



TAKING BETTER TRAVEL PHOTOS

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MYIRIETIME.COM

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*Cover Photo:
Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas*

Above: Tortuga Bay, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic



*Blowing Point Harbour,
Anguilla*



*Trellis Bay, Beef Island
Tortola, British Virgin Islands*

I love to travel, and take photos along the way. That is how My Irie Time came into being. It emerged from a desire to share what I had learned, to help others plan their trips. I have been helped by so many travel blogs and websites over the years. My Irie Time began as a way to repay the kindness of others, and pass along useful information to the next persons planning their trip to paradise.

This book is more about photos than words, probably because I prefer to speak through photos. When a friend returns from vacation, I love to hear about their trip, but I'm really far more interested in their images. You can share so much more of what you experience with a photo, than with words. Yet so many friends return from vacation with little to show of what they experienced. They capture the "usual" image, "Here's Dave standing in front of the boat," or "Here's the sunset on the beach."



Jumby Bay, Antigua

Now don't get me wrong, I love a good sunset photo, and you will see many of them in this book and on My Irie Time. However, it seems that so much of the trip is missing. Friends will tell you of the great people they met or how they felt about a place, but it's not in the images. So here are a few tips on how to bring home the experience, how to capture what you saw and felt, to remind you of the great time away.

This is not a guide which will tell you what camera or lens you need to buy for great images. True, there is a difference between an image taken with a camera phone and a professional DSLR. However, some really amazing images can be taken on a camera phone or a point-and-shoot. I love to talk photography gear, but that's not what this book is about. If you want to read about gear, read the ["What's in my bag?" page on My Irie Time.](#)



*Pinney's Beach,
Nevis*

This book is about looking for the image to capture, regardless of what camera you choose to make it happen.



Jumby Bay, Antigua

Notes on the second edition:

This book was originally published in 2013. The very first chapter of the original book was devoted to getting yourself in the picture. Over the past few years, the “selfie” has become the most common travel photo seen on Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms. People seem to have no difficulty with this concept, even emphasizing it over capturing what they are experiencing while traveling. Accordingly, in this edition of the book, I have omitted that chapter. This book will focus on capturing more of what we see and experience around us in our travels that make them so special.

I have also added sections on basic concepts of composition. The old “rules” are often disregarded, but provide valuable assistance in making an effective image. Although they have been disregarded at times to convey a certain emotion to an image, and quite effectively, the rules of composition provide a great foundation for conveying to the viewer what is important in an image and to make it visually pleasing.

Finally, I have added a section on some special spots in the Caribbean for capturing great photographs. When traveling to a new place, it is nice to know where to capture that great view or that special feature. We will continue to add to this list, so follow our travel journal at My Irie Time <http://myirietime.com/> for new places to capture that great image!

1

SHOOT PEOPLE



SandBar, Sandy Ground
Anguilla



So much of our experience in traveling comes from the people we meet. Yet many people hesitate to capture the images of those people, myself included, because we don't want to look like a tourist. Face it, it's pretty clear that you are a tourist. There's no shame in being one. Be polite about it.

For a portrait, I generally ask permission. There are some instances where asking permission would ruin the spontaneity of the emotion you are trying to capture, and then I will sneak a shot, but only when I need to.



Clockwise from upper left: Rodney Elliott of Rodney's Cuisine, Nevis; Party guest at Sunshine's Beach Bar, Nevis; Sweet Pea, Pinney's Beach, Nevis; Chevy and guest at Chevy's, Pinney's Beach, Nevis

People rarely refuse a request to take a photo, and it will give you a great memory of the people who make your trip so pleasurable.

*Glass artist at GreenVI,
Cane Garden Bay, Tortola,
British Virgin Islands*





Clockwise from above: Bankie Banx at Dune Preserve, Anguilla; Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands; Hiking Guide Sheldon, Nevis

*Surfers at Bomba's
Surfside Shack, Tortola,
British Virgin Islands*





Clockwise from upper left: Garvey's SunShine Shack, Anguilla; Upper Banks Road, Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera; Codrington, Barbuda; Smokey's at the Cove, Anguilla



2

RENT A CAR

Cappoon's Bay,
Tortola

On the travel forums I frequent, people often ask about accommodations near bars and restaurants so that they won't have to rent a car and drive in a foreign land. I love being able to walk back to the resort on the beach after dinner and drinks, but I would always rent a car.

