



# 30 Tips for Photographing Amazing Arctic Landscape

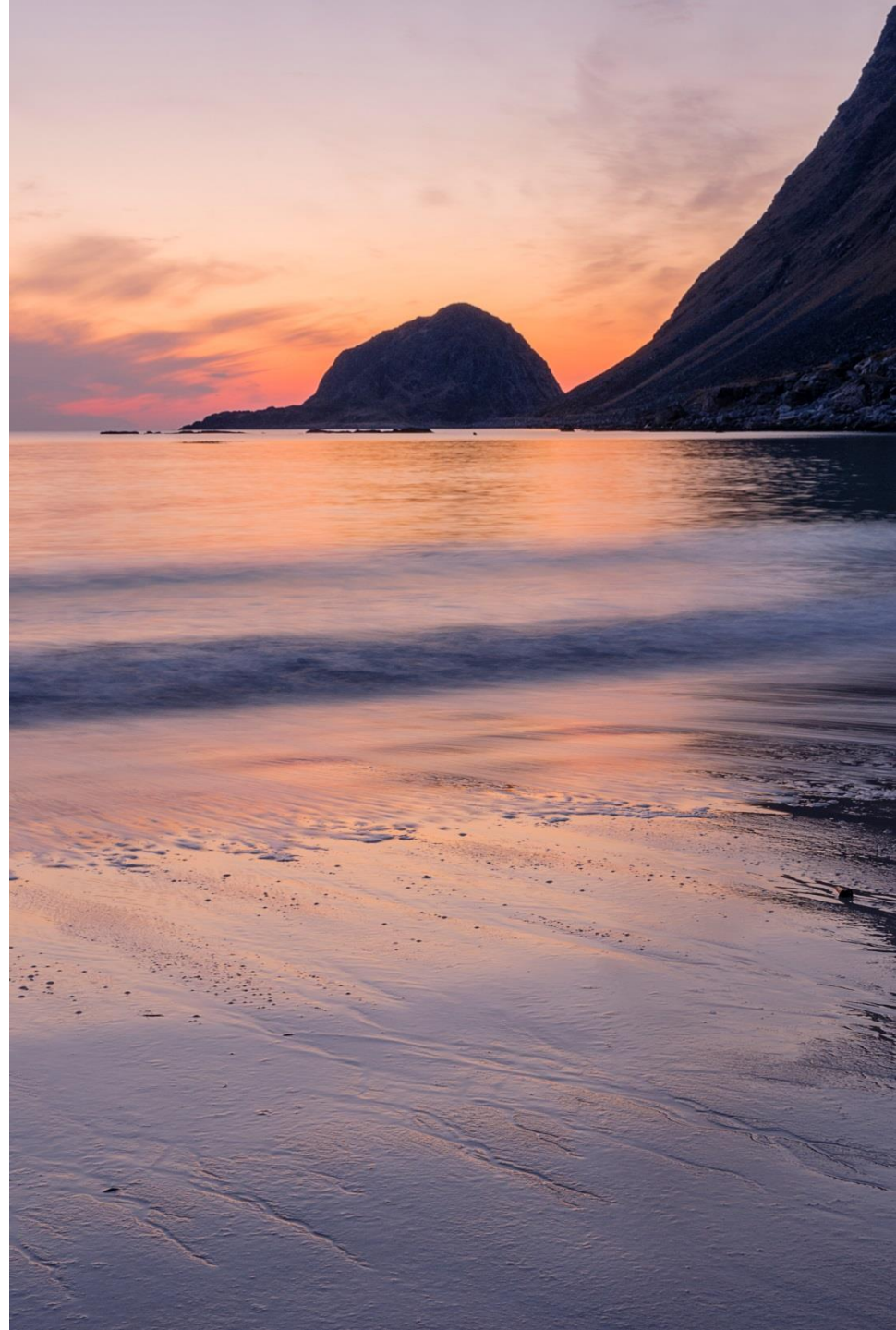
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Marat Stepanoff was born in Russia and after a career in Law, today he is a full-time professional landscape photographer. Most often he can be seen his in the North. This is Norway, Iceland and Northern parts of Russia. He has over 14 years of experience in landscape photography. Marat has written a guide of the Lofoten Islands for photographers and travellers. He is the author of a blog on his website and writes educational articles about photography which are published on various landscape photography sites. Marat conducts photo workshops focusing on the Lofoten Islands. 30 Tips for Photographing Amazing Arctic Landscape is Marat's e-Book about practical experience as a landscape photographer.

