

Be a Tourist in Your Hometown

Sometimes the best way to see the world is to approach it as if you're seeing it for the first time. If you want to explore daily, it's essential to genuinely love the place you photograph. We often get bogged down by the idea that our hometown is boring, thinking there's no potential to make interesting pictures. But what if we could turn our everyday surroundings into paradise? Here's how I make my hometown feel like a whole new world.

Make Your City Paradise

One of my favorite ways to experience my hometown, **Philadelphia**, is as a tourist. Every day, I stop by the **tourist center** at Independence Hall—not just to use the restroom or browse the gift shop, but to embrace the excitement and curiosity that tourists bring to my city. Watching the displays about Philadelphia's history or seeing the reenactors dressed as Benjamin Franklin reminds me of the beauty and richness of my surroundings. Embracing this mindset lets me see familiar streets with fresh eyes, discovering new details and nuances every day.

The Tourist Technique

Adopting the tourist approach has another advantage: it makes you blend in. When you look like a tourist, people don't question why you're taking photos. They assume you're capturing the city for the first time. Here's how I use the "tourist technique" in my photography:

- **Pretend You're Photographing the Background:** Act like you're focusing on something other than your true subject. For example, when people walk through **City Hall**, I'll pretend to be photographing the tunnel or architecture behind them. People think you're just admiring the scenery, and you get candid, natural expressions.

- **Use the Look-Up, Look-Down Trick:** This one's simple but effective. I'll start by looking up, pretending to admire and photograph a building, and then casually bring the camera down to capture the people in front of me. This movement looks natural, and people assume I'm focused on the surroundings instead of them.

Keep Curiosity Alive

The idea is to walk with your intuition at the forefront. **Let your curiosity guide you** and lead you to new places, even on the most familiar streets. The beauty of photography is that it allows you to reframe the ordinary as something extraordinary. With a tourist's mindset, you begin to appreciate the mundane—the signs, textures, and buildings—like never before. Each new discovery feels like an adventure, as if you're uncovering a hidden side of your hometown.

Approach Like a Tourist Every Day

Remember that the camera is a tool, a passport to new experiences. When you head out with your camera, don't hold preconceived notions of what you'll find. **Enter the Zen zone** and let yourself explore with an open mind. Whether you're photographing the vibrant scenes on Market Street or the quiet corners of suburban parks, treat each photograph as a way to ask questions about your world.

Key Benefits of the Tourist Mindset:

- **Stay Motivated:** Seeing the city with fresh eyes keeps you inspired to go out and shoot regularly.
 - **Blend In:** Acting like a tourist allows you to capture candid shots without standing out.
 - **Discover Details:** Embrace the small details—textures on walls, the withering of trees, or the architecture of old buildings.
 - **Find Joy in the Everyday:** Every street, every corner can become part of your creative process, allowing you to enjoy the journey rather than focus on the destination.
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Go Out There and Be a Tourist

Explore daily and make your city paradise. Treat each day as an opportunity to see the world anew. Remember, it's not about reaching a final "destination" in photography, but about embracing the process itself. So, grab your camera, walk with curiosity, and see what your hometown has to offer. Embrace the playful spirit of a tourist and find beauty everywhere.