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Guide to... PHOTOGRAPHY

Caravanning holidays provide plenty of great memories, against a backdrop of the most spectacular landscapes – ideal for keen photographers! Here's how to snap stunning pictures, just like a pro, on your next tour

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Digital cameras

Making the most of your camera, and choosing the right kit and accessories for your needs

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CUT OUT
AND KEEP
GUIDE!



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Also available as a FREE ebook – see
www.practicalcaravan.com/know-how/ to download yours!



DIGITAL CAMERA GUIDE

Whether smartphone or DSLR, get to know your camera and you'll soon be taking your best ever photos!



DECIDING WHICH CAMERA to buy can be rather tricky. There are different camera types, manufacturers, features and prices to consider, but we believe it's not just about the camera, it's about knowing how to use it.

Each type of camera has its own set of pros and cons, and which one you choose will be dependent on what you're using the camera for and your past experience in photography.

If you simply want to catch quick shots on tour or take videos of a grandchild, a compact or smartphone will probably suit you. But those looking for large printouts and more advanced shooting options will need to look towards DSLRs.

No matter what you choose, with this guide, you'll get to know the key aspects of your camera and soon be taking amazing shots.

Symbols explained

	Delete – found on all cameras		Timer for self-portraits		Macro – for close-ups
	Playback – use to review photos		Image stabilisation		Sports – for fast action
	Flash – switch it on or off via this		Burst mode button		Landscapes – for wide angles
	Night time/low light scenes		Metering icon on pro cameras		Portrait – perfect for people
	Zoom in on your photos		Exposure compensation	M	Manual mode – for control
	Zoom out of your photos		Movie mode features		

Glossary

Aperture Affects the amount of your image that is in focus – the 'depth of field'

Shutter speed Fast speeds freeze action, while longer ones blur motion

ISO Refers to how sensitive the sensor is to light and makes low-light photos clearer

White balance Affected by ambient light around you, your camera can alter setting to ensure a natural colour result

Exposure A balanced exposure has detail in light and dark areas

Metering Refers to the way the camera reads the light in the scene

Focal lengths

Wide-angle Wider angle of view than normal, for example 28mm

Telephoto Magnified view of distant subjects, for example 200mm

LCD The screen on the rear of the camera

Megapixels Number of pixels on sensor, in millions

Viewfinder

Optical Shows you the view through the camera lens and is good for accurate framing

Electronic Shows view on an LCD in the viewfinder

DSLR

Digital single lens reflex camera

CSC

Compact system camera



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Accessories

- 1 Card reader**
You can pick these up cheaply for one card, but you'll pay more for multiple slots
- 2 Memory card**
Check which type your camera accepts before you buy
- 3 Connection**
Check that you have all the leads you need to connect your camera
- 4 Editing software**
Your camera usually comes with its own free editing program on a disc or as a digital download
- 5 Lens cloth**
Keep your camera clean. You could try a glasses cloth
- 6 Support**
A beanbag will keep shots steady while you decide on a tripod
- 7 Batteries**
Spare batteries are a must-have
- 8 Bag**
Protect your camera, card and any accessories with a camera bag



Camera types

SMARTPHONES

- Pros...**
- ✓ Light and compact
 - ✓ Cool app add-ons
 - ✓ Instant sharing
- Cons...**
- ✗ Small lens and sensor
 - ✗ Flattens perspective
 - ✗ Fewer features

Your smartphone can shoot, edit and share images instantly



FIXED LENS

- Pros...**
- ✓ Easy to use
 - ✓ Light and versatile
 - ✓ Lots of features
- Cons...**
- ✗ Fewer manual options
 - ✗ Can be slow
 - ✗ Less adaptable

Fixed lens cameras are easy to use and fairly cheap



Compact

INTERCHANGEABLE LENS

- Pros...**
- ✓ Great image quality
 - ✓ Fast shooting speed
 - ✓ Manual and auto
- Cons...**
- ✗ Can be expensive
 - ✗ Can be complex
 - ✗ Can be heavy

