

Ring in the Magic

Each photographer on a travel expedition strives endlessly to be 'at the chosen place at the right time'. We wake up in the wee hours of the morning and stay up late into the chilly evenings, not to forget the long drives we embark upon to make it on time. So, what does this right time mean? Why is there a rush for that time? I would like to call it, 'The Gold Rush'.

The eternal wait - A photographer's delight

We all know that light is crucial in photography. Understanding how it behaves, and the factors that influence it are mandatory. Having said this, the right time we are talking about, is with reference to the best light available in a day for photography. To be present at the 'right time' and capitalize on the 'best light' are two major goals for any shutterbug.

"In almost all photography it's the quality of light that makes or breaks the shot. For professional photographers, chasing the light, waiting for it, sometimes helping it, and finally capturing it is a constant preoccupation — and for some an obsession." said Mr Michael Freeman, the British photographer.

So true that nature presents herself in her best form, with colours and shades of the right tonal quality of light. There is a magic to it and hence we chase it.

When it comes to sunlight overall, we can distinguish different light phases based on the elevation of the sun, such as



I Want to Break Free © Hema Narayanan EFIP, AFIAP, cMoL, QPSA f/11, ISO 400 Golden hour of the morning

1) golden hour, 2) blue hour, 3) twilights, 4) daytime and 5) night-time.

In this article, let us take a deep dive and look at the Golden and the Blue hour.

The Golden Hour

It is that elusive window of time in a day when everything around us has a brilliant aura. We are lucky to get two such windows in a day to work behind our camera.

Golden hour is the period during the day, which is shortly after sunrise or before sunset, when the colour of the sky goes from red and orange to yellow or, as its name suggests, golden tones, having a warm colour temperature. The texture

of the light is distinct too and thus photographers and cinematographers call them the 'Magic Hours!'

Several reasons exist why this light, right before sunrise and after sunset, is so sought after. It comes with the following characteristics:

- Light is soft, diffused and has less contrast, as the sun is low in the sky
- As the contrast is less, the shadows are less dark, and highlights are less likely to be overexposed
- No sharp shadows exist because the sun has not risen nor has set
- Light is directional, giving lovely side lighting to accentuate subjects
- Daylight is redder and softer than when the sun is higher in the sky
- Above all, most colours of the spectrum are visible

Typically, the magic hour is close to 30 minutes, yet the golden hour window is around, two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset. This lighting is useful to most genres of photography, such as street, architecture, portraits, and landscape. Especially in landscape photography, the warm colours of the low sun are often desirable to enhance the colours of the scene.

In short, golden hour is the best time of day for any type of photography since the light is properly diffused and warm.



Golden Summit © Hema Narayanan EFIP, AFIAP, cMoL, QPSA f/8, ISO 100, Exposure Compensation of -0.67. Golden hour in the evening



Tranquility © Hema Narayanan EFIP, AFIAP, cMoL, QPSA

f/6.3, ISO 125. Blue hour in the evening

There is a marked elevation to the frames created at this time.

The Blue Hour

If golden hour is that exclusive, then what is the Blue hour? Well, it is that period during the day, which is shortly before the magic hour at sunrise or after at sunset. This is the time when the sun is far enough below the horizon, and the existing residual, indirect sunlight in the blue wavelengths takes on a predominantly blue shade. This is why the sky has a deep blue hue with a

cold colour temperature and saturated colours. There is a gradient of colours, from blue to orange, right in the place of sunset and sunrise, at the beginning (morning) and at the end (evening).

Blue hour is usually ideal for:

- City and urban photography, since the buildings are still lit and streetlights on
- Landscape photography, due to the different shades of the sky and colour saturation

- Moon photography because the blue hour occurs during twilight.

In summary, coming back to where we started, this is why it is important to carefully plan for a right timing when you travel. Starting time and duration of these light phases also depend on the location one is at. In addition, by understanding when each phase occurs and its light conditions, one can assess what type of photography will be most suitable for each moment.

So, ring in your next travel by predicting and planning right. Be shutter-ready to click those frames, when the sun kisses the horizon, be it the morning or the evening!



Glory of Badami © Hema Narayanan EFIP, AFIAP, cMoL, QPSA

f/8, 0.08 seconds, ISO 200



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