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# The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

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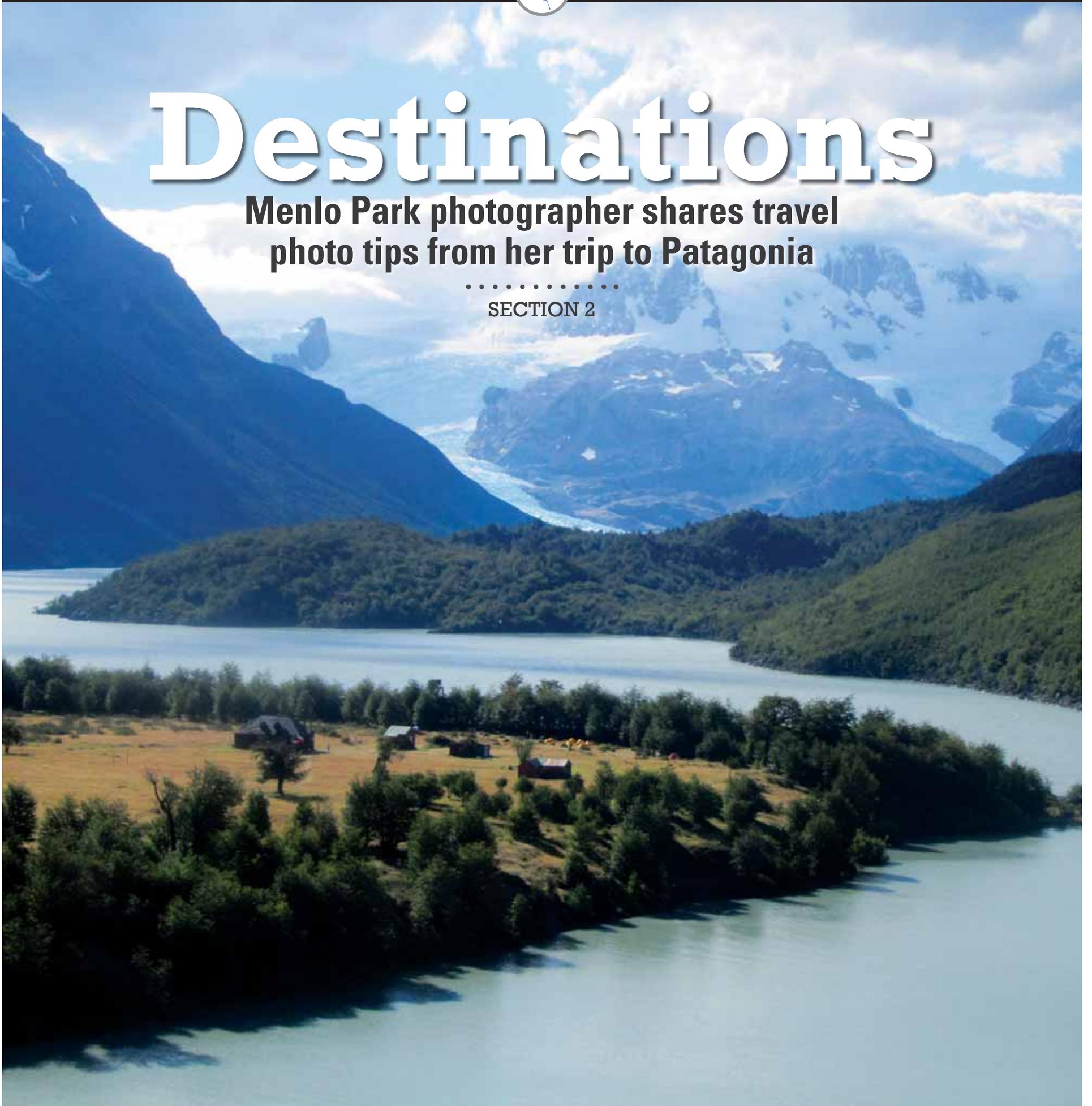


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# Destinations

**Menlo Park photographer shares travel  
photo tips from her trip to Patagonia**

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SECTION 2



# Photography

## TIPS FROM THE TRAIL

Menlo Park photographer Frances Freyberg gives you the benefit of her trials and errors

**Photos and story**  
by Frances Freyberg

Special to the Almanac

**I**n February, my friend Ashley Holt and I spent a week backpacking through Chile's Torres del Paine National Park in Southern Patagonia.

With its jagged mountains, enormous glaciers and well-worn trails, the park is a spectacular place for hiking, camping, kayaking and rock climbing. Its unique geology, vivid landscape, and constantly changing light also make it a fabulous place to photograph.