DSLRs and CSCs are expensive but have great image quality



DSLR

Modes



1 Auto

Your camera makes all of the decisions for you in this mode

4 Aperture priority

You control the aperture; camera controls all of the other settings

2 Scene

You select the type of scene, then the camera does the rest

5 Shutter priority

You control shutter speed, but your camera controls the other settings

3 Program

You have control over aspects like white balance, flash or ISO

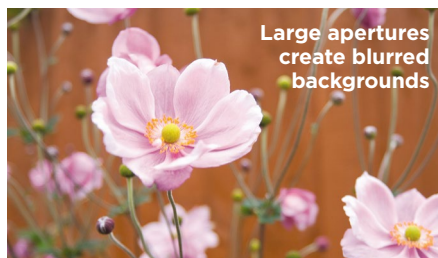
6 Manual

You decide on all of the camera settings



CAMERA JARGON BUSTER

What does it all mean? We take a moment to talk about key phrases you're likely to come across in photography



APERTURE

Aperture decides how much light is let into the camera, and is measured on a scale of f-numbers. This setting also dictates how much of the image is in or out of focus.

➤ **Small aperture** A small-sized aperture of f11, f16 or f22 keeps objects in the distance looking sharp.

➤ **Large aperture** Shooting with a large-sized aperture of f2, f2.8 or f4 will make objects in the distance appear out of focus, placing emphasis on the main subject closer to the lens.

➤ **Aperture priority mode** This lets you choose the aperture with which you need to shoot. The camera automatically controls other important settings during this process.

COLOUR CAST

Colour cast describes the tinting that an image may have due to the type of lighting used. This could be either due to wrong settings or for creative effect.

CONTRAST

Contrast is the vividness of the colours and tones in an image, and how much they stand out from subject to subject.



EXPOSURE

Exposure describes the amount of light that has entered the camera to form an image. This is dependent on camera settings being correctly balanced, so that enough light is captured for a perfect exposure.

➤ **Overexpose** If an image is overexposed, too much light has entered through the lens and the subject appears bleached out, or far too white.

➤ **Underexpose** Underexposure is when not enough light has entered the lens, and images look dull and lacklustre in their contrast and colour.

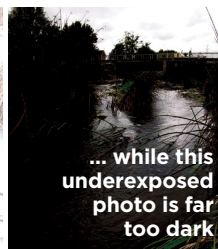
➤ **Long exposure** Light has been allowed to enter the camera for extended periods. This is usually used to create movement in landscape or sports photography.

FILTERS

Filters can be applied over the lens for replicating certain styles or effects. Some include colour, grain and lighting effects. A lot of compacts add in-camera filters.

FOCAL LENGTHS

Measured in millimetres, camera lenses have various focal lengths, used to zoom in or out on a subject. Focal lengths can be fixed, made to extend to huge distances, or to capture subjects close up.



➤ **Telephoto** Lenses that are telephoto are used to capture subjects in the distance. These lenses are popular with sports and wildlife photographers, using a lens with a focal length of 200-400mm, for example.

➤ **Wide-angle** Lenses that have a wide angle cover a very broad field of view. Focal lengths include 15-30mm; these are useful for landscape photography.

➤ **Fish-eye** Lenses that distort the scene you are shooting, in order to produce a sometimes abstract composition, almost creating a bubble effect. The focal lengths involved in fish-eye photography can be 10mm or less.

HDR

HDR stands for high dynamic range and describes an image that has strong details, lighting and colours throughout.

HISTOGRAM

A histogram such as the one shown below is used in photography to assess the lighting pattern through any given image. It shows which areas of the photograph are most inside the visible spectrum.

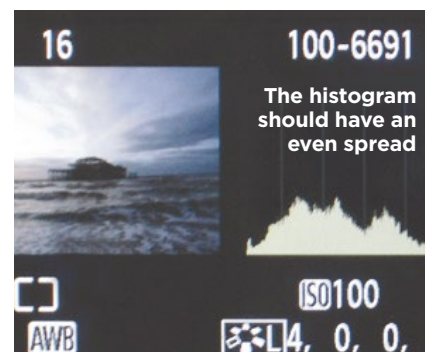




IMAGE STABILISATION

Either built into a lens or in-camera, image stabilisation counterbalances any unstable movement. This helps to reduce the amount of blur caused by hand movement.

ISO

This is how sensitive the camera sensor is to light, starting as low as ISO 64 (not very sensitive) and going up to ISO 3200 or above (very sensitive). Sensitive ISO ratings produce the most distortion.

JPG

JPG is used in all digital cameras to capture images in a compressed but high-resolution format. The images are portable, but they cannot be enlarged.

LIVE VIEW

Live View is available with DSLRs and allows you to use the camera screen to compose an image. This is instead of using the viewfinder.

