

PHOTOGRAPHY

Selby Gardens Beachscapes Workshop

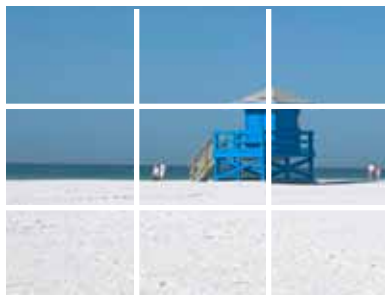


BEACHES

take pictures of simple objects, you can use them in lots of ways



Sun, blue sky, clouds, rain, fog, it doesn't matter. There is always something to shoot at the beach!



Rule of thirds



The best images are simple and uncluttered.



But, sometimes clutter is OK when exaggerated.

Why?

The beaches play a significant role in our lives here in Sarasota whether it be actual or only symbolic. Beaches offer wonderful opportunities as they are places of natural beauty, color, interesting light and people. Anybody interested in photography and in Sarasota should be shooting at the beach as a part of their photo excursions.

Your Equipment

Determined by your type of outing and desired outcome. Know your tools, shoot around their limitations and have a rough plan in mind. Take good care of your camera, but don't baby it as cameras in this day and age are a quickly depreciating asset.

Head to the Beach When Others Don't

The beach can really come to life on the days that everyone avoids because of inclement weather, rough water, threatening and dramatic clouds and wind blowing flags and trees over call all make for fantastic and a more diverse portfolio of images.

Timing is important | Make the Most of your day!

The start and end of days often present the best opportunities for shooting at the beach. For starters there will be less people but also you'll find that with the sun shining on an angle that you often get more interesting effects of shadows and colors - particularly in the evening when the light becomes soft and brings out all those pastel colors.

Subject Matter: Look for focal points to avoid clutter (less is more)

Guide One: What's my subject?

Guide Two: How can I highlight my subject?

Guide Three: How can I simplify my image?

Rule of thirds

Really simply, the rule of thirds is breaking an image down into thirds (both horizontally and vertically) so that you have 9 parts to consider placing points of interest in as you frame your image and four 'lines' that are also great positions for elements in your photo.

Watch the Horizon

A common issue in beach photography where there are wide open spaces with a long and often unbroken horizon is sloping horizons. Work hard at keeping your horizon square to the framing of your shot. Experiment placing your horizon with the **rule of thirds** in mind.

Proper Exposure and Bracketing

One issue when shooting in the middle of summer on a beach is that it can be incredibly bright and your camera could want to under expose your shots if



Our beautiful sand with a high quartz content will challenge your light meter if left to itself.



Because beaches are wide open spaces, most people tend to shoot almost completely in landscape (horizontal) format. Challenge yourself to find subjects and composition that feature vertical formats as well.



you're shooting in Auto mode. This is because the light meter in your camera will want to bring whites to **Neutral Gray**. If your camera has a manual mode it can be well worth playing with it at the beach and experimenting with different levels of exposure. I find that I get the best results when I look at what value the camera wants to expose the shot, and then **over expose by a stop or two** for certain subjects. Sometimes it's a matter of working out which area you want to be well exposed and focussing on that area as to get everything right is often impossible. Bracketing is a concept where you shoot the same subject with different exposures then pick the best one when editing. REMEMBER, digital photography has given us lots of latitude with our technique, but the best images are most ALWAYS properly captured then made better in post processing.

Spot Metering

If your camera has spot metering you can overcome lots of exposure problems. Spot metering is a feature that some cameras have whereby you tell the camera which part of the image you want to be well exposed and it will get that bit right. This is useful in bright light when you want to get a shady area exposed well. It will optimize the shady area (and the other areas will be over exposed - but at least your main subject will be ok).

Using Fill Flash

If you're photographing people at the beach as a portrait and it's bright you'll find that they will almost always have shadows on their face (often cast by hats, glasses, noses etc). Switch on your flash and force it to fire when shooting in these situations and you'll find the shadows eliminated and your actual subject is well exposed. Experiment.

Sunsets

Everybody loves sunsets, so a brief mention is noteworthy even though we won't be shooting at this workshop nor could we reasonably schedule a workshop around them because they just happen, and only last a short time where the light is really optimum. Good sunsets are actually caused by particulates in the air diffusing the light passing through. At the beach, this is often humidity or water in the air from the heat of the day.

If you point your camera at the sunset using auto exposure your image will probably be under exposed unless you really are going for a silhouette effect because the light from the sun is still bright in relation to the other parts of the frame. Try bracketing a stop each way or see what your light meter reading is on a neutral object lit by the ambient light and use that while shooting the sunset. If all else fails just shoot a way moving your light meter to the left and right of the sunset, locking the exposure and then composing your shot. A tripod is also a good tool to help you level off your horizon line and keep the camera steady. The sun can also fool your auto focus so try setting your camera's setting to landscape to force the lens to focus on infinity or similar technique. Don't forget the light from the sunset cast on other subjects (look behind you) because those colors would be almost impossible to replicate in Photoshop™.