

Feature Photo...

A Minimalist's Approach

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While the usual photographic foray into nature may include a heavy tripod, a pro-level camera body with a booster drive, an assortment of lenses (including a long, fast and very heavy telephoto), speedlites, battery packs, flash brackets, etc., I find there's much to be said for a simpler approach. Traveling light with just a minimal amount of equipment (conveniently stored in an easy-to-carry shoulder bag) not only allows me to more fully enjoy the excursion, but eliminates the "tired as a pack mule" feeling at the end of the day as well.

Granted, there will be photo opportunities that you may have to pass up because you don't have a particular piece of equipment with you. On the other hand, learning to become a proficient minimalist pays dividends in another key way - that easy-to-carry shoulder bag is very convenient to take with you anywhere, allowing you to take advantage of everyday photo ops that might otherwise be passed up. For me, a Canon Elan 7E, EF 28-70/2.8L USM, EF 100/2.8 USM Macro and 420EX speedlite fit very comfortably in a LowePro S&F Specialist 80 AW bag, along with a small assortment of accessories. If I want to travel really light, the Elan 7E with an EF 50mm f/1.4 USM lens fits comfortably in the tiny LowePro S&F Toploader 65 AW bag. One of these bags travels with me nearly every place I go, including to work every day. A small Bogen 3001 tripod remains in the Jeep in case I need it. Over the years of practicing the minimalist approach, I have captured some images that I would have missed altogether without that small bag of equipment within easy reach.

After an enjoyable winter afternoon of photography on Fire Island, and with most of the camera equipment packed up and stored in the back of the Jeep, we made our return trip along the sandy shore. The Minimalist's bag was with us up front, easily accessible in the event a photo op materialized. As we approached these old dock pilings, which have long been reclaimed by the ocean's surf, one such opportunity presented itself. With the window rolled down and the engine turned off, I placed the camera with the EF 100/2.8 USM Macro lens attached atop a [SAC4 beanbag](#) in the window frame. With the sun poised to drop below the horizon, I captured this single frame.

As it turned out, it was the best shot of the day.

About the image...

Full frame image cropped from the top and bottom, f/5.6 in AV mode (uncompensated Evaluative metering, shutter speed unrecorded), focus locked on pilings in one-shot AF mode, Fuji Provia 100F.

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