MACRO

Macro is the art of capturing subjects at extreme closeness, creating heavy blurring in the process. Subjects can be larger than they are in real life.

MEGAPIXELS

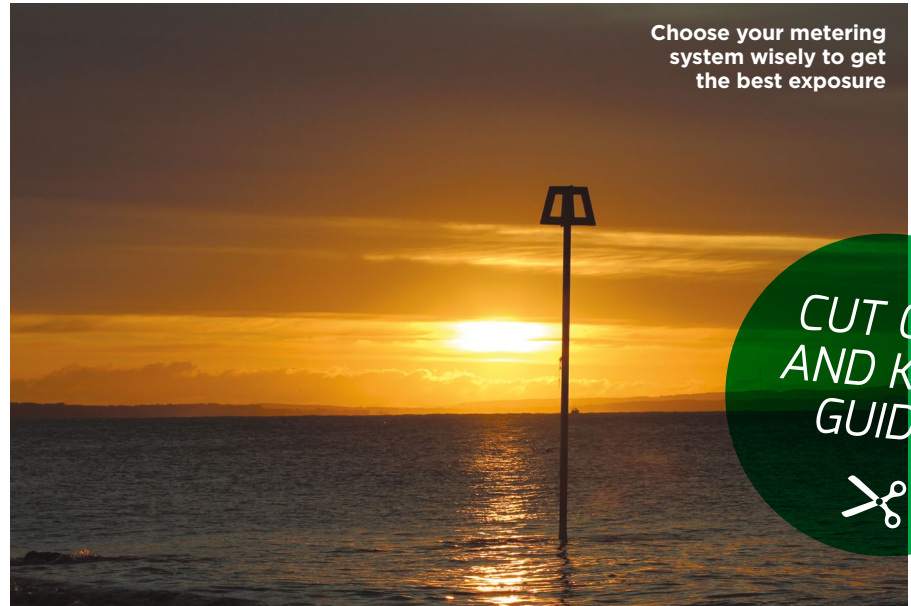
The number of pixels in an image is measured in megapixels (mp). The more megapixels, the larger the resolution and printable size of the photograph.

METERING

Metering is the way in which the camera analyses the lighting of the scene to make the exposure, for example, using just the central part, or an average. Metering modes are altered according to the scene and also the subject.

➤ **Spot or partial metering** In this setting, the camera takes a light reading from the centre of the scene and calculates the exposure. Light in the background is not considered.

➤ **Evaluative metering** This takes the entire scene's lighting into account to make the exposure. It's also ideal if you're not sure which setting to use, or the scene is constantly changing.



➤ **Centre-weighted metering** This system of metering is where the camera uses the most central part of the scene to calculate the exposure, as well as some of the surrounding light. It's halfway between spot and evaluative metering.

NOISE

Created by the lack of light in a scene, noise is the distortion of pixels mainly seen in the shadow areas of an image. Noise occurs with sensitive ISO ratings.

PRIME LENS

Lens with a single, 'fixed' focal length, with no zoom, for example 50mm. Popular for excellent build quality and advanced optics.

RAW

RAW images are uncompressed and high quality. They have a level of detail that is second-to-none in post-shoot editing. This is a standard feature of DSLRs.

SATURATION

The strength, or amount, of colour in an image is described as 'saturation'. A highly saturated image has unusually strong colour, and can look unnatural.

SD/SDHC/SDXC

Common memory cards that many compact and DSLR cameras use to store images. Measured in gigabytes, the larger the card size, the more photos you can shoot.

SHUTTER SPEED

Shutter speed is the length of time that the camera sensor is exposed to light. Measured in fractions of a second, fast speeds prevent blurring.

WHITE BALANCE

White balance is used to keep the colour of light in an image looking natural (as if it has been shot in daylight). Different types of white balance include tungsten, flash and fluorescent.

