

Photographing Antelope Canyon, Arizona, Part Two



One of the important elements in any photography travel adventure is the preparation done at home before the trip.

Prior to departure, I received a packet describing the workshop and what I could expect during the trip. One of the high points for me was the assurance of a small group of no more than eight participants. The packet included a list of suggested equipment for film and digital photographers with tips for making the trip a success. I have included a list of suggested equipment below.

More than just an opportunity to take great photos, a visit to the slot canyons comes pretty close to being a spiritual experience. Lower Antelope, called Hazdistazi by the Navajo, meaning "spiral rock arches," feels in places like a cathedral, a place where water and wind has sculpted sandstone grain by grain to form swirls and arches of magnificent shapes and colors. The sandstone walls curve and bend in flowing shapes, alternating in shades of salmon, orange, purple, brown and yellow, thanks to sedimentary formations of Hematite and Geothite. As an interesting aside, evidence of [Geothite's use](#) has been found in paint pigment samples taken from the caves of Lascaux in France.

After many years of conducting photography workshops in the Southwest, Craig has developed personal and often unique relationships with places and people all over the region. One evening, everyone was invited to the home of a Navajo elder for dinner and the opportunity to photograph. Another evening, we hiked over the reservation to a magnificent overlook where we photographed and lingered until the last light was extinguished. We reluctantly traipsed back to the van with only starlight and a crescent moon to light our way.

Near the town of Page, a horseshoe-shaped bend in the Colorado River is locally known as "King Bend." Slightly downstream from Lake Powell within Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and another of Craig's favorite shooting locations, it proved a worthy outing for a few hours of photography before dinner. Horseshoe Bend overlook is 4,200 feet above sea level. Looking down upon the Colorado River from the overlook, you are perched 1,000 feet above the water, making for a spectacular overview and a great photo opportunity. Just watch your step.

An unexpected benefit of traveling with a photo group was the camaraderie of our small band of like minded photographers. Over dinner each evening, we reviewed the day's challenges and accomplishments with shared insights and tips. For anyone wanting to come away from a visit to Arizona's slot canyons, I would highly recommend a photography workshop as a memorable learning vacation that will reward you with skills lasting a lifetime.

For more than twenty years, [Craig Varjabedian](#) has explored and photographed the American Southwest. To paraphrase his experience, the area has been both his "subject and his patient teacher." He says, "Here I first learned that light has moods: it comes to life, flourishes and then dies. And sometimes, like a benediction, the photographer and the camera become aligned with the unfolding moment and an exceptional photograph is made."

The University of New Mexico Press has published a keepsake of Craig's photographic vision of the Southwest. This splendid coffee table book commemorates Ghost Ranch where Georgia O'Keeffe lived and worked and where Craig spent many years breathing in the beauty of the land. Look for the title, "Ghost Ranch and the Faraway Nearby," by [Craig Varjabedian](#).

Recommended equipment for digital photographers:

Digital or film camera with lenses. Highly recommended is a moderate to wide-angle zoom lens for photographing the canyons.

Circular polarizing filter, two batteries, battery charger

Camera Instruction Manual

Backpack Camera Bag.

Digital shooters should also bring a laptop computer or media storage device.

Media card reader, battery, battery charger, case and any necessary cables and instruction manuals.

Three or more 4 gb media cards with storage case.

If you need to rent a laptop, try Rentex at (800) 574-1702.

Camera Equipment Rental: Keeble & Shuchat. www.kspphoto.com/rental-department.html

Tripod

Backpack for camera gear

Notebook

Practical and comfortable working shoes or hiking boots.

For more information or to sign up for one of Craig Varjabedian's Eloquent Light Workshops, visit the website at www.eloquentlight.com