You cannot experience the island by staying on or near the resort property your entire visit. You only see how people live by renting a car and driving around. You can use cabs, but the cost is high, and you will not be inclined to ask the driver to stop so you can explore.





In our experience, if you have any trouble, people are quick to stop and offer a hand. When we hit a pothole and flattened two tires in Nevis, the rental car people were so fast I didn't have time to finish my beer at a local bar before it was fixed.

Driving on the other side of the road can take some getting used to, but for the first few days we both work together negotiating roundabouts, speaking aloud, "Go left, yield to the right."

If you are ever in doubt, follow the advice of the doorman at the CuisinArt Resort in Anguilla, "Left is right, right is wrong!"



Clockwise from top: New River Estate, Nevis; St. George's Anglican Church, Nevis; Two flat tires, Nevis

*Clockwise from right: Roadside in Anguilla;
Sunday church services on Nevis; Elusive
Savannah Bay, Anguilla*



*Anegada Lobster Salad,
Pusser's Marina Cay,
British Virgin Islands*



3

SHOOT YOUR FOOD (AND DRINK)

Your travel memories are not limited to the landscape shots of the resort or other tourist attractions.

So much of our travel experience is in what we eat and drink. I have been known to say that we travel on our stomachs (perhaps why we love Anguilla so much).

It takes just a moment before digging in to snap a shot of your meal or beverage.



*Top: Sunshine Salad, Sunshine's Beach Bar, Nevis
Bottom: Conch Salad, Da Conch Shack,
Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands*



Remember those Killer Bees at Sunshine's in Nevis?

Now you won't just have the memory of that massive hangover, you'll remember how amazing those Bees looked which prompted you to down three of them. Look at that fresh nutmeg!

Food brings back strong memories of our childhood and people we have known over the years. Let it bring back your travel memories as well.



Clockwise from top: "Killer Bee," Sunshine's Beach Bar, Nevis; Pain du Chocolat, Geraud's Patisserie, Anguilla; Margarita, Picante, Anguilla



Top: Making a conch salad at Da Conch Shack, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands

Left: Painkiller from Pusser's Marina Cay, British Virgin Islands



Clockwise from top left: Anguillan Breakfast at Anacaona, Anguilla; Chicken Wings from Pusser's Marina Cay, British Virgin Islands; Ceviche Salad from Coco Maya, Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands; Lobster from Big Bamboo, Anegada, British Virgin Islands; Killer Bee from Sunshine's, Nevis; Churros from Picante, Anguilla; Carib from Sunshine's, Nevis; Everything from Da Conch Shack, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands





Left: Rum punch welcome at Jumby Bay, Antigua; Top right: Ceviche from Jumby Bay, Antigua; Bottom right: Stone crab claws from Tippy's, Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera



MGREENING 2010

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4

SHOOT SIGNS

Big Bamboo, Anegada,
British Virgin Islands

This may sound pretty simple, and it is. Many people shoot signs. Those “Monkey Crossing” signs on Nevis see more photographs than the monkeys themselves.

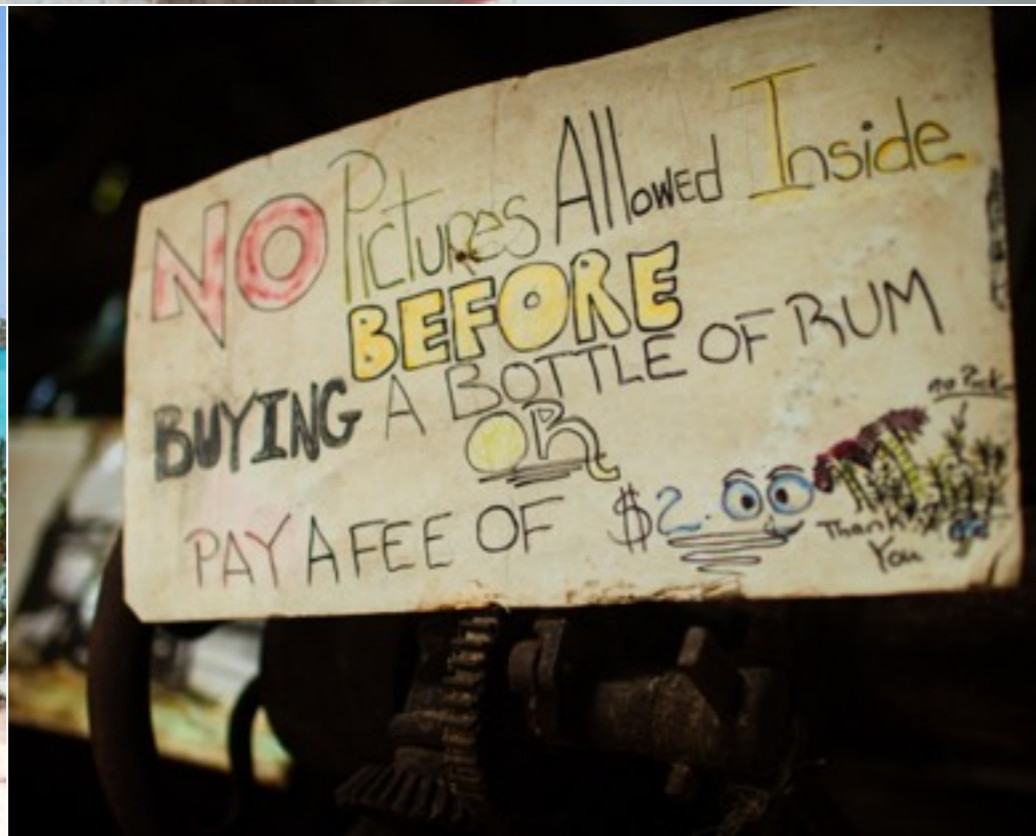
Clockwise from upper right: Bomba's Surfside Shack, Tortola, British Virgin Islands; Menu at Madeiriman, Shoal Bay East, Anguilla; Signpost at Pusser's Marina Cay, British Virgin Islands





