

DESERT INSTITUTE
at Joshua Tree National Park Association
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Spring Session
2023

Salton Sea Photography Workshop

Information

Date/Time: Sunday, Feb. 12th, 10a-sunset

Meeting location: Bombay Soleil, 2126 2nd St., Bombay Beach, CA 92257

Instructor: Sandi Wheaton, Photography Instructor and tour guide

Overview

The Salton Sea, California's largest lake, was formed by accident in 1905 by an engineering mishap during irrigation of the Imperial Valley. Over time, it has been a hotbed for sports fishing, a recreational area boasting more visitors than Yosemite, and an important wetland for migratory birds - and more recently, a haven for artists. The sea's decaying ruins, plentiful birdlife, intriguing off-the-grid culture, and gorgeous light have made it something of a Mecca for photographers. Sandi Wheaton has been traveling to the Salton Sea annually to document its constantly changing landscape since 2004, and knows exactly where the great places are for interesting photographs. Your tour will start with coffee/tea and a slideshow at Bombay Soleil (Sandi's studio in Bombay Beach), introducing you to the area, its history, and the sites you will be visiting. You will then head out to explore and photograph inspiring art sites like Leonard Knight's Salvation Mountain (featured in the movie "Into the Wild"), East Jesus sculpture garden, and the growing art community of Bombay Beach. At the end of the day, you will spend time capturing sunset among the beautiful natural landscapes and seascapes along the southeast shores of the Salton Sea. Please note that the Salton Sea is constantly changing, and some of the iconic structures that have been popular to photograph are rapidly disappearing – but new great photo locations are revealing themselves as well!

Itinerary

Sunday Feb.12, 10 am – sunset

Meet at Bombay Soleil, Sandi's studio in Bombay Beach, 10am

- Introduction to the Salton Sea history and landscape, followed by time to explore and photograph Bombay Beach
- Bring your own food for lunch, eat when you like - or you can get food at the Ski Inn in Bombay Beach (it will just limit your shooting time in Bombay Beach)
- Caravan to various locations for photography as follows (additional locations nearby may be added at instructor's discretion):
 - Slab City / East Jesus Sculpture Garden
 - Salvation Mountain
 - Sunset shoot near south end of sea
- Camera and shooting instruction will take place on the field, as desired by individual participants

What to pack

Camera and shooting equipment

- Camera (digital SLR or mirrorless preferred, not just a "phone camera")
- Tripod (highly recommended for sunset/evening shoot)
- Lenses (zoom and/or prime lenses that range from wide angle to telephoto)
- Filters (optional; UV is important to protect lenses, and circular polarizer is recommended)
 - UV
 - Polarizer
 - Graduated Neutral Density, if desired
- **Your camera user manual**
- Extra batteries (perhaps bring camera battery charger and car adaptor/inverter to charge batteries in car)
- Extra memory cards
- Camera bag
- Remote shutter release (optional, not really necessary if camera has short self-timer option)
- Lens cleaning cloths or tissues

Other items

- Rubber boots are not required, but are recommended if you want to get close to (or in) the water while photographing - it's extremely soft and muddy at water's
- sun protection: long-sleeved lightweight shirt, visor or hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- closed-toe shoes appropriate for long days on feet
- water (suggested 3 litres per person)
- snacks/food

Fitness Requirements

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Moderate, as you will be out in the elements on your feet, walking, and focusing on the activity for a full day

Instructor Biography

SANDI WHEATON is a freelance tour director and photography instructor based in Windsor, ON and the Salton Sea, CA. After being downsized from General Motors in 2009, she took a life-changing drive across America on historic Route 66, creating three photography projects and an award-winning travel blog. One of Sandi's greatest passions and long-term photography projects is the ecologically-troubled Salton Sea in southern California. She has been visiting and photographing the Salton Sea since 2004, sharing the work through several solo exhibitions over the years. A true globetrotter, Sandi leads photography tours in Iceland and California, has taught Forensic Photography at the University of Windsor, and travels far and wide with Crystal Cruises as a guest lecturer, teaching "Creative Media Fundamentals".

* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant's needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.