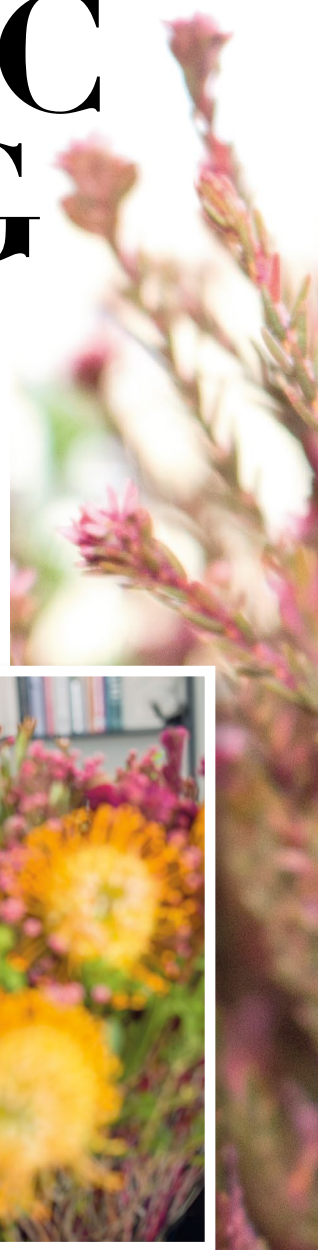


'The number of pixels in an image is measured in megapixels. The more megapixels, the larger the resolution and printable size of the photograph'



AUTOMATIC SHOOTING MODES

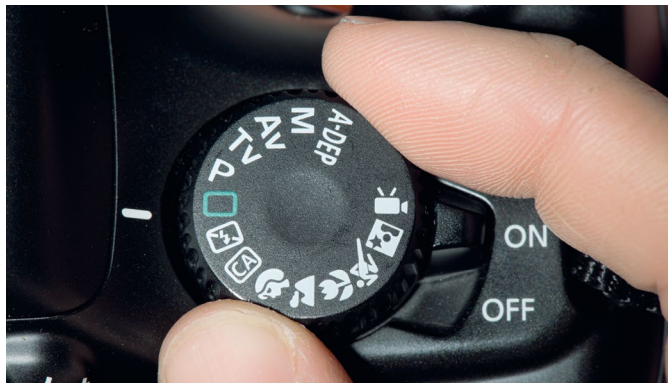
Get started quickly by giving your DSLR control of the basic settings and letting it do the hard work for you



WHEN YOU'RE READY to take a shot, you'll need to decide which shooting mode to use. There are multiple options available – including fully automatic, semi-automatic, manual and scene modes – which can be accessed via the mode dial on your camera's top plate. Right now the options might seem bewildering, not least because they're represented only by icons and letters, but we'll make it easy for you.

Full Auto mode is a good starting point for beginners. By handing over control of key settings to the camera, you can concentrate on careful framing. However, you will soon uncover its limitations.

We'd recommend you shoot with it until you feel comfortable taking pictures, then switch over to one of the more advanced shooting modes as you gain experience.



1 Select Auto

The Full Auto mode on a camera usually appears on the mode dial as a green rectangular icon, or something similar. Turn the dial around to this point to activate it. Make sure you're standing in a sturdy position, with your finger hovering over the shutter release, and your left arm tucked tightly into your body.



2 Focus carefully

Make sure your lens is set to its autofocus (AF) mode. Now your lens will take care of the focusing for you, as long as you half-press the shutter release, and you'll hear a beep when focus is achieved. In manual focus (MF), you are in complete control – simply turn the focus ring until your subject appears sharp.



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3 Flash light

If light levels drop when shooting in Auto mode, or you're taking pictures indoors, the pop-up flash will automatically engage to throw extra light on your subject. Flash is also useful when shooting a subject with dark shadows against a bright background, sometimes referred to as 'fill-in' flash, as used in the image above.



4 Take a different view

Now place your finger over the shutter button. Half-press the button to activate the autofocus and fully press the button down to take the shot. Try having a go at shooting a flower yourself, varying your angle of view, and zooming in and out, for more creative results. You could shoot just the centre of the flower, for example.

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COMPOSITION

Divide the scene laid out before you into sections, and you can create a more pleasing photographic composition

1 How to use the rule of thirds

The rule of thirds can be used in all genres of photography, but you'll find it especially useful for landscapes (p92).

By splitting the scene into virtual thirds, vertically and horizontally, you can balance the composition, carefully positioning your main point of interest (a tree in the example below) on a point where the lines intersect, to draw the viewer's eye into the scene.

You should also aim to split the sky and the ground in this way, including either one-third ground to two-thirds sky, or vice versa.

If you're shooting on a day when there are good colours in the sky, or some interesting clouds above, for example, it would be best to include two-thirds of sky.



In this image, the tree is in the centre and the sky and the ground are evenly divided



Here, the eye is led through the space and the ratio of sky to land is more pleasing



How does the rule of thirds work?

Artists and photographers use the rule of thirds to enhance their compositions, because it really works. But how?

