

C H A S I N G  
WILD  
HORSES

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How to Photograph Wild Horses  
In the Wild



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PHOTOGRAPHY



Hey I'm Jennifer, an environmentally conscious fine art photographer with a decade of experience capturing the essence of wild landscapes and creatures. I have a bucket list to document twenty unique herds of horses around the world as part of my [Wild We Roam](#) collection.

I've already checked five of the locations off my list! I've learned some invaluable lessons with each adventure. The thing I get asked about the most is: HOW THE HECK DO YOU GET SO CLOSE TO HORSES IN THE WILD?!

Experiencing wild horses up close and personal is incredible. But there is so much to know and consider before you set out. So for my photography-loving and nature-loving tribe, I've taken my lessons learned from over 19,000 miles traveled and condensed them into 5 tips on How to Experience Wild Horses in the Wild. This guide includes my candid, sometimes hard-earned advice, with stories from each of my wild horse adventures.



Where Wild We Roam has taken me (so far!)

- 📍 [Arizona in a heat wave](#)
- 📍 The rolling hillsides of [California](#)
- 📍 Mediterranean Seaside in [France](#)
- 📍 Battling snow and cold in [Iceland](#)
- 📍 Sea-surrounded on secluded [Sable Island](#)



# Read Up!

Many wild herds live in harsh environments. It is so impressive to see the rugged beauty and resiliency of these horses. Before you set out, you need to do your homework. Without enough research, you run the risk of not being able to fully experience a wild herd.

My Arizona trip is the perfect example to illustrate why research is so important. I knew I would need to prepare my body to be able to endure the desert heat... cue the sauna!

I have always enjoyed the sauna for its health benefits. And, if I'm being completely honest, it's also an escape where I can take a real break: no kids, no devices. Frequenting the sauna prepared my body to cope with the heat.

Another important preparation: hydrating preemptively. I increased my water intake by 2 liters per day in the days leading up to my trip. I am so glad I did! Days before my trip, Arizona was hit with a heat wave.

In the Arizona desert, my guide got heat stroke! I think all my reading, plus my sauna and water intake preparation helped me.



Here's a checklist for things you'll need to have on hand:

## Travel Light But With Forethought

- ✓ **Water is a must** but avoid plastic bottles if you can. Plastic can leach in intense heat so bring a canteen.
- ✓ **Plan for other wildlife** you might encounter and dress accordingly. For the desert, you'll want rattlesnake guards. In Southern France in the fall, I needed hip waders to trek through the marshy wetlands and was bitten through my clothing by mosquitos!
- ✓ **Be sun safe** and wear clothing that protects your skin as well as a hat and sunscreen.
- ✓ **Put your best (most practical!) foot forward** with proper footwear. Hiking shoes are what I'd recommend but keep in mind if you're going to need something that's waterproof or designer for a cooler or warmer climate.
- ✓ **Layer like a pro** by checking the local weather to find out what temperatures are like in the mornings, afternoons and evenings.
- ✓ **Test your gear!** Before my trip to Iceland, I used my morning walks with my dog, Maui as an opportunity to test my gear. In the cold of Canadian winter mornings, I'd take Maui for his daily walk while wearing the gloves I planned to bring.
- ✓ **Camera considerations** for cold or rainy weather are important. A rainsleeve is always handy to stash in your camera bag. If you're shooting in colder climates, make sure to bring extra batteries and a charger. The cold will kill your batteries! To prevent condensation on your lenses: set your equipment outside half an hour at least, before shooting. This will prevent condensation on your lenses.

**IN SHORT:** Soak in all the info you can before you head out about the area, the climate, and the conditions.



# Beyond The Beauty of Horses: Understanding the Broader Context

I am captivated by the beauty of wild horses. But my work is about more than documenting their beauty. For every herd I photograph I learn about the broader context that the animals live in. That includes the place, the people, and the creatures themselves:

## The Place

Where you stay affects how enriching of an experience you'll have. Book a hotel or Airbnb close by and read the reviews on how helpful and friendly the staff or hosts are! Your hotel staff or your Airbnb host have likely had other guests curious about wild horses and could point you in the right direction on people in the area who have insight into wild horses.

## The People

Research wild horse organizations in the area. The passionate people involved in these organizations can be super helpful in letting you know where you can spot the horses throughout the day. These locals know the herd habits! Where you might find them at sunrise, the trails they

will be on, the hillsides they graze on, or the watering holes they frequent.

