

## Salton Sea Photography Workshop

### Information

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Date/ Time: Sunday, January 19, 9 am – sunset  
Meet at: [Sandi Wheaton's home](#)  
2126 2nd St., Niland, CA, 92257  
Instructor: Sandi Wheaton, Tour Guide / Photography Instructor

### Overview

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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. Currently the sea is lined with dead fish and is shrinking fast, and its 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 and knows exactly where the great places are for interesting photographs. In this workshop, you will explore the east shores and discover inspiring art sites like Leonard Knight's Salvation Mountain (featured in the movie "Into the Wild") and East Jesus sculpture garden, as well as spend time capturing 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

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Sunday, January 19, 9 am - sunset

*Sandi Wheaton's home*

- Introduction to digital photography / camera operation (indoors), followed by hands-on outdoor shooting at North Shore
- Caravan to various locations for photography as follows (additional locations nearby may be added at instructor's discretion):
- Bombay Beach
- Lunch break, **bring your own food or join Sandi for lunch at the Ski Inn in Niland**
- Salvation Mountain and East Jesus Sculpture Garden
- Sunset shoot

## What to Bring to the Course

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- Camera (digital SLR or mirrorless preferred, not just a “phone camera”)
- Tripod (highly recommended for sunset 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
- **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

### *The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert*

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

## Fitness Requirements

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Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

## Hike Level

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Easy

## Guidelines

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- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.

- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.

### **Instructor Biography**

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SANDI WHEATON is a freelance tour director and photography instructor based in Canada. 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 week-long photography tours in Iceland and California, has taught Forensic Photography at the University of Windsor, and teaches "Moviemaking Made Fun" on a cruise ship.

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