If you place your main subject in the middle of the frame, it will appear static – you create empty surrounding space that is rarely interesting. By using the rule of thirds, however, you use the space more effectively and draw the eye through the image.

Use the rule of thirds to divide the sky and the ground, and you'll find the ratio of light (sky) and dark (ground) is more effective. Generally, this comes down to the fact that we don't like to view things in equal measures. But rules are made to be broken, so experiment with composition and see what works for you in any given scene.

2 Frame it up

When you arrive on location, have a good look around before you even think about taking your camera out of the bag. Take your time and consider the space you're working with, moving around to decide the best vantage point to shoot from.

Use your fingers to mock up a frame so you can see what works – and what doesn't. Many photographers return to a particular location on multiple occasions, in different light, to get the results that they're after.



3 Don't forget to take a tripod

A tripod is a must-have accessory for all landscape photographers. When capturing scenic shots, you'll often be shooting in low light at the start or the end of the day, or using small aperture settings to capture as much of the scene as possible in focus, so you'll need to use a slow shutter speed.

This makes it impossible to obtain sharp shots when the camera is handheld. Using a tripod helps get composition right, as it forces you to slow down and think about how your subject works in the frame.

The way to get better results is to shoot, review, tweak, then shoot again. This might take a few tries, so keep practising.

4 Use Live View to compose

Live View is an excellent feature that's guaranteed to help you when it comes to composition.

The Live View feature on most DSLRs comes with a grid overlay option, which you can use to apply the rule of thirds.

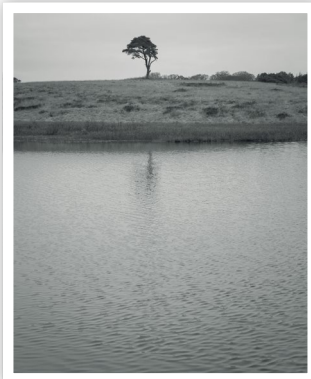
Simply line up the horizon in the top or bottom third and place your main subject at a point that is positioned one-third of the way in – this is a simple, yet very effective, set-up.





Include eye-catching foreground interest

Strengthen your landscape compositions by including some elements in the foreground of your images that will be of intrinsic interest



It's simple to make a rather static view appear much more dramatic



1 Now add some interest

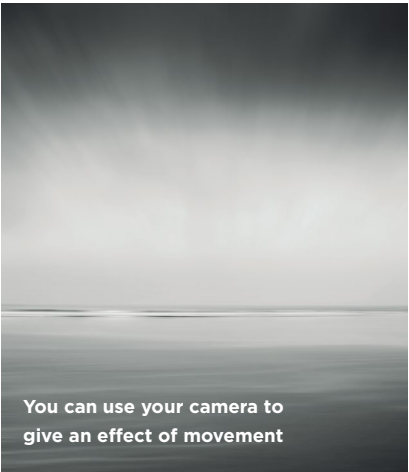
It might seem obvious, but placing something of interest in the foreground of your image really does work, catching the viewer's eye and leading it on through the frame. Shots with no foreground interest are very boring.

By simply lowering the viewpoint and including something in the foreground, negative space can be filled, and the resulting photograph will be far more pleasing.

3 Don't be afraid to use negative space

We've mentioned the term negative space, and despite this sounding like a bad thing – and in some cases it is – there are times when it can be used to create an effective, minimal result.

In this monochrome seascape, for example, we've created movement and atmosphere by dragging the camera across as we opened the shutter. This can work particularly well in a coastal location such as this, where you are trying to capture a large open space.



You can use your camera to give an effect of movement



Slowing your shutter speed creates a soft, milky effect over expanses of water

2 Make water look more interesting

When shooting large areas of water, you can create the kind of soft, milky effect used by landscape pros, simply by slowing your shutter speed (creating a longer exposure).

This is a great way to illustrate movement in water – whether you're shooting the sea, waterfalls or fast-moving rivers – but also in dramatic overhead clouds on a windy day. It's this kind of technique that elevates images from simple to stunning.

4 Landscape versus portrait

In landscape photography, it's easy to get into the habit of shooting everything in a landscape orientation; that is, with your camera in its normal shooting position.

However, in some situations, you'll get better, stronger results simply by turning your camera to a portrait orientation, as shown here. Now you can capture an entirely different view of a scene, emphasising vertical lines and features that lead the eye into the image.



Portrait orientation provides a more creative composition

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SHOOTING LANDSCAPES

Learn how to compose eye-catching landscape images on your next tour!