However, don't limit yourself to the ordinary, or the sign which you have seen over and over again in images. Be on the lookout for signs in bars and restaurants, political signs, and advertisements.

Signs remind of us where we are, and what is current at the time we are there.



Clockwise from top: Trellis Bay, Beef Island, British Virgin Islands; Callwood Distillery, Tortola, British Virgin Islands; Gwen's Reggae Grill, Shoal Bay East, Anguilla



Providenciales,
Turks & Caicos Islands



Shoal Bay East,
Anguilla



Loblolly Bay, Anegada,
British Virgin Islands



Sandy Ground,
Anguilla



Top left: Friday Night Fish Fry, Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera, Bahamas; Bottom left: Bankie Banx's Dune Preserve, Anguilla; Right: Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas

A serene sunset scene over the ocean. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, yellow, and pink, with scattered dark clouds. The water reflects the warm colors of the sky. In the foreground on the right, a wooden pier with a covered walkway and railings extends into the water. A small, dark boat is visible in the middle ground on the left. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

5

SHOOT AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF DAY



*Cuisinart Resort, Rendezvous
Bay, Anguilla*

I'm not one to wake up at the crack of dawn, but the early morning presents some great time to take photos. If you never shoot the early morning, you never capture the sun on the other side of the island. We are so quick to shoot a sunset, but not very often a sunrise.

The time just after sunset is a great time to shoot too, because the sky still has loads of color in it.

Venture out at different times of day, and see all the island has to offer.



Above: Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands; Left: Scrub Island, British Virgin Islands

Trellis Bay, Beef Island,
British Virgin Islands





Top left: French Leave Beach, Eleuthera, Bahamas; Bottom left: Lighthouse Bay, Barbuda; Top right: Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera, Bahamas; Bottom right: Jumby Bay, Antigua

*Virgin Gorda,
British Virgin Islands*

6

SHOOT FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

So many people shoot from eye level. It's natural. You're walking along and you see something you like. You pull the camera up to your eye, and snap.

However, a different angle can offer a whole new perspective and bring great interest to your image.

Get low or get high.

Think about shooting from a lower angle by getting down on the ground and shooting up, or putting the camera up high and shooting down. Instead of standing on the beach shooting the ocean, wade out into the ocean and shoot toward the beach.

Top: Pinney's Beach, Nevis

Bottom: Four Seasons Resort, Nevis



Shoot from an angle. Walk around your subject for a different view.

A different angle give a whole different look to the shot.

Clockwise from right: Anegada, British Virgin Islands; Pinney's Beach, Nevis; Pusser's Marina Cay, British Virgin Islands





*Four Seasons Resort,
Pinney's Beach, Nevis*

Get your feet wet!



7

GET CLOSE

North Beach, Scrub Island
British Virgin Islands



Too often travel photos consist of broadly composed landscapes of the area you visit. Draw your viewer into your experience by getting close.

If you don't have enough zoom on your camera, zoom with your feet. Walk to your subject and get your camera closer.



