

Tips for Photographing on the Fall Color and Waterfall Trip

Dennis Fritsche

August 15, 2024

Fall Foliage - considerations

- When the sun is shining on the colorful leaves, they can act like mirrors.
 - Use a circular polarizer to knock down the reflections.
 - Check the RGB histogram and make sure no color is blown out. Reds can get away from you.
- If it's windy, up your shutter speed.
- Photograph the wide expanses of color hills, but also look for the little details and isolated trees.
- Backlit leaves are beautiful. Underexpose to keep from blowing out.

The Expansive Shot



The Trees



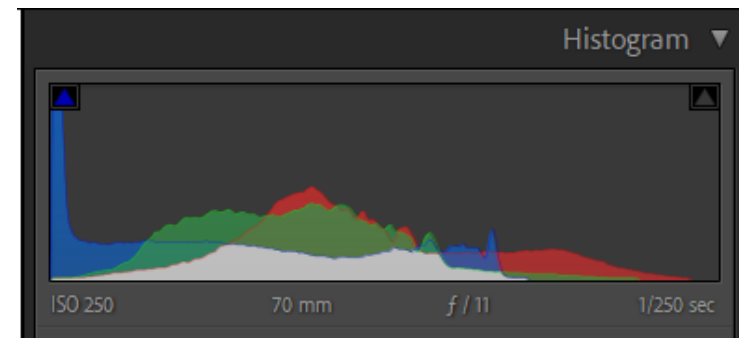
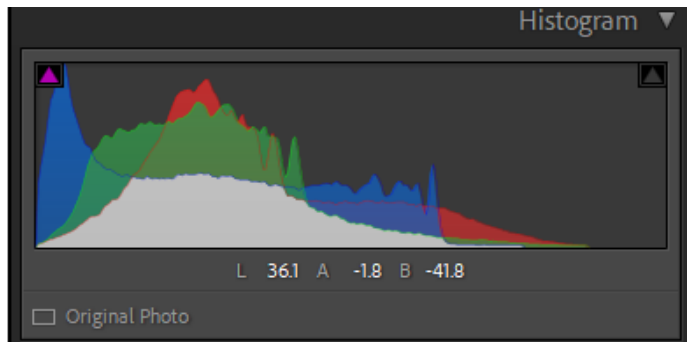
Intimate Shots



Backlit Maple Leaf



Underexpose Backlit Leaves



Waterfalls and Moving Water

- It's all about shutter speed and your artistic intent.
- Slow shutter speeds blur the movement and faster shutter speeds freeze the motion.
- The effect will vary greatly based on the speed of the water – you have to experiment.

Varying Shutter Speed – Slow Water



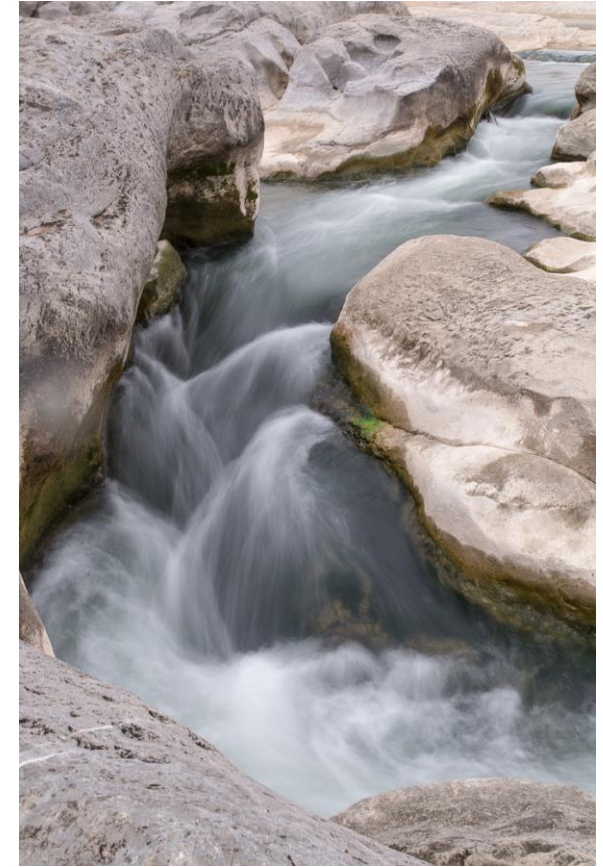
1/40 Second



1/25 Second



1/3 Second



1 Second

Varying Shutter Speed Fast Water



1/30 Second



1 Second

Watch the Light



- When the water is churning there will be “white water”
- Take care not to blow these out.
- Overcast skies and shade are preferred.

Changing Patterns



- Water flow is not constant.
- Patterns change in interesting ways.
- Especially in the wind.

Controlling the Shutter Speed

- My starting point for waterfalls and running water is 1/8, 1/15, and 1/30 second. Adjust from there.
- Time of day. Early or late if possible.
- Stop down and use low ISO.
- Circular polarizer and neutral density filters.
- Fixed neutral density filters
 - 6 stops is a good all-around choice. 3 stops can be stacked with the 6.
 - Rarely need 10 stop.
- Variable neutral density filters.
 - 1 to 5 or 1 to 8 stop is a good choice.
 - Find one with stops
 - Good quality otherwise color issues
 - [Amazon.com : B+W 77mm XS-Pro Digital Vario ND with Multi-Resistant Nano Coating : Electronics](#)

Gear and Technique

- Gear
 - Sturdy tripod and head.
 - Neutral density and circular polarizing filters.
 - Lens of choice.
- My Technique
 - Variable ND filter.
 - Aperture priority.
 - ISO 64 (or lowest).
 - Adjust ND to get the time I want.
 - If it is really bright, I might add a fixed ND.
 - Look at the display and adjust to taste.
- Post processing
 - Local use of Dehaze gives life to the water. May need to brighten shadows.

References

- *My Passion*
Moving Water - Alan Whiteside, June 11, 2024 [PDF](#)
- *Photographing Water* with Alan Whiteside
 - Part 1 [PDF](#) [VIDEO](#)
 - Part 2 [PDF](#) [VIDEO](#)