COMPOSITION CAN MAKE or break an image, so don't rush when framing your photo. A well-structured landscape should be balanced and eye-catching enough to draw you into the frame, which is why it's worth getting to grips with the traditional composition rules we've outlined below.

Familiarising yourself with what works will help guide you on your next shoot and ensure you get better landscape images as a result. That being said, don't be afraid to experiment with composition.

Originality is key to getting your work noticed, so break a few a rules and try composing your next image from a unique viewpoint or perspective, especially if you're shooting at a popular landscape location.



Lack of structure

Lead-in lines should always draw you into the photo and up to the focal point, but in this image they lead you out, which means the subject is lost in the background

Top four rules to master

Discover the secrets behind a strong composition

Traditional composition rules have been followed by professional photographers for many years, which is why it's important for beginners to understand how they work and why you should use them.

We've outlined four of the best rules here, which can immediately help to set you on your way to becoming a better landscape photographer.



Rule of thirds

Use the camera's grid lines, which divide the scene into thirds, and position your focal point on one of the intersecting points with the horizon appearing straight along the top or bottom line.



Lead-in lines

Lead-in lines are designed to draw your eye further into a photo. It's important to ensure that they are leading inwards towards a focal point or the centre of the frame, as opposed to away.



Balanced composition
Rule of thirds (p90) adds structure and emphasises the focal point in the background. The stone wall gives a more three-dimensional feel



Framing the view
Look for unique natural or constructed frames to photograph a landscape through. Always use wide aperture, though, and ensure you focus on the landscape within the background.



Foreground interest
If there's a lot of detail in the background of your landscapes, balance the frame by also including a subject within the foreground, whether it's flowers, rocks or even a built structure.

Photo hacks for great vistas

Handy tricks to ensure you get great shots on tour



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Filter the frame
A quick fix for achieving good exposure in bright conditions is to position your sunglasses in front of the lens. This works in a similar way to an ND filter



Find support
If you're caught short without a tripod on an impromptu landscape shoot and need to steady your camera, position it on a nearby secure structure, such as a wall



Steady your tripod
Affordable tripods can be a bit lightweight, especially in windy weather. Keep it steady by attaching your camera bag to the central column, to help weigh it down



Use self-timer mode
Use your camera's built-in self-timer to release the shutter when using slower shutter speeds. This will help you to eliminate all possibility of camera shake



PICTURE PERFECT

Whether you're looking to capture a jaw-dropping view or snap a candid street scene, here are some inspiring places to grab those top shots

