

# The Golden Hour: A Magical Time For Every Photographer

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There is a magical hour, a time when the light from the sun shines on the Earth from the side. During this hour, light is warm, soft, and perfect for taking pictures. If the light hits the clouds in the sky at just the right angle, they give off a purplish color that accents a scene in ways nothing else can. To start taking better pictures now, you need to get the most out of the Golden Hour. Here are a few ideas.

## **First of all, it's not the Golden Hour. It's the Golden Two Hours**

You get two chances each day. There's a golden hour during the sunrise and another at sunset. The sunrise hour is for go-getters who have to get to work right away, and the sunset hour is for those who are more like me and enjoy sleeping in. Either way, if you get out during one of these hours every day for a month, I can practically guarantee that you'll take more than a few interesting pictures.

And that's really the whole point of this article. Get out at sunrise and sunset as much as you can. Yes, the other hours of the day are good for taking pictures too, but the most dramatic and colorful pictures happen during the golden two hours. As a photographer, I plan my day around them. If I'm at a new shooting location, I make sure we do one session early in the morning and another as the sun is going down.

## **The Golden Hour doesn't last long**

Planning is essential. Because the golden hour is, well, only an hour, you need to make sure you're all setup by the time the light gets interesting. You don't want to be driving to the shooting location or fiddling with memory cards and lenses while your window gets shorter and shorter. Have a plan for the shot. See it in your mind's eye before you show up, and the golden hour won't pass you by.

Literally take everything into account. Think of it like it's a job interview. Be 15 minutes early (great for eating breakfast). If you have to hike somewhere, factor it in. If you need to setup your tripod, that's another 10 minutes. It all counts.

## **Bring a tripod for landscape shots during the Golden Hour**

The light during the golden hour isn't nearly as strong as the light during the middle of the day. That's a good thing, but it also means you need to bring a tripod for landscape shots. Because your camera will let in less light, meaning it will be more susceptible to the blurring that results from camera shake. A tripod (or resting your camera on an object) will keep your camera still for the shot, adding extra contrast and sharpness to all of your images.



## **Try taking some silhouettes**

The golden two hours are a great time to experiment with silhouettes. Just find an object that sits in front of the sun and set your exposure to capture the warm colors in the sky. You'll get a black form set against an incredibly colorful backdrop, just like the image above.

Being a good photographer isn't always about technique. Sometimes it's about being at the right place at the right time. The right time is the Golden Hour. So go on, get out there and take as many pictures during the golden hour as you can. You're bound to stumble on something amazing!