

Natural Framing

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Give your photos a finishing touch with natural framing - the art of using everyday objects to frame your photos. Use doorways, windows, tunnels, bridges, trees, and rock faces in your pictures to give them a great finished look. Take whatever you can find in your daily surroundings, as long as it provides a "natural frame" on at least two sides of the subject.



Click any photo for a larger example.

Natural framing gives your photos a sense of continuity. It provides a frame of reference for the eye that makes the subject easier and more pleasing to look at. For example, if you're taking photos of birds, why not use the tree branches to frame the subject? This will give your subject a sense of placement within its environment, and provide natural borders to the photo that help guide the viewer and make for a more pleasing visual experience.



In this example, the canal is used to naturally frame the photo.

Another advantage of natural framing is that you avoid having to do much editing later. A lot of amateur photographers rely on the crop tool in their digital image software to frame their photos after they've been taken. Though cropping may give the impression a photo has been properly framed, it can also cause you some problems later on down the line when you want export your work.

Below is a fantastic photo that was framed really well to begin with -- no cropping necessary.



If you don't intend to run full-screen slide shows for friends and family, or print out any enlargements, then the limitations of cropping shouldn't concern you. If you'd like to retain as much flexibility in your images as possible, and have a natural ambience to your pictures, then there are a few tips you can follow to get great results.

Look for both natural peripheral (side) borders that might frame your shot nicely give the subject of your photo. Fitting tree into your side borders, with foliage along the top border, looks great when shooting quiet, serene, nature oriented subject matter.

Using the sides of derelict building, or industrial piping, will look better if you're taking pictures with a more somber mood. It all depends on the result you want. Juxtaposing a man-made natural frame with a lush, verdant landscape as subject matter might make for a beautiful contrast.



Try to ensure that you are getting just the right amount of foreground and background in you photos. There's no hard and fast rule for specific amounts, as they'll also change according to what kind of photo you're taking. That being said, here are some general guidelines:

- The horizon should usually be above the middle of the photo.
- In people shots, foreground should be minimized, while in landscape shots foreground lends better perspective.
- Likewise, don't allow too much additional space on either side of your subjects in people shots. They'll get lost in it.

These tips should help keep you from having to use your crop tool too often.

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