Clockwise from top left: Bomba's Surfside Shack, Tortola, British Virgin Islands; Smokey's at the Cove, Anguilla; Da Conch Shack, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands



Top Left:
Bomba's Surfside
Shack, Tortola,
British Virgin
Islands

Bottom Left:
Turks & Caicos
Conch Festival,
Providenciales,
Turks & Caicos
Islands



Top Right:
Gardens at
Meads Bay
Beach Villas,
Anguilla

Bottom Right:
Architectural
detail, Bomba's
Surfside Shack,
Tortola, British
Virgin Islands



Top left: Fishing boat,
Codrington, Barbuda;



Bottom left: Batik stamp,
Androsia Batk, Andros,
Bahamas;



Far right: Conch shells,
Rendezvous Bay, Anguilla





8

SHOOT ATMOSPHERE

*Sunshine's Beach Bar,
Nevis*



Shoot atmosphere. What I mean is try to get a sense for the place you are. Don't just show people where you went. Help them feel it.

Shooting atmosphere often means shooting a wider angle shot. By way of example, we were at Sunshine's Beach Bar on Nevis one afternoon. There was a birthday party going on, and a boat full of daytrippers had filled the bar. I didn't know any of these people, but they brought a real excitement to the place, which I didn't feel in the evening. I took a few shots of the crowds to remember the atmosphere.

Clockwise from top: Pusser's Marina Cay, British Virgin Islands; Sunshine's Beach Bar, Nevis; Sunshine's Beach Bar, Nevis

Our memories are not just a few glimpses of what we focused upon, but are part of the bigger picture.



Picante, Anguilla



Both images: Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas

9

SHOOT THE NON-TOURIST SHOT





St. Kitts



Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands



Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands

Our final tip is to shoot the shot you won't see on the Tourism Bureau's website.

If you check out the official website of any tourist destination, you will see gorgeous images of the most picturesque areas of the island. But an island is not all about people walking hand-in-hand on the beach or clinking champagne glasses at a beachside table. An island is a community of people, and people have all different lifestyles. It's not all "picture-perfect," high-end resorts with a lot of money changing hands. I love to photograph where and how real people live. Complete the picture by shooting the entire picture.

Now some people have a different point of view. I had friends who upon returning from a trip to St. Martin were shocked by all the “poverty.” Perhaps, this friend’s sense of “poverty” was not having a lawn service or a washer/dryer. One of the most important lessons I have learned from traveling to the Caribbean is that you don’t need a lot of possessions to be kind, generous, and happy. We often spend so much time wrapped up in what we have that we lose sense of what is important. A simple life can be a very rich life. These are not images of “poverty,” but of “wealth,” from a different point of view.



Nevis

10

BASIC RULES OF COMPOSITION





My daughter was the youngest member of the Coalition of Photographic Arts (CoPA) at age eleven. CoPA is a non-profit organization of artists, students, professionals, amateurs, enthusiasts and collectors. The group holds monthly meetings in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area, showcases the work of local artists, and offers educational programs, lectures, panel discussions and exhibitions for those of us who love photography. Occasionally, at the monthly meetings of CoPA, they will have what is called a “slide slam,” where members display their images to the group and give some background on the project or technique used.

My daughter decided at her very first meeting that she wanted to participate. She displayed her photographs of Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, including one very similar to the image above. One of the CoPA members asked her, “When you took this photograph, did you have in mind the “Rule of Thirds?” With the innocence and frankness of a child, she replied, “No. I took it because it looked cool!”



Despite the excitement of an eleven-year-old, the rules are there for a reason. They provide useful guidelines and assist us in finding a composition which is pleasing to the eye and engages the viewer. It is undisputed that the rules are not the end of the discussion. However, it is important to understand the rules, to appreciate the reasons why they exist, so that we may understand when a departure from the rules is appropriate.

The rules also help us find the composition. There are times where a scene is very busy and we are so caught up in the excitement that it is difficult to find the shot. The rules help us find our way, to help us see what it is about the scene which creates that emotion, so that we may convey it to our audience.

It is often said that rules are meant to be broken, but there should be a purpose in doing so. You may want to create a feeling of unrest or tension based upon the subject of your image. Some very effective images have tossed the rules aside, but knowing the rules gives you the foundation upon which to work in making great images.

