



Black Isle Photography Workshops

Auto to manual in one day!

www.karenthorburn.com





"Absolutely fantastic and highly recommended for those who want to improve their photography. I was amazed at Karen's knowledge and skill in teaching.

Everything we discussed was tailored to my skill level with Karen providing lots of useful hints and tips (plus a handy guide emailed to me afterwards).

By the end of the workshop, I could see an improvement in my photography and felt like I'd known Karen for years as she was so friendly and made me feel completely relaxed.

I'll definitely be booking another workshop!"

Rose Nicholls



Black Isle Highlights

Looking for things to do near Inverness? Maybe you're about to embark on the North Coast 500? What a great opportunity to develop your landscape photography skills! I'd love it if you'd join me for a landscape photography workshop on the picturesque Black Isle!

- Develop your photography skills in the beautiful landscapes of the Black Isle, a peninsula to the north of Inverness.
- Get off the beaten track and discover peaceful woodlands and waterfalls.
- Spend a half day or full day alone with a friendly and down-to-earth professional photographer who will put you at ease.
- Learn from one-to-one tuition in the field, with feedback delivered in a positive way which won't dent your confidence.
- If booking a full day workshop, enjoy a relaxing lunch at a local café, complete with cake!
- Access to a free landscape photography eBook to reinforce the key learning points from the workshop.



Hello! I'm Karen.

I know it can feel a bit daunting, spending a day with a complete stranger!

I've run numerous workshops over the years and haven't had an awkward experience yet, even when there's been a language barrier to negotiate.

I'm sure we'll find lots of things in common to chat about over lunch and in the car travelling between locations!

I live on the Black Isle with my husband Mark and our furry friends! I love coastal walks, and getting out and about in the Highlands and Islands with my little touring caravan and bike.



"Karen provided a very enjoyable and helpful day for both myself, an intermediate amateur, and my wife, who has a great eye but is not into the 'tech' part of photography.

Karen has a genuine warmth and empathy as a teacher that lets her find each student at their level and give calm, helpful suggestions.

In between locations, Karen was delightful company and showed us some other Black Isle sights."

David Van Blarcom

Black Isle Details

The Black Isle is a relatively undiscovered gem just a stone's throw from the Highland capital of Inverness across the Kessock Bridge, and a short detour from the North Coast 500.

I'll take you to some beautiful locations on this scenic peninsula, most of them away from the tourist hot-spots. I've worked with clients who have lived on the Black Isle all their lives and have never previously visited some of these locations!

I've lived here since 2013 and have spent these past years exploring this corner of the Highlands, discovering the coastline, sites of historical interest and peaceful woodlands and waterfalls, all set against a backdrop of the seasonal changes in this lovely agricultural landscape.



Black Isle Workshop Itinerary

Here's a sample itinerary for a full day workshop, to give you an idea of the number and types of locations we'll visit. Expect this to change a little, so we can take advantage of the weather and tidal conditions on the day. Don't worry if you think you might run out of energy by the afternoon; we can substitute the last location for a café!

Half day workshops run from 09:30 to 13:00 and do not include lunch or waterfall photography. Times are subject to change during the winter months due to the shorter hours of daylight.



- 09:30 Meet and greet.
- 10:00 We'll arrive at our first location, Craig Castle, the ruins of a sixteenth century tower house overlooking the Cromarty Firth. We'll run through some theory before setting up our cameras and tripods for the first time and delving into camera settings.
- 11:00 We'll move on to Findon to focus on composition and practise capturing some details within the landscape.
- 12:30 We'll head over to the hill to Rosemarkie Beach Café for a relaxing lunch (cake included!).
- 15:00 We'll take a walk up the enchanting Fairy Glen behind Rosemarkie, which will give us the opportunity to photograph an impressive waterfall and experiment with shutter speeds.
- 17:00 Drop off.

Frequently Asked Questions



What can I expect to learn?

