

Total time:
4-8 hours



Difficulty Level:
Challenging

Skill Points:

- Photographing celestial bodies
- Working with apps and software
- Using long exposures properly
- Composing at night

CAPTURING THE MILKY WAY

To photograph the Milky Way, it's going to take some specialized skills, equipment, research, and patience. While that may seem daunting at first, the rewards are worth it.

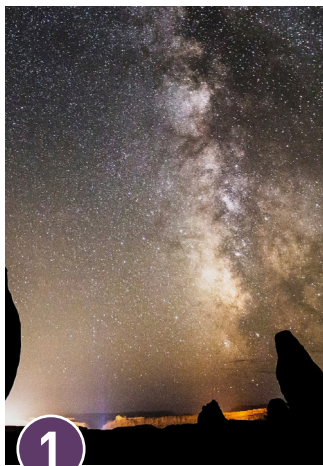


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KEY LESSON: To successfully capture a Milky Way photograph, (outside of equipment), you need the following- A location that is free of light pollution, a clear night, a proper time of the year, and the knowledge of where and when the Milky Way will appear in the sky. There are several apps to help you. *PhotoPills*, or *Skyview*, will help you find the Milky Way in the Sky. *Dark Sky Finder*, or the website *Light Pollution Atlas*, helps you to find a location with minimal light pollution. The *Dark Skies* app will help you to eliminate star trails by calculating the maximum shutter speed length for your lens.

EQUIPMENT: Camera with "Bulb" setting | Sturdy Tripod & Remote Shutter Release | Wide-angle Lens 14-24mm range 10 lb. Sandbag (optional to add weight to the tripod if it's too windy) | Post-processing software | Recommended Apps

SAMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS



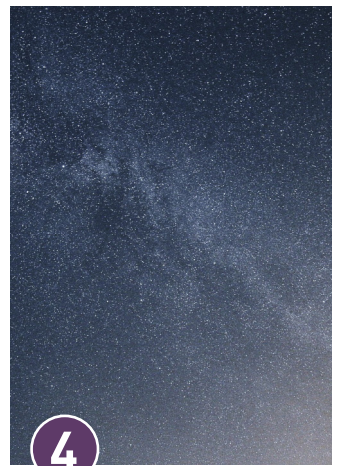
1- Light pollution can ruin your shot. You will be photographing at extended exposures.



2- Start with a simple silhouette of a structure in the foreground to add composition. If nothing is available then start by just including the sky. Eliminate star trails based upon lens focal length calculations.



3- Light pollution can also be beneficial if it's properly placed. Your exposure times will range from 20 – 50 seconds. Be aware of objects in motion that might ruin your shot.



4- An unprocessed Milky Way picture will lack color and contrast. Post-processing is a necessity.



ACTION ASSIGNMENT!

- 1-** Research a location with little or no light pollution, pick a clear night, and choose an app to help you locate the Milky Way in the sky.
- 2-** Set up your equipment. Set your lens aperture to the widest setting, and the ISO to 3200 (go to 6400 if your initial attempt is too dark). Set the shutter speed, as determined by the "600 rule" or use the "Dark Skies" app.
- 3-** Include a foreground object in silhouette, (if possible), otherwise frame for just the Milky Way in the sky.
- 4-** Use camera "Live View" - Zoom in on a star and manually focus the lens. The star should appear as a solid point with no halo. Zoom out to recompose.
- 5-** Unprocessed Milky Way photos are dull in color and contrast. Post-processing is a necessity. Shoot in camera raw. Use the Clarity, Saturation, Vibrance, and Contrast settings to make the Milky Way Pop!

HOW DID YOU DO?

- Is your shot free of star trails?
- Did your post-processing make the Milky Way pop and increase color?
- Is the Milky Way in focus?
- Did you capture an accurate exposure?

READY! SET! GO! **ACTION CARDS - STRETCH GOALS: MILKY WAY**