*Governor's Harbour,
Eleuthera, Bahamas*

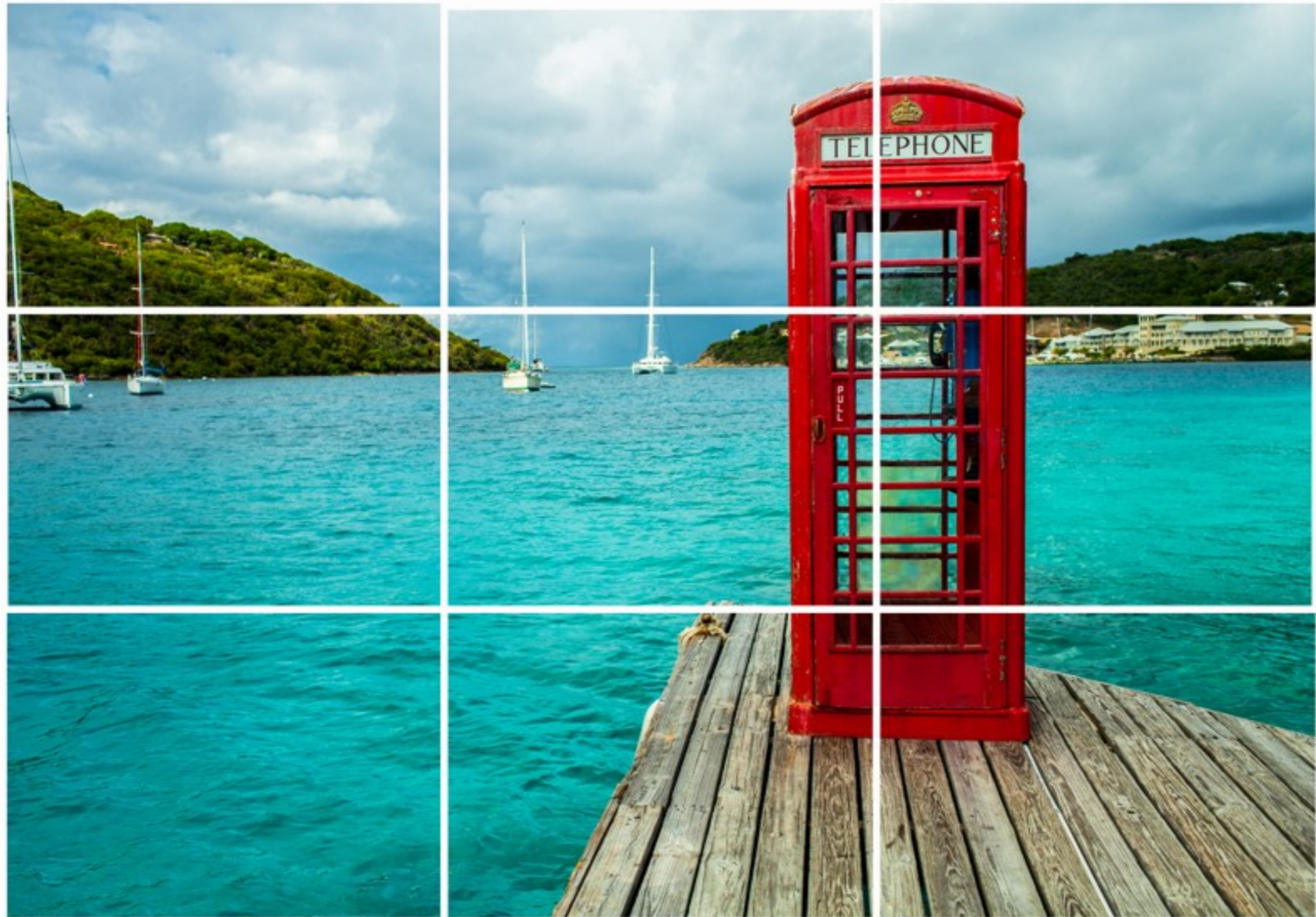
THE RULE OF THIRDS

Let's start with one of the most popular rules of composition: The Rule of Thirds. It is so popular because it works. Basically, we divide the scene into thirds vertically and horizontally, and put the subject, upon which we want our audience to focus, at the intersections of the lines.

In this example, we want to invite our audience to take a seat and admire the waves as they roll in from the sea. Accordingly, we put the horizon on the top third of the image, and the seat along the lower third and the right third of the image.

