



PHOTOGRAPHY: IN-FIELD CHARGING OPTIONS AND LENS CARE

ABR's photography expert, **Simon Thomas**, shares 12-years worth of knowledge on how to keep your camera equipment charged and safe on the road

Words and images: Simon Thomas

It's like playing Russian roulette! It's not a question of 'if' your camera gear is going to get covered in crap and run out of charge, it's when.

It's all too easy to get 'out there', surrounded by stunning mountains and inspiring scenery, only to find that when you pull out your camera gear all you see is either a low battery warning or a malfunctioning lens. Say goodbye to that perfect shot that you had lined up.

More often than not, Lisa and I are way off the beaten track in some far-flung and remote corner of the earth. Over the years we've learnt a few tricks of the adventure trade that allow us to manage our power needs and minimize the risk of our precious camera gear getting damaged. Some of them may sound obvious but when you're exhausted, dehydrated and riding your bike at 17,000 feet, sometimes obvious just isn't obvious enough.

More cameras today are becoming power savvy and offering multiple charging options. If you're heading out, look to pick up a camera with USB charging facilities. There are a couple of considerations here. One is simply the fast and easy option to breath life back into your dead camera's battery pack via any USB outlet and second, you can leave that bulky plastic battery charger and tangled cable at home. One less thing to pack.

For a few years Lisa and I regularly plugged our cameras into the USB cabling we'd installed on our bikes and jammed our cameras into some crevice or another. Not a bad charging solution

but along with the plethora of other accessories we eventually hooked up, all those wires soon resembled a rat's nest.

Today life's a little neater and simpler. Each morning we connect our ultra high capacity portable battery (Weego JS6) into the USB outlet installed on both bikes and we're good to go. There's a slew of new portable batteries on the market, but the Weego JS6 is easily the most powerful, smallest and fastest charging unit we've ever used. It'll also take a beating. We saw one run over by a truck. It didn't blink, just carried on working. With a day's charge, our J6 will jump-start both our R1200GSA and F800GS multiple times. This little baby will actually jump-start a 4.6-litre diesel engine. Crucially it will also fully recharge all our cameras (we have six), our video cameras, iPhone, iPod and SENA communication devices. You've got to love modern tech.

Simple is good. We now have an easy to manage daily routine that allows us to keep all our camera batteries charged and ready to use.

Here are a few other top tips that will keep your camera gear in good shape whilst out on the road.

1 If your camera lenses have VR (Vibration Reduction), make sure that when the lenses are travelling, the VR button on the lens is switched to the OFF position. Trust me, this will potentially save you thousands of your hard earned



KEEPING CAMERA EQUIPMENT SAFE IS VITAL FOR SIMON AND LISA



ONE ON-THE-GO CHARGING SOLUTION



TURN YOUR CAMERA'S VR OFF

pounds. With the VR left ON, even when the lenses are not connected to a camera body, VR lenses will be thrown into a working frenzy. They will interpret the rolling motion from the road and vibration from your bike as camera shake. This overload can ruin the lens or at least the expensive VR facility.

2 In wet weather, if you don't have a rain cover, cut a lens-sized hole in the end of a zip lock bag and slide your camera and lens into the open end. Then use a rubber band or something similar to secure the plastic around your lens. This will keep the worst of the weather from killing your camera.

3 Make sure that each time you swap lenses your lens caps are in place

and being used. It might sound obvious but scratched lenses will ruin your shots.

4 If you're carrying your camera gear in your tank bag (recommended) make sure that your tank-bag's rain cover is within arm's reach and easily accessible. When that wall of water is rolling your way, you need to make sure that you can keep your precious gear dry and safe quickly. We keep ours in our small Touratech waterproof pannier bags attached on the rider's side of one of the panniers. Job done.

5 Use a liner inside your tank bag to keep the worst of the weather and dust from reaching your camera gear. Have fun out there. **ABR**



SIMON THOMAS

Simon and Lisa Thomas have ridden their way into a life that most of us can only imagine. This year is the start of their 12th year on the road and in those years the duo has amazed an insane 420,000 miles on their ride through 78 countries and six continents. Along the way they've traversed 27 deserts, survived a broken neck in the Amazon Jungle, cheated death and become professional photographers, writers and public speakers. www.2ridetheworld.com

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