

Moon photography - tips for beginners

1. Use good equipment

Camera: preferably SLR or compact with interchangeable optics

Telephoto: the absolute minimum focal length is 200mm,

Tripod: The heavy weight of the camera and telephoto lens, combined with the long exposure time that is necessary after dark, requires the use of a tripod to obtain sharp pictures.

2. Choose a suitable place

If you do not need the urban landscape in the frame, go away from the city, to a place that is not polluted with artificial light.

3. Choose the correct time

Take photos the day before or the day after a full moon for more detail. At full moon, the sun shines directly on its shield and it reflects flat light towards you.

4. Wait for the moon in the right position

Take pictures of the moon when it is at least 30 degrees and no more than 45 degrees above the horizon.

5. Set the shutter speed, aperture, iso

Set the camera to manual mode. You can start with settings like this: iso 100, f / 8 or f / 16 aperture, shutter speed 1/30. If your test shot is too dark, increase the exposure time to make it brighter. Try to keep the rest of the parameters at the initial level.

6. File type - raw or jpg?

Take photos in raws. This file format saves more data about the shooting scene. This will allow you to "extract" more details while processing, and also set the fine white balance.

If you do not know how to handle this file format and are shooting in jpg, be sure to turn on



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bracketing (available in every camera) or test the HDR mode (available in some cameras). Set the white balance to daylight (sun icon).

7. Turn off the stabilization (VR) on the lens.

8. Focusing

Turn off the autofocus as well and try to sharpen manually, as under such conditions the machine can do more harm than good. Help yourself by turning on live view and use the zoom positioned on the moon to focus precisely.

9. Photo processing

The most important thing in post-production is the order of some treatments. First adjust the frame so that the moon covers most of it, then apply a de-noise and sharpen filter - in exactly that order, never the other way around. You must know that noise can look tragic with particularly long exposures. If you sharpen the photo first rather than denoise it, the algorithms won't do the job well.



Step by step how to shoot full moon

1. Before taking the camera out of its case, take a walk and look for a good composition with an interesting object on which the moonlight falls. Photographing the moon itself is quite complicated, check out our tips here.
2. White balance can be tweaked in post-production, but it's best to set it up correctly in the shooting stage. Try Incandescent light or set the user's WB to a temperature of approx. 3200 K. This will prevent your photos from having a brownish glow.
3. When shooting with the wide-angle lens, open the diaphragm. You will get a fairly shallow depth of field. Try to keep your distance to the photographed object to capture it in the center of the focal plane.
4. Focus at infinity and take a test shot. Take a look at the photo on the camera's LCD screen, zoom in 100% and see if the subject and / or stars are clear enough.
5. Take another picture and check the histogram. The histogram values will be clustered closer to the left side as the scene will be full of dark tones a medium gray, the slight highlights are most likely stars.



Sources of information and photos:

1. <https://blog.cyfrowe.pl/fotografia-ksiezycyca/>
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