Hog Heaven, Virgin Gorda, BVI





*Here the red telephone box catches our interest not only by its color, but by its placement along the intersecting lines.
Marina Cay, British Virgin Islands*



Clockwise from top left: Pink Sand Beach, Harbour Island, Bahamas; Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas; Low Bay, Barbuda; Jumby Bay, Antigua

VISUAL WEIGHT

The concept of visual weight refers to the idea that some things in a photograph demand more attention because of their placement, color, focal point, or other component of the image. These elements push their weight around in an image. These elements are the first you notice when you look at an image.

Elements of an image pop for a variety of reasons. It could be that the element is light where the rest of the image is dark. It could be that one element is in focus while the remaining party of the image is out of focus. It could be that one element is a strong or vibrant color which stands out.

In composing an image, keep in mind those elements which grab your attention. Strive to keep those elements in balance with the remaining elements of the image. A balanced image is more pleasing to the eye.

The most important elements should be visually heavy. Draw your audience to the elements which are most important to you in the image or most important to the story you want to tell.

Also, avoid distracting elements which may have weight. For example, if you have a strong image which is consistent in color but also in your view is an element which is not important and happens to be in a strong contrasting color. It can distract the viewer from what is important. Work to compose the image to eliminate distracting elements.



Dune Preserve, Anguilla



In this image, the strong orange color of the kayak has a lot of visual weight and becomes the focus of the image. If I had not intended for it to be the focus of the story of this image, I would recompose the image to eliminate it from view. By its color and placement in the image, it becomes the object of our attention.

French Leave Beach, Eleuthera, Bahamas

NEGATIVE SPACE

Negative space is an area in your composition which contains no strong elements. It would be the sky, a colored wall, or any solid or somewhat solid background. Negative space is used to draw the viewer's attention to the subject of your image, that element which is set off from the negative space by color, light, or texture.

Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas



Negative space need not be a painted wall or other solid color surface. It can be the sky or other elements which are consistent in color or texture so as to set off the subject of your image.

Both images from Low Bay, Barbuda



DEPTH OF FIELD

The more advanced your camera, the more control you have over how the final image will appear. One of the advantages of a camera with manual controls is that you can adjust the depth of field. You can isolate elements in your image by using a wider aperture and narrowing the depth of field to put some elements in focus and other elements in the “blur.” Cameras are becoming more and more sophisticated and even the simplest cameras may allow you to use certain modes which allow you to do this to a certain extent. However, to really take advantage of this technique, you need a camera with a lens that can open up to give you a very shallow depth of field, where particular elements are in focus and others are not.

Varying the depth of field can also diminish the distraction of unattractive elements. Those elements will blend into the background, allowing you to focus your audience on the particular element of interest in your image, while softening those that are undesirable.

Martini at the Library Bar, Four Seasons Nevis



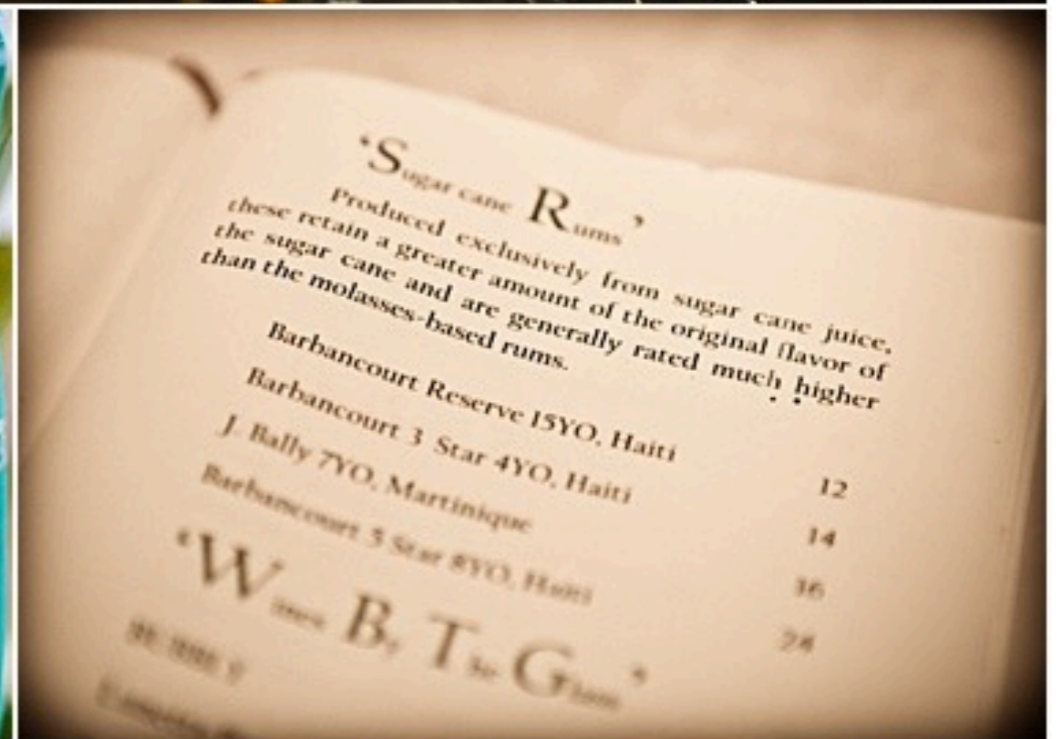
Clockwise from top left:

Lighthouse Bay Resort,
Barbuda;

Rum tasting at Jumby
Bay, Antigua;

Rum menu at Four
Seasons Nevis;

Androsia Batik, Andros,
Bahamas



SYMMETRY AND PATTERNS

Symmetry and patterns make for strong images. The eye is drawn into the image by the pattern which the eye immediately recognizes and directs the viewer into the details.

Look for patterns in architecture, in man-made objects, and in nature.





Clockwise from top left: Codrington Harbour, Barbuda; Neve at the Four Seasons Nevis; St. Columba's Anglican/ Episcopal Church , Eleuthera Bahamas



Left to right: Travelers Palm, Nevis; St. George's Anglican Church, Nevis; Spa at Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas

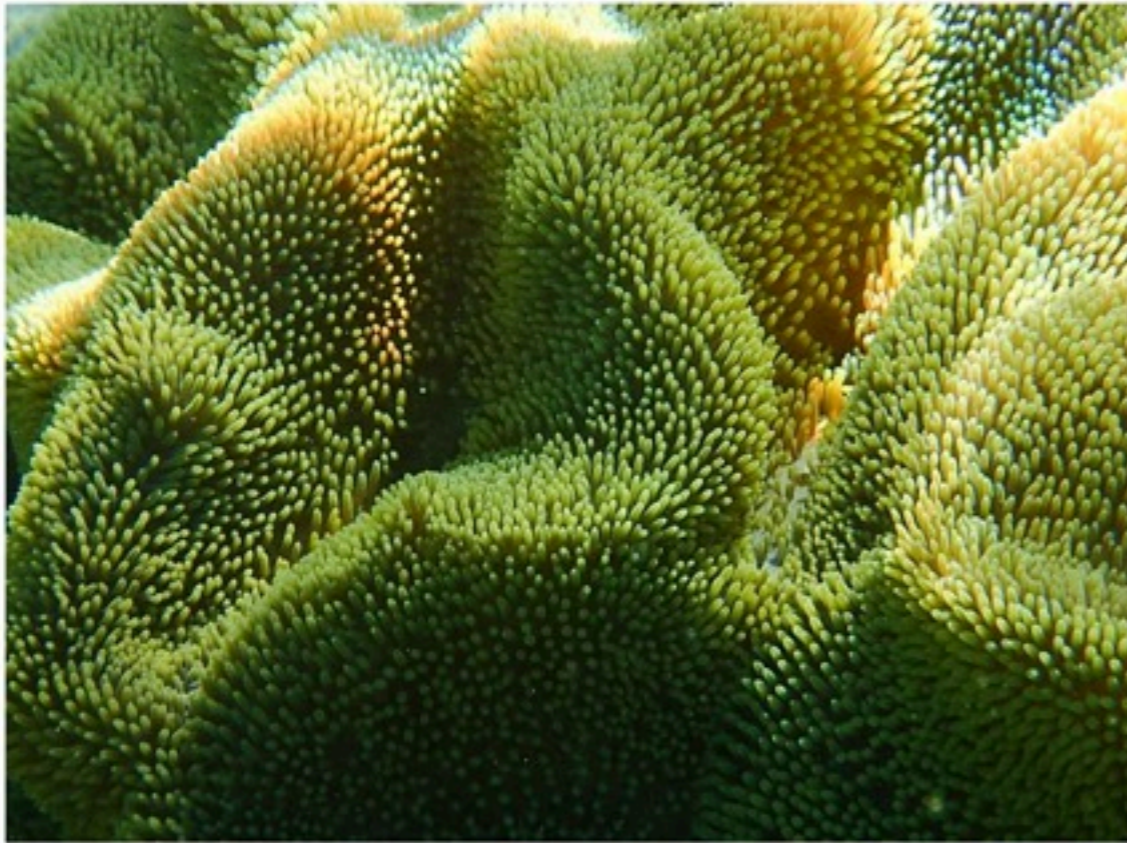
FILL THE FRAME

In a photography studio or in a styled photo shoot, the photographer has control over what is in the frame and what is not. When you are traveling, you lose a great deal of that control. Repositioning people or items is not always an option, and oftentimes, is not possible at all.