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## **Choose the right season**

You should spend some time planning your journey. And find information about the best seasons for shooting. Your chances of taking amazing pictures increase many times over. The most popular season is winter. In winter, you can see the polar lights, snow-covered mountains and dramatic light. No less popular summer time. This is the time of the Midnight sun. Most routes are open for hiking and driving. I shot in winter and summer time. I cannot prefer one of these seasons. Summer and winter are amazing. I do not advise to come here in spring time. You will be disappointed.

## **The weather is changing fast**

Remember that in the Arctic, the weather changes quickly. During the day it can rain 5 times and have sunshine 6 times. If the weather is terrible, it does not mean that you will not get an opening in the sky. Install a weather forecast app on your smartphone or tablet. You will need a Polar Lights forecast in the winter time.



## **Be in the center**

Before a photo session in the field, I usually go outside and look around. I often have to change plans due to the fact that I see in the sky and go to another point of shooting. You can see it much better from the center. Staying in the center will save you a lot of drive time and it is very important in the early morning. Mark all the places you want to see, map them and find the central area would be nice to stay in.

## **Bring a backup camera**

I broke one of my cameras on the island of Senya. And the second cameras I lost in a wave on Black Sand Beach in Iceland. In both cases, the camera broke. If I did not have a backup camera, I would have no choice but to retrain as a fisherman.





## **Bring Microfibers Cloths**

I have with me 3-5 dry microfiber wipes. This is a very necessary thing. Especially if you shoot on the seascape.

## **Bring cleaning equipment**

After shooting, I wipe the camera and lenses every day, open and dry the camera bag. Have at least 7-10 wet clothes for quick clean up of the camera and lenses. Saltwater breaks tripod. Broken during the photo tour tripod will not improve your mood.



## **Have spare batteries**

Everybody writes about it. But for some reason, not everyone reads this carefully. If you take a long exposure photo, use Live View, in cold weather, etc., your batteries run out quickly.

## **Visit the most popular places early in the morning**

Tourism and photo tourism today is mega popular. To have time to shoot the landscape you should have to get up earlier and earlier.



## **Turn off the trail (walk away from the popular routes)**

Exploring new places you can take exclusive photos that will make you a famous photographer.

## **Be a picky shooter**

Quality, not quantity, is always better. How many photos do you shoot during a photo tour in one week? I have enough 64GB flash drives. It's not enough? But why shoot everything. Isn't it better to invest in 4K GoPro and put it on your head and cut our favorite frames after? Don't you want it? Then try a 64 GB flash drive. Photographing is a creative process. Ask yourself what is better; take 200 mediocre photos or 20 amazing ones?



## **Be patient**

You cannot create a professional portfolio during one trip. These are the results of many visits. If you inspired by the place, work on it and return to this place one more time. There are exceptions, but you should be so lucky.

## **Don't follow after all.**

Decide what you are shooting and what your style is. The photographers shoot in different styles. Don't try to copy of them. You can't make it. Find 1-2 favorite styles and improve them. Your "look" will come later.





## **Don't stop learning**

I look at Instagram, Facebook, Behance and etc., read articles about photography, watch workshops. Only daily training allows me to move things upward and forward. Some websites are an amazing source of inspiration for me.

## **Explore the place during the day before shooting**

The first time I spent 40 minutes looking for the Dragon's Eye on the Uttakleiv Beach. If I had come here 10 minutes before sunset, I would not have found it. All professional photographers study the place of shooting in advance.



## **Make a lot of pic with different framing, change your position, and move**

During shooting it is difficult to understand the composition, quality of your photo. If you take 10-15 photos from one point, you will have a lot to choose from.

## **Don't hang out**

This is a big problem. Get stuck in one place, this is the most favorite pastime for yours. Just remember, while you hang out, you lose pictures.



