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For the best photographs, the ideal natural lighting conditions usually occur approximately one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset. In photographic terminology this is known as the Golden Hour.

The reason that the Golden Hour is so good for photography is because of the angle at which the light hits its subjects, and because at these times it produces a deep glow rather than the harsh glare of midday sun. The morning and the evening Golden Hours produce slightly different effects: the morning sun has a soft golden effect, while the evening sun tends to have a stronger orange glow with a bit more depth to it.

The other thing to be aware of about the Golden Hour is that it is short. This means that you will not have a lot of time to move from location to location. It is best to pick a subject that you want to capture and then concentrate on a few top-quality shots.



## Into the Blue/Purple Hour

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Similar to the Golden Hour, the Blue Hour (sometimes known as the Purple Hour too) is a slightly shorter period of time, occurring in the morning just before the sun rises, and in the evening just after the sun sets, but there is still some light in the sky. Depending on the weather conditions – i.e. if there are clouds to reflect the diminishing light or not – or just the sky, this can create scenes with a blueish/purple tinge. The Blue Hour can be thought of as occurring just before the Golden Hour (in the morning) and just after it (in the evening). Also, the Blue Hour is usually slightly shorter than a full hour in duration.

The Blue Hour is best for capturing city scenes and landscapes. For city scenes, the lights of the city, or structures, can contrast with the blue effect created by the lack of direct sunlight.



Where possible, keep your smartphone as steady as possible when capturing Blue Hour shots, as the lack of light will mean that there is more chance of a blurry image if the smartphone is not held firmly in position.

## Changing Your Position

One of the simplest ways of improving the composition of photos taken with your smartphone camera is to change the position from where you are taking photos. Even a small movement can have a dramatic effect on the final image:

- Start by taking a standard, straight-on shot of your subject.



- Get as low as possible (this can sometimes result in some strange looks from people around you) to emphasize size in buildings, or create a larger foreground in a photo.



- Find a higher viewpoint to look down on a subject, rather than looking up at it.

# Moving the Horizon

When taking photos straight-on, it is a natural reaction to keep the horizon in the middle of a photo. This is a good option, but moving the position of the horizon in a shot is another effective way to change the perspective of a scene.

- 1 Take a photo with the horizon in one position of the frame
- 2 Move the position of the horizon to the top or bottom of the frame to see how this alters the overall effect in the photo

