



Where Can I Get Photographs?

Travel is always an adventure and it is photographs that bring it to life.

Have you ever seen a travel article without photos, or at least some drawings? Photos are the essence of travel writing, and the first question an editor will ask when you submit a story is "Where can I get photographs?"

Your job, then, is to answer the question. The best way is to take photos yourself, for two reasons. First, because it answers the editor's question and makes her/his job easier. Second, because most publications pay extra for photos, so you'll earn fees for both the writing and the illustrations.

You needn't be a professional photographer to shoot for most publications (especially newspapers), but you must be better than an amateur. You don't need fancy equipment. What you need is an acquaintance with the basics of photography: looking at scenes as patterns of light and contrast, shooting with the sun at your back, filling the frame so there's not a lot of blank space around your chosen image--that sort of thing.

Take a quick photography course, or simply buy a beginner's photography manual and study it. Look at travel photos in newspapers and magazines and see what the photographers do.

If you really don't want to get involved in photography, there's another way: locate available photos. The editor wants to know where to get the photos, and if you can't provide them, you can at least provide the name and phone number of a chamber of commerce, state tourism office, national tourism office or stock photo house which can provide them.

Your job as a writer is to make the editor's job easy. Do it, and editors will always buy your stuff.