

The iPad

FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

Master the Newest Tool in Your Camera Bag



JEFF CARLSON

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PEACHPIT PRESS

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Jeff Carlson

Peachpit Press

1249 Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
510/524-2178
510/524-2221 (fax)

Find us on the Web at: www.peachpit.com

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Project Editor: Susan Rimerman

Production Editor: Tracey Croom

Copyeditor/Proofreader: Scout Festa

Indexer: Karin Arrigoni

Composition: Jeff Carlson

Cover Design/Photo Collage: Mimi Heft

Interior Design: Mimi Heft

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For Steve. Thank you.

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Introduction

Photographers carry gear. It doesn't matter whether you're a pro with multiple camera bodies and lenses or a casual shooter with an ever-present point-and-shoot camera—there's always stuff to pack along. And if you're traveling or away from your office or studio, part of that gear typically includes a laptop for reviewing and backing up the photos you take. Too often I've heard friends who are about to go on vacation moan that they needed to bring a bulky computer just to handle their digital photos.

The iPad is changing all that.

Measuring less than half an inch thick and weighing about 1.3 pounds, the iPad is a fantastic device to take in the field. With the addition of the inexpensive iPad Camera Connection Kit, you can import photos directly from a camera or memory card and view them on the iPad's large color screen, revealing details that the relatively puny LCD on the back of your camera may obscure. More important, a rich array of photography apps and related products is adding to the list of things the iPad can do with those photos: rate and add keywords, perform color adjustments, retouch blemishes, and share the results online.

Oh, and don't forget all of the iPad's other capabilities: browsing the Web, accessing your email, reading ebooks, playing movies and music, and, as they say, so much more.

Can You Really Leave the Laptop Behind?

Although the iPad can do a lot that you would have needed a laptop to do just two years ago, there are still some important limitations that you should keep in mind when you decide whether a laptop stays at home.

If you're generating a significant amount of image data—over 32 gigabytes (GB)—then storage becomes a problem. As this book goes to press, the current highest-capacity iPad holds 64 GB. You can free up some memory by removing apps, music, videos, and the like, but if you're filling multiple 16 GB or 32 GB cards with photos, the iPad won't work as a repository of your shots. (But I detail several workarounds in Chapter 1.)

One solution is to buy a lot of memory cards and use them as you would film canisters. The originals stay on the cards, while the keepers remain on the iPad; you delete the ones you don't want as you cull through them. Fortunately, memory cards are inexpensive now. *Unfortunately*, they're small and easy to lose. Make sure you know where they are, label them accurately, and keep them protected.

If you capture raw-formatted images, you won't benefit from the same level of editing that a dedicated application on a desktop computer can offer. With a few exceptions, all image editing occurs on JPEG versions of the raw files, and exports as JPEG files (see Chapter 4 for more details).

So, to answer my question, in many circumstances yes, you can leave the laptop behind. If you're going to trek across Africa for four weeks, that's likely not realistic, but for most day trips or short vacations, the iPad makes a great companion.

Which iPad Should You Use?

If you don't already own an iPad, here are some guidelines for choosing one that will be a worthwhile addition to your camera bag.

For the reasons mentioned, I recommend getting the highest-capacity iPad that's available (and that you can afford). That gives you plenty of room to store photos and apps; some image editors make a copy of a photo to work with, so you could easily fill a couple of gigabytes just editing. Plus, it's an iPad, not just an extra hard disk, so you'll want to store music, movies, books, and all sorts of other media.

You also need to choose whether to buy a model that connects to the Internet via Wi-Fi only or that includes 3G cellular networking. For photographic uses, 3G isn't as important, because you're likely to burn up your data allotment quickly if you transfer images to sharing sites or to online backup sources like Dropbox. (And it's turning out that even when a cellular provider offers "unlimited" data plans, they're not really unlimited.) I personally find the 3G capability useful in general iPad use, but not necessarily for photo-related uses.

In terms of which iPad model to get if you don't own one yet, I'd argue for the latest model. As I write this, the successor to the iPad 2 is rumored to be just a few weeks away; it will most certainly offer better processing performance and hopefully more storage and internal memory, all good factors when working with photos. If you can buy an iPad 2 for a good price, it too is a great model for photographers (obviously, it's what I used in writing this book). The original iPad will also work, but as apps and the iOS advance, its processor—and especially its small amount of working memory—is going to start showing its age.