## **Have a sturdy tripod**

It's foolish of you to invest a lot of money in photo equipment, time, tickets, hotels and takes broken pictures because you saved on a tripod. Always look at the characteristics of the tripod and consult with experienced photographers. A tripod manufacturer does not always write the right specifications.

## **Keep the camera and lenses clean and dry**

I had 3-4 heavy rain days when I traveled by boat on the lake in the North of Russia. All my gear got wet. On the last day, I went to shoot in the rain and the camera broke. I had to wait 2 months to fix it. Dampness even killed professional equipment. If you do not shoot something really unique, take care of your camera.



## **Always shoot in RAW**

10-12 years ago, the question to shoot in the RAW and JPEG was relevant. Today, almost every photo editor programs can process RAW files. Why be rob himself of the chance to take everything from your photo file?

## **Have the right clothes**

It was a very warm day in Lofoten. About 18-20°C. I did not want to carry extra equipment. And I went to Ryten light. While waiting for sunset, I hid from the wind behind a big rock and thought about Global Warming. Clothing for traveling beyond the Arctic Circle is the topic of a new article. I wrote a little equipment guide for travelers.





## **Use a wide angle lens**

Choosing a lens is one of the most important things a landscape photographer can do. You should think about how exactly you want to show the scene. Using a wide-angle lens, you can create an image that is exciting and epic.

A wide-angle lens can help give the image a sense of depth, making the horizon more distant. This gives the front, middle, and background and sky space. Shooting wide-angle scenes will also show an incredible range of light that can be found in such open places. Some parts of the scene flooded with golden light, while others are in dark shadow. So, a wide-angle lens is a lens for most landscape photographers.

My current lens is my Canon 24-70mm f4. This lens is incredibly sharp and pleasant to use. But for some scenes, I want to go a little wider. I also have a lens with a focal length of 11-24 mm. It's an amazing lens, but I rarely shoot a landscape below 16 mm. And the use of filters on this lens may seem a bit strange and also cause vignetting. I recently invested in a Canon 16-35mm f / 4, which is another excellent lens. It is much easier to use with filters and gives me the required focal length.

## **Do not use wide angle lens**

A telephoto lens will squeeze your image and push all the elements forward, leaving you with an image that may be a bit flat and cluttered. My Canon 70-200mm f4 is an excellent lens for landscape photography. 200 mm is enough focal length for me.



## **Use lens correction tool in PS, Lightroom or similar software**

Many people forget from such a function in the Camera RAW, as the lens correction.

## **Correct the exposure**

Each landscape photographer faces problems of contrasts in your scene. ND filter is a popular pick. This will give you a good, well-balanced exposure. Bracketing is another way. Many photographers use bracketing and blend photos in Photoshop. This technique is used by more and more photographers lessen the cost of buying filters.



## **Always use a polarizer**

I use the polarizer always. This saves me a lot of time during post-processing. The polarizer will also increase color saturation, giving your scene bright blue skies. You will also see the effect on the foliage, and the filter will give a real green effect to the leaves, trees, grass.

## **Use a smaller aperture for sharp photos**

I shoot landscapes on in the range of f 8 to f 16. This allows me to take sharp pictures. Do not use a smaller aperture if you want to take a sharp picture across the field.



## **Break the rules**

Pictures shoot in the f 2.8 to f 4 on the telephoto lens are amazing. Blurred background creates a special mood.

## **Don't overload the camera bag**

Find out what equipment you need before going on a trip. Do not bring the lenses that you will not use. Maybe all that you need on hiking to the top are 1-2 lenses, a tripod, a pair of filters and a spare battery.





## **Learn from the best**

You can have a boost grow only if you learn from the best. Choose 8-10 best photographers in your style and learn how they work.

## **Take pictures**

If you do not take pictures, you should not read this manual from point 1 to point 29. But since you have already read it, take pictures and learn from the best.



A scenic landscape of rugged mountains and a blue fjord at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some clouds. The mountains are dark and rocky, with some snow patches. The water is a deep blue. The text "WORKSHOPS and expedition" is overlaid in white, centered in the upper half of the image.

# WORKSHOPS and expedition