Changing perspective

As a travel photographer it’s my job to make you want to go somewhere. It’s my job to portray a place in such a way that the viewer of the image is inspired to go see it for themselves, and as such the image effectively becomes a sales pitch. To achieve this can often mean having to find a new angle or a new perspective. Let’s take this example: –

Here I am standing in front of Skógafoss, perhaps Icelands most famous and most visited waterfall. This waterfall throws

a cascade of water from the Skóga river over a 49 foot wide lip, plummeting 200 feet to the base of the former sea cliffs to flow through the coastal lowlands and out to the sea. There are many factors driving tourists to this particular waterfall. Firstly, it’s so easily accessible, being situated on the main ring road and the walk to it is short and flat. There are other things, however. There’s the legend that the first Viking settler, Þrasi Þórólfsson, buried a treasure behind the waterfall in a cave. There’s the geological factors of it’s size which I’ve mentioned above. There’s the troll face in the rocks towards the top of the falls. There’s a lot about Skógafoss to bring people here.

But here’s the thing: – To shoot Skógafoss is akin to shooting the Eiffel Tower. I could shoot it all day long and struggle to get a shot that hasn’t been seen a hundred times already. That’s what I want to throw out there today for you all to think about in your travel photography. I want you to challenge yourselves that the next time you shoot something,

get more than one view, more than one perspective, and strive to find a view that you haven’t seen before of that subject in your planning and preparation. Hopefully when you’re planning a location shoot you’re scouring Instagram, 500px, Pinterest, FourSquare, and using what you find to plan your shoot, and if you’re shooting a perspective that you’ve seen during your research you aren’t breaking the mould. For me on my latest trip to Iceland, I wanted to catch a new perspective of Skógafoss. Every tour bus and rental car is parked in the lot up front, right at the edge of the village of Skógar next to the hotel and restaurant, so that’s the perspective all of those people are getting. They’re setting up tripods and catching the flowing water, they’re catching the scale of the falls between the two cliffs, and they’re hustling for their selfies. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying don’t do that, I’ve done all of it: –

(I’ll spare you the selfie this time)

To achieve my challenge of finding a perspective on Skógafoss which is lesser seen I had to remove myself from that situation. I had to not be where all those tourists were. Looking around the area I noticed a spot way back by the main road where the river flowed under a bridge, and it was from there that I spotted my foreground. Here’s a shot from my

phone from right there: –

So I’d found the rough spot, now I had to just move about a little and find the composition I wanted. To my right there was a huge field of Lupines and I knew that was my foreground

so I got myself set up right there in front of them and got my shot.

The moral of the story is this: –

If you shoot something that’s been shot a thousand times in the same way that everybody else shoots it, it’s going nowhere. If you challenge yourself to find a new angle, a new perspective, and give people a view they don’t recognise of a subject that they do, you’re onto a winner.

https://layersmagazine.com/changing-perspective.html