

HOW TO SHOOT

FIREWORKS



Where to Start

- First take the lay of the land,
- Considering possible backdrops for your fireworks photos.
 - Look for foreground objects buildings, hillsides, trees, monuments
- Then, get to the spot early to claim the high ground
- Give yourself an unobstructed view of fireworks and foreground
- Make yourself comfortable, bring a chair
- Know the length of the show
- Another key element is what are you going to do with your images

Equipment

1. Use a tripod. (light, med, and heavy)
2. Use a cable release or wireless remote to trigger the shutter
3. Turn off Long Exposure Noise Reduction. (Helpful but slow.
Some cameras have very high ISO noise reduction already so
no need to use it.)
4. Shoot the highest quality file you can. RAW is ideal.
5. Set the camera to a low ISO, such as 100 or 200.

Equipment

6. A good starting point for aperture is f/11 (no lower than f/8). You want good depth of focus. You will need to test a few shots.
7. Turn off the autofocus, Manually focus your lens at infinity prior to the show. Focus on something that is near or further than the display You can use Autofocus and then switch to manual.

Equipment

Lenses:

- Shoot the fastest lens you can
 - 35mm f/1.4 for close shows where I want some foreground
 - 18-55mm f/2.8-4 for close shows where I can get foreground and zoom in to fill the frame
 - 55-200 f/ 3.5-4.8 for a little more distance
 - 100-400 f/ 4.5-5.6 for extreme distance
 - Old Tokina 60-300 f/4-5.6 for experimenting (push/pull zoom)

Timing

Instead of choosing a shutter speed, set the camera to Bulb (B) which allows you to keep the shutter open as long as you want. Expose for the entire fireworks burst. You can even keep the shutter open for multiple bursts. This can get a little cluttered

I also count potential timing. From the time I hear the launch boom I start counting until the burst happens. 1001, 1002, etc. The time will depend on your distance from the display. If you are too far away, wait until you see the streak of the rocket and start counting. That will give you an idea of the timing of your shutter. If for example you see the streak and it takes to the count of three before the burst, set your shutter to 4 or 6 seconds. You will get the streak and the burst.

Timing

- Excellent time to shoot fireworks is Blue Hour. But it doesn't last long.
- Thinking about layering your firework images into other pictures or combining a few into one image, then the black sky background is the way to go. It can easily be removed with blending modes
- Watch the ambient lights. Parking lot lights, street lights, city lights, etc.

Blue Hour



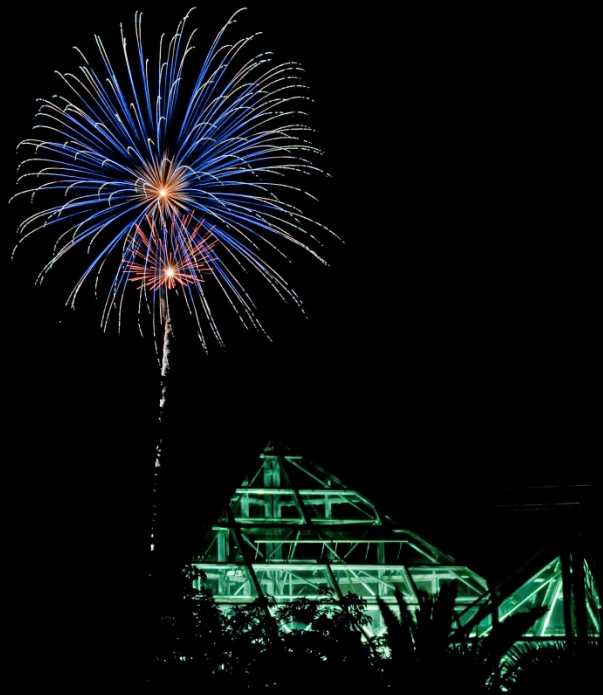
Trails



Fill the Frame



Foreground



Create Things



Composites



Composites



Favorite







Art



Art



Art



Cell Phone



Hand Held

- Buy your own fireworks, small stuff
- Use the fastest lens you have
- Don't go to wide, stay in the 35-50 mm range
- You will have to experiment a few times
- Stand as close as you can – SAFELY
- Try to pre focus
- If your camera has high speed shutter, 3-5 fps
- I Use a 35mm f1.4

Hand Held



Original



Cropped

35 mm, ISO 160, 1/0.5 sec. f1.4

Hand Held



Hand Held



Hand Held