Notes About this Book

As you read, you'll run into examples where I've adopted general terms or phrases to avoid getting distracted by details. For example, I frequently refer to the "computer" or the "desktop" as shorthand for any traditional computer that isn't the iPad. Although the iPad is most certainly a computer, I'm making the distinction between it and other computing devices, such as laptops, towers, all-in-one machines, and other hardware that runs Mac OS X or Windows. When those details are important to a task, I note specific applications or computers.

I also assume you're familiar with the way an iPad works—using gestures such as taps and swipes, syncing with a computer, connecting to the Internet, charging the battery, and otherwise taking care of your tablet. If you're brand new to the iPad, allow me a shameless plug as I encourage you to buy my *iPad Pocket Guide* (also from Peachpit Press).

Don't be surprised when you frequently run across the phrase, "As I write this." Both the iPad and software useful to photographers are advancing rapidly. A great example is the app Photosmith 2, which was in its pre-beta testing stage while I wrote Chapter 3. Products that enable you to copy photos from the iPad to an external USB hard disk were also just starting to hit the market. And, of course, the successor to the iPad 2 was also on the (rapidly approaching) horizon.

To stay abreast of the changing field, be sure to visit the companion site for this book, www.ipadforphotographers.com, where I'll post updates and information related to the newest tool in your camera bag.

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CHAPTER 1

The iPad on Location

Through the years, I've hauled various laptops on vacations and business trips, and although the computers have gotten smaller and lighter over time, carrying one and its assorted peripherals still takes up a lot of space and weight. In contrast, the iPad's slim size and weight makes it an ideal traveling companion. As a photographer, you probably already carry a fair amount of gear. Wouldn't you like to lighten your bag further?

Instead of squinting at the LCD panel on the back of the camera, view your shots on the iPad's brilliant 9.7-inch screen and pick out details in the middle of a shoot that you may miss through the viewfinder. You can also use the iPad as a remote photo studio. Sort, rate, and apply metadata to the images while you're traveling, or edit and share them to your favorite social networks. And then, when you're back at home or in your studio, bring the photos into your computer, ready for further editing in Lightroom or other software. Whether "on location" is somewhere truly remote or just your back yard, the iPad can be your new photographer's assistant.

Shoot Raw or JPEG (or Both)?

Before stepping outside, it’s important to figure out how you want to capture the images that will end up on the iPad. The question of whether to shoot images in raw format or JPEG format initially seems irrelevant to the iPad—the device can import both types. But choosing one (or both) leads to considerations that ripple through the entire iPad workflow. So let’s take the time to look at this first. (The table below provides a quick overview of the discussion.)

Raw image files contain the unaltered information captured by the camera’s image sensor, which provides much more data to work with when editing in a desktop program such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, or Apple’s Aperture. In general, professional and intermediate cameras offer a raw capture option.

JPEG files, on the other hand, are processed within the camera before they’re saved. Each image is color corrected, sharpened, compressed, and adjusted in other ways to create what the camera believes is the best image.

When brought into an image editor on the desktop, a JPEG file doesn’t offer as much image data and therefore can’t be edited as thoroughly as a raw file. For example, you’re more likely to successfully pull detail out of shadow areas with a raw file than with a JPEG. All digital cameras can capture JPEG images; for some models, JPEG is the only choice.

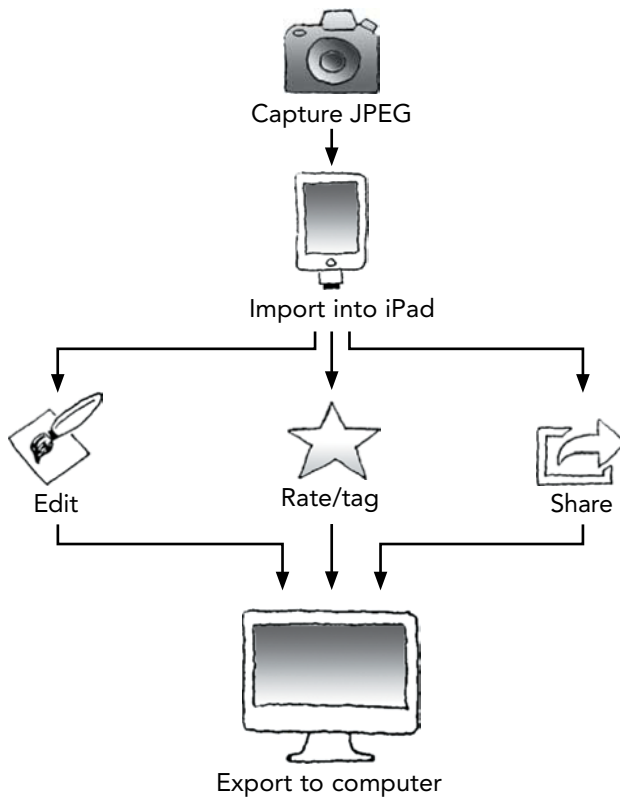
Read on for an overview of the options. Although I assume you want to shoot raw if you’re able to—after all, the ultimate consideration is usually image quality—some situations may call for you to switch formats.

	Import to iPad	Rate & Tag Images	Edit Images	Sync to Computer
JPEG	Fast	Yes	Yes, but limited image information is available. Quality starts out compressed. Edited versions are saved as copies.	Easy import into desktop software or folder
Raw	Slower	Yes	Not directly in most apps. Edits apply to the JPEG preview. Lose the full advantage of editing raw files.	Raw files are imported into desktop software; any edited versions (JPEGs) are imported separately.
Raw+ JPEG	Slowest; uses the most disk space	Yes; treated as one image	JPEG portion is edited, while raw remains untouched. JPEG is often better quality than auto-generated preview.	Bring raw files and edited JPEGs into desktop software; delete other JPEGs (depending on software).

Shoot JPEG

If your camera doesn't shoot in raw format, JPEG is your only option. You might also choose to capture JPEGs when you're deliberately shooting snapshots that need to be processed or shared quickly, or when you want to employ the simplest workflow (1.1).

1. Capture photos in JPEG format on your camera.
2. Import the photos into the iPad (discussed in detail later in this chapter).
3. Review the photos using the Photos app.
4. Optionally edit, rate, tag, or share pictures.
5. Synchronize the pictures to photo software on your computer when you're back at home or the office.



1.1 Workflow for shooting in JPEG format

The main advantage of the JPEG workflow is that it's largely friction free. Photos occupy less storage space on the iPad, making even the lowest-capacity model (16 GB) workable for holding pictures on location. You also deal with just one set of images, unlike with raw files (as you'll see shortly).

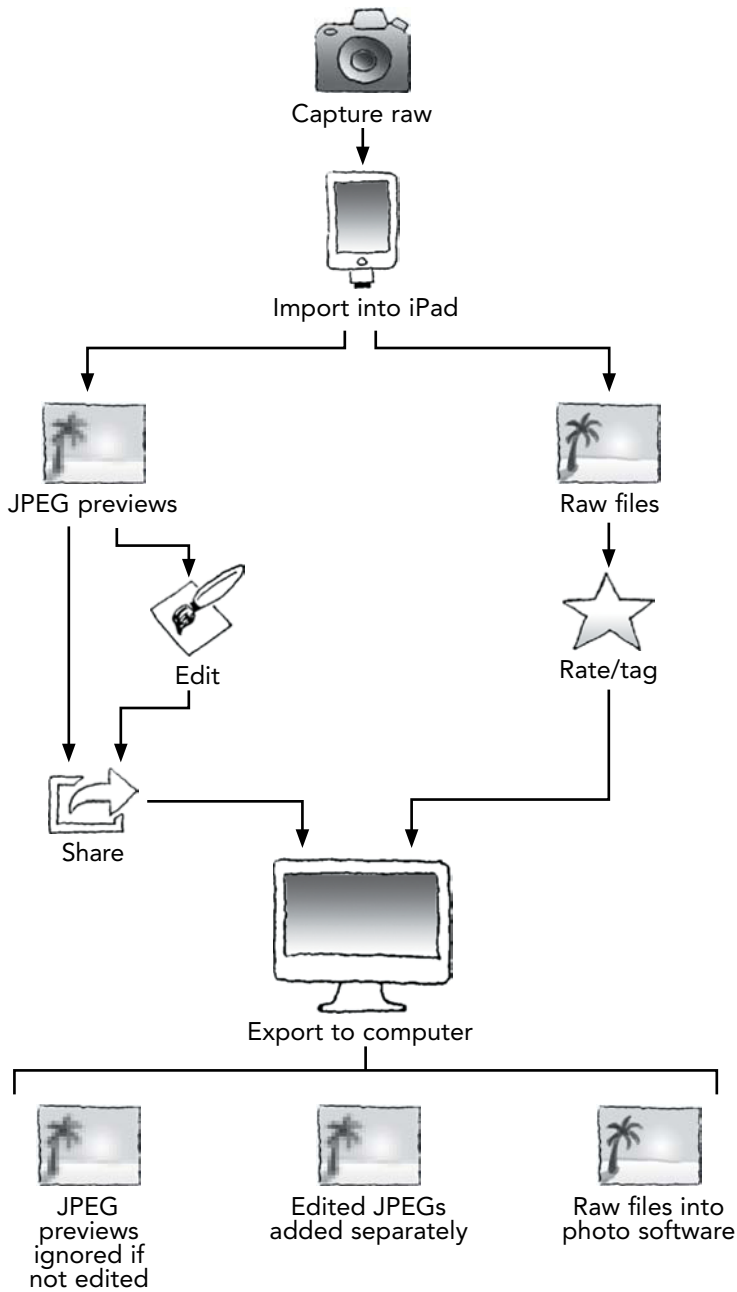
The primary disadvantage is that JPEG images are compressed and corrected within the camera, so you're not getting the fullest possible image data. Editing images, whether on the iPad or on the desktop, further reduces image quality, because the JPEG format applies lossy compression—image data is removed from the file whenever it's saved. If you edit the images on the iPad, many editing apps apply still more compression when they output the corrected JPEG files. When you bring the photos into the computer, you don't have as much latitude for editing them.

I don't mean to sound alarmist, as if shooting in JPEG is going to produce muddled images or as if you need to go out and buy an expensive DSLR to end up with decent photos. JPEG compression is based on how the eye perceives images and is generally very good. It's just that, when compared to working with a raw file, JPEG files start you at a disadvantage.

Shoot Raw

Capturing photos in raw format adds some complexity to the iPad workflow (1.2). Although the iPad can import raw files, it can't edit them natively (in most cases; see Chapter 4 to learn about apps that are able to manipulate raw files directly). Instead, any editing or sharing is done on JPEG previews supplied by the camera.

1. Capture photos in raw format on your camera.
2. Import the pictures into the iPad.
3. If you edit or share photos on the iPad, the work is done on the JPEG previews. Edited versions are saved as new JPEG files, and the raw files remain untouched.
4. If you rate and tag photos using the app Photosmith, the metadata is retained when photos are exported from the iPad to the photo software on your computer (see Chapter 3).
5. Since any images you edited on the iPad are separate versions, they're added to your photo software. For images you didn't edit, the JPEG previews are ignored.



- **TIP** One option is to consider editing on the iPad a temporary step: Edit images to share them quickly when you know you won't be back at the computer for a while, and then dump those edited versions when syncing to the computer, where you can edit the originals with better tools.

The advantage to the raw workflow is that you retain all of the image data for later editing, giving you the most flexibility with the photos on the desktop. Also, metadata that you add in Photosmith stays with the raw images when imported into Lightroom, so you don't need to undertake another round of rating and keyword tagging.

However, a main disadvantage is that raw files occupy much more storage space, which is an issue if you're shooting hundreds or thousands of photos. Most editing apps work only on JPEG previews, so you can't take full advantage of the raw image data unless you use a dedicated raw editing app. Also, unless the iPad is acting as just temporary storage between camera and computer, you end up with separate JPEG versions that must also be imported (unless you dump the JPEG versions).

Shoot Raw+JPEG

For cameras that support it, a third option is to shoot in Raw+JPEG mode. In this case, the camera writes two files: the raw file, plus a JPEG file as specified by the camera settings instead of an automatically generated preview file. The workflow looks something like this (1.3):

1. Shoot photos using the camera's Raw+JPEG mode.
2. Import the photos into the iPad, which displays just one thumbnail for each image and a "RAW+JPG" badge, although each image is made up of a raw file and a JPEG file.
3. Optionally edit and/or share photos, which applies to the JPEG counterpart for each photo. Edited images are saved as new JPEG files.
4. Rate and tag images in Photosmith. When you do so, the Raw+JPEG pair is treated as a single image.
5. Export the photos to your computer. The Raw+JPEG pair is treated as one image, although you can choose to work on the versions separately; Aperture, for example, gives you the option to import just the raw file, to import just the JPEG, or to import both files and specify which is the "master" for the pair.