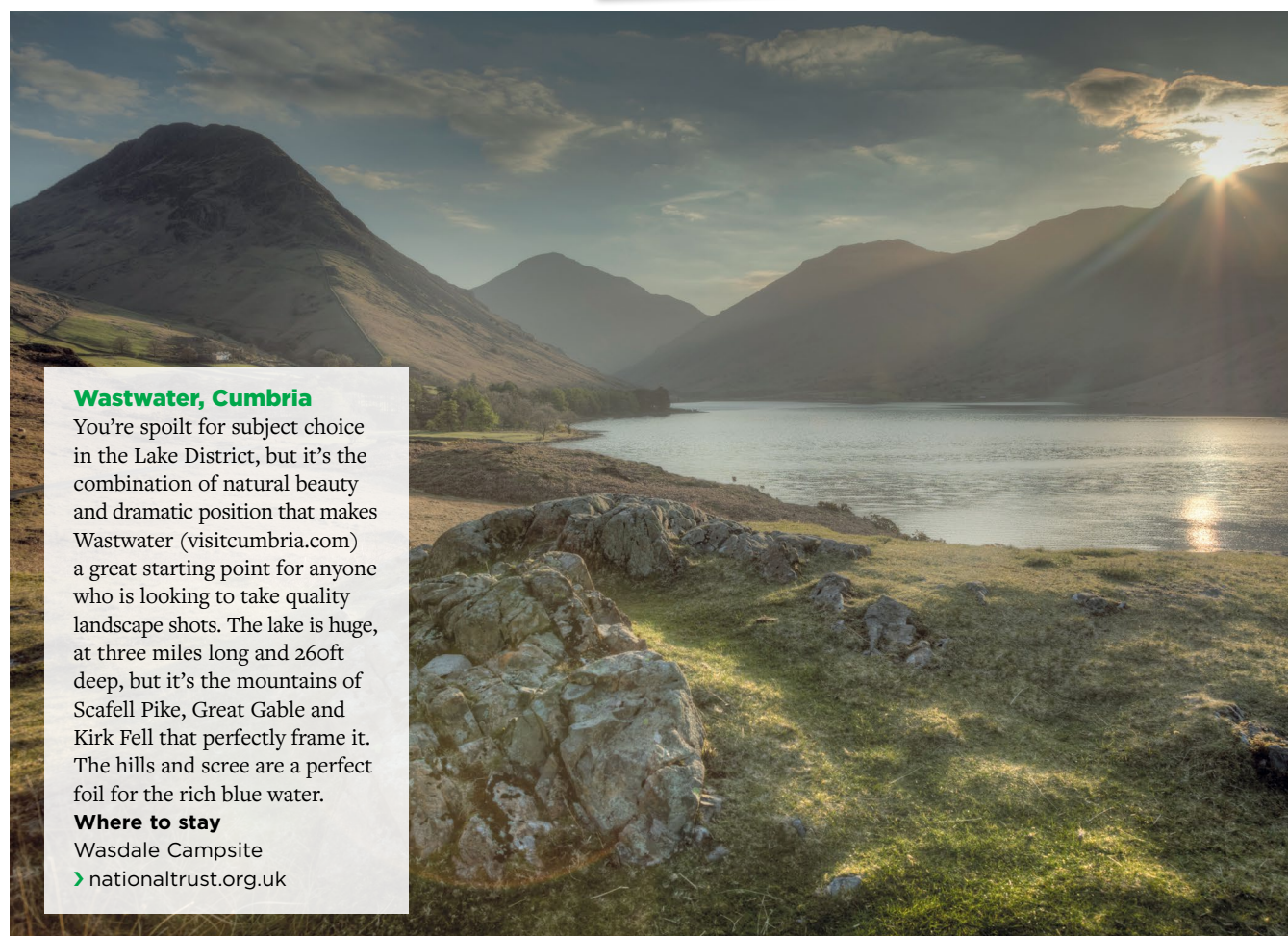
Whitby, North Yorkshire

Positioned as it is on the North Yorkshire coast and with its literary connections to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Whitby (www.visitwhitby.com) has an alluring quality that presents a fun challenge for snappers seeking to capture its unique atmosphere. The Gothic architecture of its buildings makes a great starting point, and you're highly likely to discover a Goth or two wandering the streets, particularly during the Whitby Goth Weekend in October. However, for sheer drama, historic Whitby Abbey is hard to beat.

Where to stay Sandfield House Farm Holiday Park
www.sandfieldhousefarm.co.uk



VisitBritain



Wastwater, Cumbria

You're spoilt for subject choice in the Lake District, but it's the combination of natural beauty and dramatic position that makes Wastwater (visitcumbria.com) a great starting point for anyone who is looking to take quality landscape shots. The lake is huge, at three miles long and 260ft deep, but it's the mountains of Scafell Pike, Great Gable and Kirk Fell that perfectly frame it. The hills and scree are a perfect foil for the rich blue water.

Where to stay
 Wasdale Campsite
nationaltrust.org.uk

VisitBritain/Rod Edwards

Portmeirion, North Wales

Italophiles who have been missing their fix in the pandemic will delight in this Italianate-designed village (portmeirion. wales), built by architect Clough Williams-Ellis in the 20th century.

Colour-washed buildings surround a Mediterranean-style piazza and there's a 70-acre sub-tropical forest with 20 miles of paths. Fans of cult 60s TV series *The Prisoner* can also recreate scenes from the popular programme.

Where to stay

Tyddyn Llwyn
Camping, Caravan
& Touring Park
➤ tyddynllwyn.com



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VisitBritain/Andrew Pickett



Rye, East Sussex

For something a bit less primeval, but no less charming, the Sussex town of Rye has much to offer the keen photographer. Subjects range from cute teashops and historic inns to cobbled streets and ancient churches.

The Mermaid Inn, in exquisitely cobbled Mermaid Street, is hugely popular, with its giant fireplace and cosy nooks and crannies. You'll also find nearby Camber Sands a great spot for landscape shots of grassy dunes with the English Channel in the background.

Where to stay

Rye Harbour Holiday Park
➤ www.parkholidays.com

St Michael's Mount, Cornwall

This tidal island (www.stmichaelsmount.co.uk) with its own castle and gardens, is achingly pretty and offers countless photo ops. The magical shot, of course, is the alluring causeway, which can be crossed at low tide. Alternatively, you could take a boat trip, which provides plenty of other scenic views.

