring your photos to life and make them truly pop.

So get ready to make memories and snap some amazing summer-themed portraits that will leave everyone in awe!

Summer photography tips and ideas: final words

Now that you've finished this article, you're ready to have plenty of summer photography fun! It doesn't matter if you're a seasoned pro or just starting out with a camera in hand; these tips are perfect for anyone who wants to capture the essence of summer through their lens.

Remember that good light is your best friend. Pay attention to the sun, the clouds, and those magical golden hours. They hold the power to transform your images into mesmerizing works of art. Don't be afraid to wake up early or stay out late; the rewards are well worth it.

So grab your camera, chase the light, and let your creativity run wild. Explore new locations, experiment with different techniques, and don't be afraid to push your boundaries.

So follow the tips and ideas I've shared. Appreciate the weather. And good luck!

Now over to you:
