

Bryan Peterson's Understanding Photography Field Guide: How to Shoot Great Photographs with Any Camera

by

Bryan Peterson



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Synopsis

Everything you need to know in one take-anywhere field guide! This all-in-one guide from renowned photographer, instructor, and author Bryan Peterson will help you take better photos anytime, anywhere—with any camera. Want to finally understand exposure? Interested in learning to "see" and composing your images more creatively? Ready to master the magic of light? It's all here, the techniques every amateur photographer needs to take better nature, landscape, people, and close-up photos. You'll even get creative techniques, like making "rain" and capturing "ghosts," and practical advice on gear, equipment, and postprocessing software. Filled with Bryan's inspirational photographs, this is the one essential guide for every camera bag.

Sort review

About the Author BRYAN PETERSON is a professional photographer, an internationally known instructor, and the best-selling author of *Understanding Exposure*, *Understanding Shutter Speed*, *Learning to See Creatively*, *Understanding Digital Photography*, and *Beyond Portraiture*. In addition, he is the founder of the online photography school *The Perfect Picture School of Photography* (www.ppsop.com). He lives in Chicago.

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Look inside the book

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Understanding Exposure, Fourth Edition: How to Shoot Great Photographs with Any Camera
Bryan Peterson's Understanding Composition Field Guide: How to See and Photograph Images with Impact
Learning to See Creatively, Third Edition: Design, Color, and Composition in Photography
Understanding Exposure: How to Shoot Great Photographs with a Film or Digital Camera (Updated Edition)
Understanding Close-Up Photography: Creative Close Encounters with Or Without a Macro Lens

What people say about this book

Ryan E. Duncan, "The New Standard - Absolutely Stunning Photos. I have owned many photography books over the years and Bryan Peterson's "Understanding Photography Field Guide" will be the book I pack with me from here on out. The book is organized into the 11 chapters detailed below and each chapter is organized into smaller sections which help you seek out the specific topics you want to review.

- 1) A Few Digital Basics - Chapter topics range from file format and shooting in RAW to a gem of a section on white balance that explained better in 2 pages how this setting can really improve my photos than anything else I have come across in the past.
- 2) Exposure - Topics in this chapter include exposure explanations, the photographic triangle, creative exposures, and more. Bryan is a master at de-mystifying exposure and you will improve your photography with this chapter.
- 3) Aperture - This chapter does much more than just explain the effects of proper aperture settings, Bryan teaches you how aperture helps you tell the story you intend to with the photo.
- 4) Shutter Speed & ISO - This chapter offered one of the best explanations of how ISO effects your photos I have found since being introduced to digital photography and I find the section on "motion in low light" to be very good. Bryan also explained the relationship between aperture and shutter speeds in an easy to understand and apply in the field format.
- 5) Learning To See - This chapter covers a lot of ground on lenses and selecting the right lens for the right shot. Advice sections such as "shooting up" and "looking down" are helpful if you are looking for new ways to shoot but the photos included throughout the book are the best way to get new ideas for framing your shots.
- 6) Designing A Striking Image - This chapter is the largest in the book and covers more than I can go into. Suffice it to say that this chapter is all about composition, choosing your subject, getting creative, etc. These kinds of chapters have always been inspiring to me because the photos are amazing and Bryan does not let you down here. If you aren't motivated to get up and grab your camera after reading these sections you should probably put it down for good.
- 7) The Importance Of Light - This chapter covers a lot of ground from the best light, to low light, to backlight, etc. I found the material on exposure settings for various light conditions helpful and I was surprised that HDR exposure was covered in the detail it was...though not enough to start shooting HDR in my opinion. It seems as though you would still want to buy an HDR book to get into that in earnest.
- 8) Close-Up Photography - This chapter is a pretty good introduction to macro and it did answer many questions I have had. I have been flirting with getting more into macro and this chapter has helped me get just a little bit closer to making the investment.
- 9) Photographing People - This chapter is really about being a more professional, courteous photographer when people are the subject. This is the smallest chapter at just 7 pages and Bryan uses most of them to play armchair psychologist at getting people to like you taking their picture so you can get the best photos possible.
- 10) Unconventional Techniques - This chapter covers various "tricks of the trade" such as "making rain" or unusual ways to mount your camera and it will only really be useful on a lazy weekend day when you can't find anything else to do or

photograph. Fun info here but basically a bonus chapter.11) Useful Tools - Here is the chapter that every photo book has and it basically feeds the gear addiction...tripods, filters, and more...It is impossible to get into all of the details that you will find in this book, and at 400 pages you will not be short of info to learn from and grow as a photographer.A couple other comments about the book itself...it is very high quality with good, heavy, high gloss paper that make the photos really pop of the pages. The book is very well built too and I can see that it will last for many years to come being lugged around in my camera bag and on trips. Also, this has to be the most compact and small 400 page book I have ever seen which is great because I do want to carry it with me when I go.And the photos...they are simply spectacular. I have found myself just flipping through the pages to look at the photos and that can be just as instructive as the text in my opinion. Bryan has selected excellent examples to demonstrate his topics/lessons and all of the photo captions have detail about the photo's exposure settings which I like because it helps reinforce the lessons being taught.I do not think anyone will be disappointed with this book and unless you are a seasoned pro already you will learn and grow as a photographer when you read and re-read this book's thorough chapters.”

LJ, “A Real "Field Guide" for Photographers Wanting to Improve Their Craft. This is one of the first photography books I got after getting my first DSLR camera. I was taught photography with a fully manual (TTL light meter) SLR camera in the early 80s, so much of manual photography was still in the dim recesses of my mind and came back to the forefront rather readily.I probably was very comfortable with Bryan Peterson's lack of flash usage because I share his love of natural light. He addresses flash briefly in two places. In his three pages discussing white balance (where he says the reason he uses cloudy white balance is because he seldom, if ever, shot interiors because he is a natural-light photographer, and a "field guide" was meant for work outdoors) and when he glowingly recommends a ring flash for macro and close-up photography (he also explains the difference between macro and close-up photography).This book also introduced me to something that was outside of my experience in digital point-and-shoot OR film photography: shooting in RAW. Developing the comfort level to do that was a definite improvement in my style and what I could do with a photograph. I was no longer "stuck" with the best guess of the camera manufacturer in my settings, or even with my best hopes in my menu choices - I had an image I could repeatedly adjust non-destructively in post. To think - I bought a DSLR hoping to be able to have more manual control over things I used to have control of in a manual SLR and ended up also having much more functionality in post!One thing that is not gone over clearly that would have been more helpful for the point and shoot crowd is the fact that they are shooting with a much smaller sensor and that it does change many things, including low light sensitivity and noise levels. However, the recommendations regarding light usage, using reflectors and composition relate for ANY camera and situation, and are all good recommendations.My aim is to create images good enough for microstock, and this book is a helpful start when it comes to creating compelling images. The author's constant

encouragement towards "creative" management of the photographic triangle (ISO, shutter speed and aperture) as well as working the subject as many ways as possible (much more affordable in this digital age - your biggest worry is running out of hard drive space if you aren't willing to "kill more of your darlings," to quote a Stephen King editing suggestion) really do a lot to make you think as you are framing your subject - what is the NEXT way I should look at this? I would recommend this book to any beginning, amateur or hobbyist photographer looking to improve their pictures and better understand what makes the difference between a "good" snapshot and a "great" photograph. On the look and quality side - this book is GORGEOUS, sturdy enough to have lived up to my hours of reading it and the various photography trips lugging it around most of this year so far (about eight months). Granted, I am careful and kind to books, but it has had rougher treatment than most. The only book harder used was my camera's manual. It, of course, was only paper and is pretty sad looking at this point. I have a book about how to enter the stock photography market and the image quality in that book is so poor that I really don't see much difference between the author's "noisy" and "not noisy" images. That is NOT a problem with this book - the pictures are absolutely beautiful. If you know you could learn more about photography and can't buy EVERY single book out there, start with this one. When you're finished you might find you don't need any others."

Jaz, "Easy to Follow. I took up photography again about four years ago after a long break, so changing to a DSLR camera via film and compact camera and then recently upgrading my DSLR. I had reached a point where my images were good enough for local camera clubs but I was finding it hard to progress without getting the results I wanted all the time. This book along with a few others have helped enormously. It is very easy to read and understand and is written in bite sized chunks, perfect to read digest and put into action. I have been surprised to find that part of my problems were due to the fact that since using digital I have not ever before fully understood the exposure triangle and its effect on depth of field, movement, sharpness etc. This has been very easy to take in properly in this book. I think perhaps some reviewers have been misled by the words Field Guide, as I said it is written in bite sized chunks so very easy to put into practice after reading a small section at home before moving on to the next. It is probably aimed at the photographer who is used to their camera and wants to move on and recap some of the fairly basic manual functions, why they use them and the results they can achieve. The author offers lots of useful hints along the way. I have not finished reading this guide yet as it is so easy to pick up, then practice before returning to it and moving on to something else."

ian russell, "Perfect Handbook for the Improving Amateur. This is a compact handbook written for the improving amateur photographer who wants to use the manual setting on their camera, and understand better control of the photo making process. The things that appeal to me about this book are; its size. It's compact enough for travelling with but not too small for showing off images. I have a few manuals already, and have read a few more, but they've all been a larger

format. This one is much more practical for carrying around, with my camera, taking on holiday, in a backpack or hand luggage, and also, I imagine, being easier to read while in transit. The photos. Despite the size, the images don't seem to suffer much. Mostly they are well-chosen examples illustrating each point covered. Many, in my view, are outstanding and inspirational. The writing style. Different but, after I settled into it, I find his words engaging and very readable. I first came across one of his books by chance in the library; *Understanding Exposure*. Having used a camera for several years, and feeling I'd become uninspired, and fed-up with photoshopping - a better understanding of exposure seemed to be what was needed. I'd not heard of Bryan Peterson before so reading his words for the first time was a bit of a culture shock, he doesn't write like any other photographer-author I'd read. It's a very informal style, almost conversational. It didn't sound like the dry, often boring, report-like statements I'd found in every other camera book I'd read. He cuts out the dreary science-speak and gives you what you really wanted to know - simply, what to do and why. In addition to the explanations, there are occasionally suggested "exercises" to help with understanding and/or to help with inspiration. *Understanding Exposure*: much of what was covered in his other book, *Understanding Exposure*, is included in this *Field Guide*. So, if you're an amateur photographer with a "manual" setting on your camera, and you want to get to grips with understanding how photography works, and to improve your technique, without feeling you're embarking on an uphill degree in physics, I recommend this book."

Ebook Library Reader, "Useful photographic reference book.. Very useful reference book, concise, gets the main points over in shortish chapters, great for quick reference. If you want more depth, then Bryan Peterson's other books give the expanded version. Would definitely recommend his book on exposure."

pgee, "Great book. Bryan Peterson has a very easy to follow writing style aimed at beginners and intermediate level photographers. He gives plenty of ideas to get you going in the field with his vast knowledge of the subject. I found I got more out of the book by viewing his videos on YouTube at the same time. Very good value book at this price."

The book by Bryan Peterson has a rating of 5 out of 4.7. 258 people have provided feedback.

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