Aficionados might consider completing the set by taking some mirror images at St Michael's sister island, Mont-Saint-Michel, in Normandy, France.

Where to stay

Mount's Bay Caravan Park
➤ www.mountsbay-caravanpark.co.uk



VisitBritain/Ben Selway





Edinburgh, Scotland

Scotland's capital has something for everyone – dramatic views from Arthur's Seat, and the Old Town, with its impressive castle and Royal Mile, featuring cobbled streets and smart tenements.

It's also home to the world's best comedy festival and a hub for street theatre and historic military displays. Photographers will revel in the sheer diversity of subjects – be sure to snap the firing of the One o'Clock Gun.

Where to stay

Edinburgh C&M Club Site

➔ www.caravanclub.co.uk



VisitBritain/Andrew Pickett



VisitBritain/Ben Selway

The Dark Hedges, Northern Ireland

Most of the places featured here offer multiple subjects, but this one is all about the unusual, cinematic avenue of beech trees used to great effect in TV series *Game of Thrones*. The episode in question, 'The Kingsroad', features Arya Stark travelling by cart on the road.

The challenge here for photographers is capturing something unique at a site that has been pictured so often. Make use of the mist for really atmospheric shots.

Where to stay

Drumaheglis Holiday Park and Marina

➔ www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/caravan-parks/drumaheglis-marina-and-caravan-park

Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland

Another causeway – many would say *'the causeway'* – this iconic site (discovernorthernireland.com) is made up of some 40,000 black basalt columns that rise from the sea and were formed by volcanic activity around 50 million years ago.

Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this place has been the stuff of myths and legends for millennia. It is also one of the most photographed scenes in Northern Ireland – the hexagonal geology making a truly wonderful subject.

Where to stay Ballyness Caravan Park

➤ www.ballynesscaravanpark.com

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VisitBritain/Ben Selway

Oxford, England

One of the UK's most popular spots, there's little to add about Oxford other than that it remains as delightful as ever. The colleges and River Isis are the most popular places and the most photogenic – it's hard to beat a shot taken on a sun-dappled afternoon of punters on the river watched by people taking a drink at one of the city's many riverside pubs. The most beautiful colleges include Merton, Balliol, Christ Church and Magdalen, and don't forget Hertford Bridge, otherwise known as the Bridge of Sighs.

Where to stay Oxford Camping and Caravanning Club Site

➤ www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk



VisitBritain/Peter Beavis

Loch Ness, Scotland

Scotland is a photographer's dream (especially when the rain holds off) and for pure beauty, atmosphere and the possibility of something special, Loch Ness (visitinvernesslochness.com) is hard to beat. Capturing that morning mist is the technical challenge to which serious snappers will have to rise. And the dream shot?

Well, romantics will say Nessie is out there just waiting to be captured on camera!

Where to stay Loch Ness Shores Camping and Caravanning Club Site

➤ www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk



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WE HOPE YOU'VE enjoyed the photography special in this issue of *Practical Caravan*, and if you'd like to take your photography to the next level, then don't miss the opportunity to download your two free photography bookazines!

Each 196-page digital bookazine is packed with brilliant hints, tips and advice on how to get the best photographs possible, whether you are out and about on tour with your camera, or simply enjoying the view in your own back garden. Here's what you'll get:

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Teach yourself Photography explains all of the photography concepts beginners need, such as how to balance exposures, how to obtain sharp shots, and how to maximise image quality.

Once you've got to grips with these basics, you can move on to the more advanced skills section at the end of the book, featuring practical guides showing you how to shoot a range of core subjects. Take your photography to the next level and start learning today!

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Outdoor photography is one of the most rewarding areas in which a photographer can specialise, but battling with the elements and capturing movement also make this one of the most challenging genres. *Teach yourself Outdoor Photography* tackles everything from landscapes and seascapes to wildlife and nature, as well as sports and action photography. Discover great tips and tricks to create images you'll be proud of.



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If you've been inspired by the photography pages in this issue, we'd love to see your pics! Simply visit www.practicalcaravan.com/win to submit yours – three entries will win a year's subscription to *Practical Caravan* and feature in an upcoming issue of the magazine.

Make sure your entries reach us no later than 11.59pm on 3 September 2021; full terms and conditions are on the website. Good luck!