
3 WAYS TO SHOOT THE MOON

BY KATHLEEN DAVIS

Who doesn't want to capture the beauty of the evening moon, whether it's moody and full or just an enigmatic crescent?

But getting your exposure right can prove challenging. Here are three ways to include the moon in your scene without losing any of its mystery.

1 When the moon is full, follow the Sunny 16 rule.

Because a full moon on a clear night reflects sunlight just like the earth on a clear day, avoid getting an overexposed ball or an underexposed foreground by setting your aperture to f/16. Determine your shutter speed using the formula $1/ISO$. For example, if you're shooting at ISO 200, the shutter speed should be 1/200 sec.

2 In other phases, open up the aperture.

As the moon waxes and wanes, its brightness stays the same, but there is less light overall, so adjust by 2.5 stops in the first or third phases, and 10 or more stops when it has a thin crescent shape to get a good foreground exposure.

3 Get it early and late.

The best time to capture the moon is 10 to 20 minutes before sunrise or after sunset. The moon is distinct then, but there is still enough light to capture detail in the foreground—a rising or setting full moon is best. Look for it directly opposite the sun in the sky (in the east at dusk and the west at dawn). 