As a traveler, my goal was to explore the park and appreciate its many natural wonders. As a photographer, my goals were to document our journey together and to capture some striking images to exhibit publicly later.

Whether your photographic goal while traveling is to simply remember your trip or to exhibit your photos widely, I hope you can benefit from the following tips, which I've learned from years of trial and error on the road.



**About**  
the author:

See Page 27 for the tips

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Frances Freyberg of Menlo Park is a photographer specializing in vibrant color portraits of people, wildlife, nature and architecture from her travels to more than 50 countries. Her photographs can be found in the Portola Art Gallery at the Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park, in private collections, and online at francesfreyberg.com.



**On the cover**  
See cover photo:

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Sometimes you have to be willing to work (or walk) to get the right view. This view of Camp Dickson from a high overlook — a 20-minute hike from the camp — shows the curve of the lake, the contrast of colors, and the range of scenery within Torres del Paine National Park.

▲ **This picture** by Frances Freyberg, from her backpacking trip in Southern Patagonia, shows how to use an unusual angle — while sometimes getting messy or wet — to get a distinctive photograph.



**Weather can change** rapidly, so it pays to have your camera ready. Here, stormy skies create dramatic lighting over Lago Pehoé at Torres del Paine.



**Bringing the camera low** to the ground can show an ordinary scene from an unordinary angle. Here, a delicate flower sits amidst moss and tree trunks along the trail.

## Tips from the trail

### 1 Before you go

#### Choose the camera that's right for you.

If your goal is to come home with your own photos, then the most important quality in a prospective camera is that it's easily usable by you. Be sure you're comfortable with the weight, size and functionality of your camera.

A large camera may be too heavy to carry all day long, but a super-compact camera may not offer the flexibility and range that you'll need. No single camera will be ideal for all situations, so select a model that will meet most of your needs most of the time. The bottom line: it doesn't matter how good your camera is if you don't use it.

#### Get to know your camera before you go.

Practice using your camera before you leave, so that you're confident with the controls and know what to expect while traveling. At least, be sure you know how to set your camera to its fully automatic mode, how to manually control the flash, how to check your battery meter and remaining number of shots, and how to change and charge your battery.

#### Bring a backup.

You don't want to reach your most anticipated destination only to find that your battery is dead or your memory card is full. A spare battery and memory card eliminate that risk and take very little space in a shoulder bag.

If photos are to be your most important souvenir, then bring a backup flash drive and regularly copy your images to it throughout the trip. Should your camera be damaged or lost along the way, you'll still be able to take home most of your photos.

Finally, consider carrying a back-up camera to use in the event of loss or theft, or to use as your primary camera in "risky" conditions, such as in the rain or on the water.

### 2 On the road

#### Get out and explore.

To truly communicate the essence of a place, you have to get to know that place and its people. Seek out unique cultural events and locations, as well as the scenes and rhythms of everyday life.

Take time to reflect on your own experiences, and consider keeping a journal that will provide context for your photos when you return home.

#### Take photos of places and people.

Learn some key phrases in the country's language, and engage people in conversation. Be sure to research any cultural sensitivities to photography, and don't be shy — but do ask politely — when taking direct photos of others. Finally, don't forget to bring home some photos of yourself and your travel companions.

#### If you want a unique photo, find a unique angle.

To get an interesting shot, you have to be willing to think creatively and sometimes get messy. Lie down on your stomach to photograph a flower from below. Climb a tree or tower, or hike out to a remote lookout point to get a view from above. Try using your surroundings to frame your subject in a new way, and look for patterns and lines that will add depth and interest to your photograph.

#### Seek out the best light.

The first and last hours of daylight provide a soft, warm glow and long, interesting shadows, while midday light tends to be harsher and flatter. The most dramatic lighting can come from stormy skies. When traveling, you may not have the luxury of waiting for the optimal light — and you certainly can't control the weather — but experiment with what's available, and learn your own artistic preferences.

#### Always be ready, and when possible, be patient.

Sometimes you'll simply be in the right place at the right time for a fabulous travel photograph. That's one of the best reasons to carry a small camera that fits in your pocket: you'll always have it with you and ready to go.

Usually, though, getting the right shot takes both patience and persistence. Be willing to wait for the right subject, moment or light, or be willing to come back to find it.

### 3 When you're home

#### Be sure to print and share your photos.

Don't let your travel photographs languish untended on your computer. Take the time to sort through them when you get home and select the best ones to print or share online.

Write captions while the trip is fresh in your mind. And consider making a photo book to share with friends and family, using sites such as blurb.com, kodak.com, snapfish.com or Menlo Park's own keepsy.com.



**Don't forget** to bring home some photos of you and your travel companions. Here, Ashley Holt sits on a ledge overlooking the "torres" (towers), for which the national park is named.