Another technique for avoiding busy or unattractive backgrounds is to fill your frame with your subject. Not only does this help focus your viewer, it provides a different perspective of a scene, helping your viewer feel the entirety of the experience.

*Photo right: Tortuga Bay, Punta Cana,
Dominican Republic*





Clockwise from top left: Coral reef, Andros, Bahamas; Jumby Bay, Antigua & Barbuda; Farmers Market, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; Low Bay, Barbuda, Antigua & Barbuda

FRAME WITHIN A FRAME

This technique uses something in your view to frame the subject of your composition. In the photo at the right, I use the arch of an opening in a historic sugar mill to frame the peak of the mountain at the center of the island of Nevis.

Look around for things to frame your subject, such as doorways, windows, arches, trees, or anything else which adds interest the photo while focusing the viewer on the subject.

Photo right: View of Nevis Peak from the sugar mill at Montpelier Plantation, Nevis





*Top left, right, and
bottom right: Low
Bay, Barbuda,
Antigua & Barbuda*

*Bottom left: CuisinArt
Resort, Anguilla*





Rendezvous Bay, Anguilla

LEADING LINES

Photographers use leading lines to lead the viewer's eye around or into a photograph. Look for strong lines in your composition, such as architecture, roads, bridges, docks, or natural elements such as the curve of plants or trees, rocks, the line where the land meets the water, or even footprints in the sand, to bring the viewer into your image.

Photo right: The pool at the Somerset Resort,
Grace Bay Beach, Providenciales, Turks &
Caicos Islands





The Spa at Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas



Clockwise from top left: Kamalame Cay, Andros, Bahamas; French Leave Beach, Eleuthera, Bahamas; Grace Bay Beach, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands; French Leave Beach, Eleuthera, Bahamas

A photograph of a cave interior. A large, textured rock overhangs a body of water, creating a natural archway. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, reflecting light from an unseen source. The cave walls are dark and shadowed, contrasting with the bright water.

11

PHOTOGRAPHY HOT SPOTS

Through the years, we have discovered some great locations to shoot throughout the islands. Here are just a few. For more, follow our blog at [My Irie Time!](#)

Inside the sugar mill at Montpelier Plantation, you get a great view of Nevis Peak.





From road near La Vue Boutique Resort, you get a fantastic view of Sandy Ground, Anguilla



This area in The Baths, Virgin Gorda, has been shot many times, but oftentimes the shot is blown out by shooting toward the opening to the sky. By taking just a few steps to the left, the harsh light of the sky is blocked, and all the beauty of the rocks is revealed.

Hog Heaven, Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands, is a great spot to take in the views of the area. Among those islands in view are Prickly Pear island, Mosquito Island, and Sir Richard





For a great view of an inland blue hole, head to Captain Bill's Blue Hole on Andros, Bahamas. The dock gives you a great angle on the entire area, and if you're not interested in getting wet, there are steps on one side allowing you to get a view from the water's edge.

The 15th fairway of the golf course at the Four Seasons Nevis is the place to be in the late afternoon if you want to capture images of the green vervet monkeys which inhabit the island. Plan on being there at 4:30 p.m. and you'll see families of monkeys, so many that it is hard to keep count.



If you want to have a great meal and watch it prepared from the sea to your table, take a seat at Da Conch Shack, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands.



Put yourself on "Turtle Watch" at Jumby Bay, Antigua. Tell the concierge during what hours you want to be called and they will alert you when a turtle is spotted laying her eggs or turtle eggs are hatching. They will pick you up and take you to the beach to catch the action.





Small prop planes provide great views of the islands. Take an island hopper and be sure to get a window seat! This flight from Beef Island, BVI to San Juan, Puerto Rico provided great views of Great Camanoe and Tortola.

The red telephone box of Pusser's Marina Cay, British Virgin Islands is a must-have shot from the islands. Hop onto a ferry over to Marina Cay from Beef Island.

I hope these tips have helped inspire you in seeing and capturing great images on your next adventure. Be sure to share them with your friends after your trip!

If you enjoyed this complimentary book, please follow us on My Irie Time!

