

Tips for Choosing a Camera

Deciding to purchase a new camera is exciting and also a bit overwhelming. As we all know a camera can be a big investment; and the research involved can be tiresome with the amount of different options that you have to wade through. It is important however to know all of your options and to do your research before you make your final decision.

The two main decisions that you will need to make are:

#1 - Which camera are you going to buy?

#2 - Where are you going to purchase your camera?

The first decision is the most important: Which camera to get...

Here are some things to consider before making your final decision:

- Which brand do I want: A name brand such as Nikon or Canon, or a more economical brand such as Sony or Minolta?
- Which model camera do I want; and more importantly which model will suit my needs best.
- What will I be using this camera for; what are the important specifications and options that the camera needs to have.

And the BIG question:

- Am I going to get a Digital SLR or a high end "point-and-shoot".

Let's start with the first question: "Which brand camera to get".

When deciding whether to get one of the high-end name brands or one of the more inexpensive brands, you will need to think about what will serve you best in the long term.

The high-end brands which are Nikon and Canon will last through the tests of time. Not only are these cameras built the best but they also have the most accessory options. The more inexpensive brands such as Sony, Minolta, etc. will be easier on your pocket book, but there will be fewer options to choose from when it comes to camera "models" and also accessories.

You just need to think about how long you want the camera to last, what you want to use it for and if you will want accessories to add on to it later.

If you decide to go with one of the high-end brands, you will have to choose whether you are going with Nikon or Canon. Everyone you ask will have a different opinion on which brand is better! What it comes down to is this: both brands are fantastic! The difference is basically what you prefer, look at the models of both brands of camera and find the camera that suits you best in your price range. If it ends up a Nikon or a Canon it doesn't matter because they are both great Camera Manufacturers.

***Something that you should keep in mind: Lenses cannot be switched between brands. Meaning that you can only use Nikon lenses with Nikon cameras, and Canon lenses can only be used with Canon cameras.

So if you have a friend who owns a Nikon camera and lenses and you planned on borrowing some of their equipment, you will want to purchase a Nikon camera in order to be able to use that equipment.*****

Next you will need to think about what your needs for the camera is. Figure out whether you plan on using it for just snapping pictures of your children, or whether you will eventually want to use it as a source of income.

The main options that will differ in camera models are:

- Megapixels - Don't be fooled into getting the camera with the highest MP number! Once you reach about 10MP anything higher than this, the average consumer will never notice the difference. Unless you are blowing the image up to billboard size, using the images for high-end editorial work or advertising, or will be doing weddings and portraits professionally; you are never going to see a difference between a 10mp camera and a 25MP camera.
- ISO range. The ISO will basically effect how low of light you can shoot in. The higher the ISO goes to, the lower the light can be that you can still shoot in. The more "professional" the camera the higher this number usually goes. So again, this is another case where you need to think about what you are going to be using the camera for. A good ISO range would be one with about 200-3200.
- The "pre-program" modes. If you plan on just using this camera for shooting images of your family and friends, then you will use these "pre-programmed" auto modes quite a bit. If you are planning on using your camera professionally then you will (hopefully!) never use these "pre-programmed" modes, and therefore will only need a camera that you can set to "Manual" and possibly "Aperture" and "Shutter" priority modes.
- One of the new things that cameras are adding now is HD video capabilities. You will need to look closely when comparing cameras; sometimes the only difference between one model and the next least expensive model is the addition of the HD video. If you have no need for the ability to record movies with your camera, then you should be able to find a less expensive model to purchase over one with this HD video.
- Some other different options you can look for are: Pop-up flash, Self-timer, File size the camera can shoot in, and the list goes on...

By now I am hoping that you know whether you want to purchase a DSLR camera or what I call a "point-and-shoot" camera! If not, here are some things to consider that may help you make a decision:

- DSLR cameras allow changing the lens on the front while "Point-and-shoots" do not. The advantage to this is the creative possibilities that you have, and also the ability to add on to your camera later on.
- "Point-and-shoot" cameras are much smaller and easier to travel with, while DSLR cameras can be big and bulky. If you only want a camera for snapping pictures of your kids that you can fit in your purse or pocket; you will want a "Point-and-shoot".
- DSLR images are going to be a higher quality than "Point-and-shoot" cameras. If you plan on using your image for an income or print competitions, you will want a DSLR.
- Basically if you want to grow your photography, produce art work with your images, or simply have photography as a growing hobby; you will want a DSLR camera. It is definitely worth the higher price and you will be much happier in the long run.
- If you plan on just using your camera for fun, snapping pictures of your friends and family and putting them on facebook; then don't spend the money on the high-end camera. A "point-and-shoot" will serve your needs just fine!

Now that you know which Camera you want to get, go read my next article on "where to buy your camera"! ...