

Winter Photography

Clothing

- Hooded waterproof wind breaker, large enough to protect your camera and extra batteries/film
- Layers of clothing to match the weather
- Thermal underwear or “long johns” for really cold days
- Comfortable and waterproof boots that won’t slip on snow and ice
- Thicker pair of socks on top of your normal ones
- Thin, warm pair of gloves so you can set the controls on your camera in the cold
- Pair of waterproof mittens when not shooting
- Hat that covers your ears
- Sunglasses when the sun is shining

Equipment

- Camera
- If raining or snowing, put camera into plastic bag with lens poking out and rubber band around the lens to seal bag around the camera. Could also try underwater camera (e.g., Digital Concepts Aqua Shot, Frog Eye, Sealife, Snap Sights, Suprema, Minolta, Bonica, Nikonos).
- Extra batteries (alkaline if possible)
- Extra film or memory cards
- Tripod

Shooting Techniques

- When you step into the cold, a fog may appear on your lens. Wait a couple minutes and let the optics adjust to the temperature.
- Avoid breathing on your lens or viewfinder; the condensation could freeze. If snow gets on your lens, brush it off, not blow it off.
- Snow covered landscapes will fool the exposure meter in your camera. Generally, overexpose by 1 to 2 stops (+1 or +2). The brighter it is, the more you’ll need to overexpose if you want white snow. Read your camera manual on how to overexpose with your camera. You may have to set it on manual.
- To brighten subjects in the foreground of snow scenes and to reduce contrast, use flash. Or use a white reflector to fill in shadows.
- Snow will have blue color on bright sunny days, orange or red color at dawn and dusk. Some people like these colors. If you want to make the snow white, use color correction filter. Auto settings on digital cameras also tend to correct this color shift.
- When done shooting in very cold weather, put camera into ziplock plastic bag until camera warms up.

Shooting Opportunities

- Winter gives you photo opportunities that are completely different from other seasons.
- Early morning and late afternoon sunlight generates beautiful warm colors on the snow.
- Subjects that contrast with the snow stand out. Look for those unusual outlines or spots of color.
- Take dramatic night snow scenes by the light of the moon.
- Photograph playful dogs in the snow, horses in a pasture, colorful birds at a feeder, or wild animals in a forest. Avoid black or dark subjects which will be underexposed against the white snow.
- Take photos of kids dressed colorfully and playing in the snow.
- If you are by the water, take shots of interesting frozen surfaces and designs.
- “Frame” buildings with fresh snow-covered branches.
- Try close-ups of frosted subjects, such as windows or tufts of grass.

Adapted from the following writers and their web articles:

Joanna Gerber: <http://betterdigitalphotography.blogspot.com/2005/01/beauty-of-winter-photography.html>

Peter Marshall: <http://photography.about.com/cs/techniques/a/aa020204.htm>

Tom Pidgeon: <http://www.photo-seminars.com/Seminars/Winter/winter.htm>

Philip Tulin: <http://www.outdooreyes.com/photo18.php3>