

Tips for Purchasing Your Camera

Now that you have figured out which camera you want to get, you need to figure out where to purchase it for the best price. Here are some questions you need to ask yourself before purchasing:

#1 - Do I want to purchase a new or used camera?

#2 - Do I want to buy locally or from an online retailer?

#3 - Do I want to purchase a "refurbished" camera?

The first option that you have is New or Used...

Most people seem to shy away from Used Cameras or any Used electronic. Sometimes this makes sense, but in some cases you can actually get a great product at a greatly reduced price; you just have to be educated and smart when buying.

Here are some things to look for when purchasing a used camera:

- Only buy from a reputable online "used" reseller. The website needs to have some sort of guarantee, so you are not stuck with a camera if it doesn't work when you get it. Some of the best "used" online sites I have used for purchasing camera equipment are: amazon.com, bhphotovideo.com and craigslist.com (I will cover more on using Craigslist later on)
- Make sure you look at the description, or the "condition" that they say the camera is in. If the camera comes with a lens, you will want to make sure they say the lens has NO scratches on the glass.
- Look at the pictures. If the camera has a significant amount of damage or wear to the body of the camera, then its a good estimation that the insides have just as much wear. Steer clear of these cameras.
- Don't purchase a camera that is too old. The old cameras are usually really cheap, but that is for a reason! Electronics change and upgrade so much with time, so you will want to stay with a more recent model.
- If the price seems "too good to be true"...then it usually is!
- If purchasing locally (from someplace such as craigslist) you want to make sure that you go and actually try out the camera before purchasing. Look at the LCD to make sure there is no damage. All of the dials, knobs, and buttons should push and turn smoothly with no resistance; the lens should also rotate on and off smoothly with no rubbing or grinding sounds.

Apart from online resellers you can also purchased used locally. Most of your local camera stores will have a used camera section. You can talk to the sales person and ask about the wear on the camera and what condition it is in. They have a reputation to keep, so they are usually pretty reliable with their information (as long as it is a reputable company).

craigslist.com is a great resource for camera equipment. You will find quite a selection of cameras and lenses for sale on here. As long as you are careful and check everything out before purchasing, I think this a great resource to utilize. When purchasing anything through this site, you will want to make sure that you see the camera in person and are able to shoot some images with it before purchase. A lot of professional photographers upgrade to new equipment then sell the older models through craigslist. Finding a camera or equipment from a professional is one of the safer options; most professionals take good care of their equipment, so it is more likely to be in good condition.

If you decide that you would rather buy a "new" camera. Here are some good places to look for a good price:

- amazon.com
- bhphotovideo.com
- adorama.com
- buy.com
- ebay.com

You can also do a "Google" search for the best price on the camera model you are looking for.

If you find one place that is significantly cheaper than everywhere else, then there is probably a reason. Be sure and check that you are comparing apples to apples. One website may be selling the camera as a "kit" which includes a lens and other camera accessories including a camera battery and charger, while the other company may be just selling the camera body alone.

Be sure to check how much each company charges for shipping. Sometimes this can make a significant difference as well.

Once you have purchased your camera ("New" or "Used"), don't forget the accessories that you will need:

- Memory card
- Battery (possibly a larger one than the camera comes with, that will last longer)
- Battery Charger
- Camera bag
- A book on how to use the camera!

Now that all the decisions are made and you know where you are getting your camera, the hard work is done! Now have fun playing with it!

Be sure to check back to www.photographic-light.com often, for more articles on everything camera related!