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Getting ready for winter photography!

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While winter photography might take a bit more prep time regarding what to wear, it is well worth the effort to take advantage of a completely different environment from summer. I thoroughly enjoy taking photos during (if safe) and after a snow/ice storm and rivers, just as they are freezing or breaking apart.

There are some advantages to winter shooting, especially in the Ottawa area. We get many crisp sunny days with pristine snow and little slush. The sun is low throughout the day, so you don't have to avoid noon-hour photography. If you do want to catch the sunrise, it is later than in the summer months (no mosquitos!), and the sunset might well be before dinner!

You may want to consider additional items for your kit to make winter photography easier. For instance, I use gloves that have fabric only halfway up my fingers for easy button pushing, but they also have a Velcro flap to go over all the fingers to keep them warm when I don't need the dexterity.

If you are standing around waiting for the sunrise or long exposures, your feet can get cold, so I recommend heavy socks with a high wool content. I save them for photography as wool does not wear as well as synthetic fibers, and at around $20-$30 a pair, I don't want to buy them often. Any winter photographer would welcome these as a Christmas gift!

In terms of camera gear, I recommend a lens hood to prevent flares and to keep falling snowflakes off your lens. You may wish to get special feet for your tripod to better grip on ice and snow. Also, a polarizing filter can help with the intense glare/reflection of the sun on white snow.

When shooting a mostly snowy scene, your camera will assume it is an overly bright object and may try to underexpose it. If your camera has a *Snow scene* mode, use that setting by all means (don't forget to take it off afterward). I prefer to ensure the camera is not on *Auto* and then choose P, A, Tv/S, or M. I can slightly overexpose my image with the EV adjust in any of these shooting modes. It usually is a button with two triangles on the back of the camera. Set the scale to +1 over the baseline of zero.

If you are shooting a scene with many trees or other objects along with the snow, your camera may meter on those, and you will find your snow over-exposed. In this instance, set your EV adjustment to -1. If it appears a bit too dark when viewing on your computer, you can lighten it with photo editing software (<https://opcug.ca/Photography/UsingMasksInPhotoEditingSoftware.pdf>).

When you are done for the day, you may have to modify your summertime routine to protect your camera. Let your camera come to room temperature in the bag before unloading images, recharging the battery, cleaning the lens, etc. This will prevent condensation from forming and entering the interior of your camera.



