
How to Vacation Well With a Digital Camera

Traveling with a digital camera is more complex than going on a trip with a conventional film camera. All that needs be done with a conventional camera is to bring along some extra rolls of film or purchase some more when the camera runs out of film. A digital camera, however, has a fixed storage capacity that can only added to by buying expensive flash memory cards.

One common solution is to carry a cheap notebook computer, if one is available, and transfer the pictures to it from the camera periodically to free up the precious camera memory. This option also permits the vacationer to preview the pictures and decide whether to erase them, e-mail them, or post them on the Web. If the notebook computer has a CD or DVD writer they can even be transferred to a write-able CD. Some people even carry a small printer to print the images, or take the digital images to a shop that provides this service.

If carrying a notebook is undesirable or not an option, it is possible to transfer images directly to a portable hard drive. This palm-sized, battery-powered device may come with or without a display screen.

It is important to remember that in North America, Central America, and some parts of South America the power supply is 110 volts and 60 Hz, whereas most of the rest of the world uses voltages of 220 volts and 50 Hz. The wall outlets may also be different. Always check before travelling abroad, as it may be necessary to purchase an adapter kit before it will be safe to plug in a notebook computer, AC adapter, or battery charger.

Adapters come in two varieties, transformers and converters. A transformer is safer and is suitable for use with sensitive electronic devices. A converter can be used with more robust electrical appliances like hairdryers. Using a device through a converter can, however, harm devices over time and should not be done for more than a few hours. Transformers, being better suited to the task, can be used for longer periods, but they tend to weigh more and are more bulky.

If it will be necessary to use a modem, it is important to find out about the type of adapters that are used in the country in question. Also, if a lot of hiking, canoeing, or sailing is planned, a solar-powered battery charger to is advisable to ensure equipment will be running smoothly.

Contrary to popular belief, a digital camera, laptop computer, flash cards, audio and video tapes, floppy discs and film are not harmed by the X-ray machines and fluoroscopes installed at airports. However, magnetic media discs can be harmed by a metal detector. Keep this in mind while traveling by air and plan accordingly.