



Viewpoint Mike Smith

Considering we are always using electronic devices, such as cameras and smartphones, we need to ensure they remain charged

Charging: this is the perennial bugbear of both the travel photographer and any photographer not tethered in the studio. My current Nikon D700 has an EN-EL3e battery, which is rated at 1410mAh. According to Nikon, it should give 1,000 shots. Compare this to my Fujifilm X-M1, which has the NP-W126 rated at 1,260mAh, and which should give 300 images. Similar capacities, but as the AP 3 September issue on 'DSLR vs mirrorless' showed, they have different levels of power consumption. If I go out with my Nikon, I have no worries for the day and I'm often good for the week. The same can't be said for my Fuji camera, and I always make sure I pack a spare battery. It really is worth the premium for own-brand or quality-branded batteries; they are reliable and long lasting.

But when the juice finally runs dry and you get the red flashing light in the viewfinder (or on the rear LCD in the case of my X-M1), what do you do? Or throw into the mix that you have flown for a weekend of city shooting to mainland Europe, opted for cabin baggage and you have a European electrical system to negotiate.

For any travelling I do, I only take cabin baggage, which means I'm secure in the knowledge that my camera gear is safely stowed, and boarding and landing are rapid. Consequently, though, it means I

have to pack as light as possible. Charging has therefore become a key area for optimisation as I have a phone, tablet, power brick (well, 'stick'), card reader and Bluetooth speaker, all to manage. Ah, and the camera(s) as well.

A single, simple solution

The key to keeping all this manageable and lightweight has been simplification. For me this has meant making sure all these devices can be charged using USB. Yes, the humble USB wall charger is the answer to all our charging problems. So how do you optimise this? My go-to product is the Mu folding plug charger (www.themu.co.uk). The ingenious fold makes the plug flat, small and lightweight. There are the Classic (1A), Duo (2x1.2A), Worldwide Traveller (2.4A interchangeable) and Tablet (2.4A) versions. The Duo allows two devices to charge overnight, or you can go for the Tablet with one fast charging port. The latter is my preference as I can top up rapidly.

So, my phone is microUSB (if you use an iDevice you'll need a Lightning cable) and so are the tablet, power brick, card reader and Bluetooth speaker. This means *one* charge cable for all these. But both the cameras – the Nikon and Fuji – have their own bulky charging blocks with two-core cables and three-pin plugs. I have a little more luck with my Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 Mark II, which directly charges via a microUSB!

If you visit your favourite shopping site and search, you'll find microUSB chargers for every battery imaginable. This was the last link in the chain for simplification. And finally, what about the connection to the electrical outlet? You might have expected me to go for the Mu Traveller, but I've opted for a slightly less bulky multi-travel adapter (pictured) which goes from any plug to any plug for the princely sum of €10. But you'll have to make a trip to a tourist shop in the middle of Vienna, Austria, for this!

Mike Smith is a London-based wedding and portrait photographer. Visit www.focali.co.uk



Instead of buying a costly all-in-one travel charger, Mike has opted for a less bulky multi-travel adapter for his chargers

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Daryll Jann @darylljann

While sitting on the sandstone seat of Mrs Macquarie's Chair on a peninsula of Sydney Harbour in Australia, Daryll Jann offers a view of the sunset against Sydney Opera House. He has documented the view through his medium-format camera – an unusual technique.

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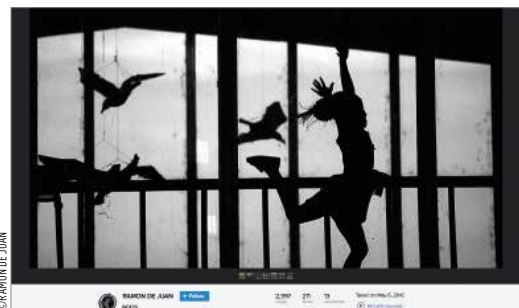
Keith Fitzgerald

Keith Fitzgerald captures the gaze of a male impala at the Lion Sands Game Reserve in South Africa. The soft background foliage is a perfect contrast to the strong form of the impala's body.

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Ramon De Juan

This image by Ramon De Juan is titled 'Los Pájaros' (Spanish for 'The Birds'). It is an excellent example of how to achieve an effective silhouette. Ramon has exposed for the highlights, and in doing so rendered the frames of the windows, the dancer and our avian friends as beautiful graphic shapes.

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