## The Creatures

In California, wild herds contend with climate change in the form of extreme weather and wildfires. In Iceland, the unique half-wild horses are steeped in the country's culture as one of the oldest horse populations in the world.

Understand the broader context the horses are living in by talking to the locals and scouring iTunes for any documentaries on the local herds. The documentary [Herd in Iceland](#) opened my eyes to the cultural significance of the creatures in the country. A bonus? The cinematography taken from land, air, (and on horseback!) made me so excited to photograph the horses and the epic landscape.

**IN SHORT:** Get to know the people, the place, and the creatures for a more enriching experience. Do your due diligence and read reviews!







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## Find the right guide

Here's how I go about finding a guide to accompany me on my wild horse adventures:

- ✓ **Start with local wild horse organizations.** If they don't have a guide as part of their group, they should be able to recommend someone.
- ✓ No luck? **Try photo tours.** My six-day trek through Iceland included many locations to photograph wild horses. Coordinating the logistics and travel myself, plus hiring a guide on top of that would have taken an abhorrent amount of planning, even for someone who loves to plan!
- ✓ Still nada? **Reach out to a local photographer** who has shot the same subject matter. They might be willing to lend advice or be hired for the day to accompany you.

Before you book your guide, make sure it's the right guide. Here's how:

- ✓ **Make sure they know their stuff.** Ensure you're choosing a guide who is experienced, well-reviewed, familiar with the horse's behaviors but knows how to be unobtrusive.
- ✓ **Read their reviews** to get an idea of how they could add to your experience.

**IN SHORT:** Start with googling wild horse organizations and photo tours in the area and go from there. Ensure you're choosing a local, horse-savvy, and experienced guide!



# Respect Their Wildness

**Wild horses are just that - wild.** These horses live without human intervention. They are not the same patient horses you might find at the riding ring and even those tame horses can get spooked. For their safety and your own, give horses their space.

**Many of my photos look like I'm up very close. I'm not!** A telephoto lens can make it look like I'm within reach of the horses when I'm further away. Don't own a telephoto lens? Rent one! You can rent from [Lens Lenders](#) or [Lensrentals](#) for one week for a reasonable price.



*I keep my distance from the horses, to honor their wildness and see them in their element. I was delighted to come upon this horse, gazing out to sea.*

Sentinel - Sable Island, Canada

**Let the horses approach you.** This guy was a little curious of what I was up to. I was adventuring around in the mountains taking photos with my camera bag sitting beside me when all of a sudden this wild horse came up beside me and started snooping through my gear. He proceeded to pick up my bag and started shaking everything out onto the ground. We stared at each other for a while as he stood over all of my favorite lenses. Thankfully, he eventually walked away and I gathered all of my gear. Hours later as I arrived back at my rental car in the pitch dark, I searched around for my car keys. They were nowhere to be seen. Panic set in as it was 10pm and I was hours away from my hotel and had an early morning flight to catch. I remembered this incident where all of my bag was emptied into the field at the top of the mountain. I decided to search one more time and lucky for me, I had hidden my keys in a secret pocket and they were safe and sound.

**IN SHORT:** You can give horses their space without your photos suffering. All you need is a telephoto lens. Rent one from [Lens Lenders](#) or [Lensrentals](#) if you don't own one!





# Capture Your Trip While Still Living in the Moment

Wild horses are spectacular. Whether you're a seasoned photographer, enthusiastic hobbyist, or just take the occasional snap with your phone, you will no doubt want to capture the beauty of the wild horses you see.

Photos are a great way to commemorate your trip. Just remember while you're taking photos to be mindful to still live in the moment.

Do not instagram in the moment. First of all, you likely won't have service in some of the remote locations where wild horses are found. Secondly, your followers and friends do not need to see your experience as it happens. Save posting your favorite shots and videos until the end of the day. Why spend your time in the presence of wild horses choosing filters?

I do recommend traveling with a notebook and Pilot V5 pen. Taking notes in the moment and journaling at the end of the day is an excellent way to capture your experience. It is so special to revisit my journals. My journals even aid in the process of naming my pieces before I launch the series!

**IN SHORT:** Capture your experience with photos and a journal but be mindful to live in the moment!





What's next

# Inspired to get out in the wild?

I'd love to see your pics! Mention me on insta  
or use #wildweroam.

If you want to bring the beauty of wild horses  
to your walls, have a look at [my gallery](#).

