



Eiffel Tower

I couldn't get this image of the Eiffel Tower without the tree, so I composed the shot to make the tree an integral part of the image.

Avoiding tourist clichés

Unfamiliar surroundings; unusual views

The Idea

You're always going to be shooting the most when you are somewhere new, as everything will seem so fresh and different. When you take photos in unfamiliar surroundings, you might want to avoid taking the tourist clichés, or at least avoid showing them to friends and family when you get back and boring the pants off them. If you want to find things to shoot off the beaten track, or to shoot well-known monuments in a different way, read on.

The Ingredients

- ▶ Any camera
- ▶ A car or a plane/train/bus ticket

The Process

Finding where to shoot

If you want to avoid taking the typical tourist shots of a town, it's good to find out what the locals like to shoot—after all, you don't have to live in New York very long before you get tired of taking pictures of the Statue of Liberty. Wandering around without a clue where you are going is a great way to find interesting spots, but a little research won't hurt. You can get an idea of interesting things to shoot in an area through a location search on flickr (www.flickr.com/places). This will bring up places that aren't necessarily in a guide book. If you search for a particular place, you will be shown the most relevant images for that location. Click on the big preview image and you will be taken to that photo's flickr page. Every photo is placed on a map (geotagged in geek speak) so that you can see where it was shot. On the photo's flickr page, scroll down until you see Additional Information in the right-hand column. Just under this you will find a map link; click on it to open a little map showing exactly where the photo was taken. You can narrow your search by looking for a place-particular thing. For instance, you could search for graffiti to find the best graffiti spots in a particular place. Most places have a flickr group related to them, so join that group and ask its users what the best things to shoot are. A quick search on flickr won't tell you about times and events—a little local knowledge always helps.



← **Left:**
Essaouira Fort
Getting up early to avoid the crowds is a good way to get pictures without other tourists in them. Next time you're on holiday get up early, or just stay out all night.

← **Far left:**
Curb Markings
Street markings and shop signs are often different from one town to another. They can make a big contribution to the overall character of a place.

✓ **Below left:**
Sleeping Carpet Salesman
In Morocco we were hassled to check people's wares all the time, so this salesman made a welcome change!



Shooting well-known landmarks

When you are photographing well-known attractions, it's always good to think about what else will be in your shot. Try either to exclude distracting elements or to work with them and make them a deliberate part of your picture. For me, getting a good photo is all about going the extra mile. Remember, in any place, the main tourist areas tend to be very small, so you don't have to move far to get out of them.

Focusing on details

It can also be good to pick up on little details that are unique to a place and that will make an intriguing set of photos. I did this recently when I was in San Francisco. I took shots of the curb markings, which interested me because they weren't familiar to me. In San Francisco's Chinatown I noticed that all the shoppers were carrying the same pink plastic bag. For me, the pink bags summed up the area, so that is what I shot.

It's always good to shoot the locals, and sometimes it's worth hanging around and waiting until there is no one around at all, tourists or locals, to get some uncluttered shots. If you're on holiday, you should have all the time in the world.