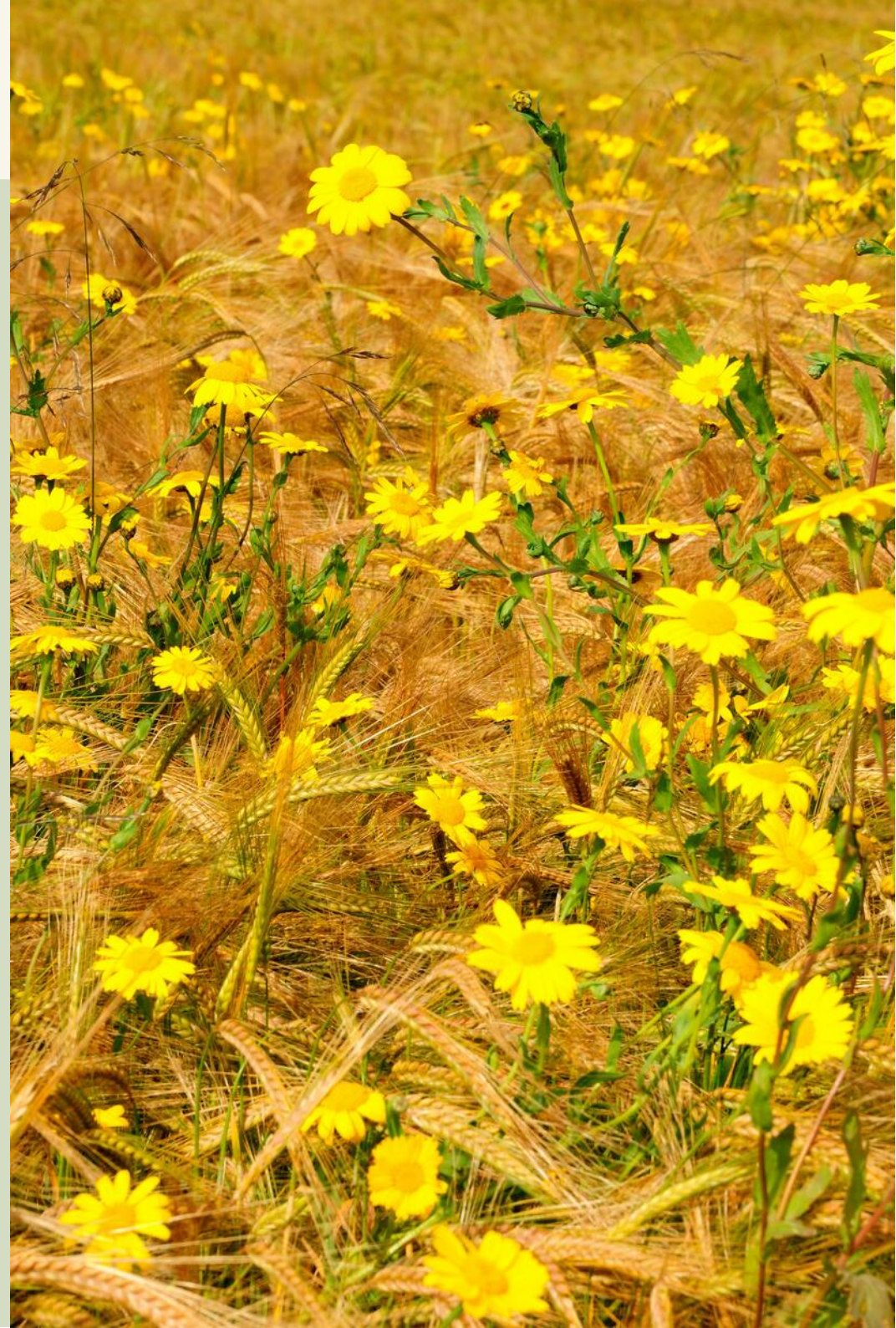
Don't worry if you're not familiar with your camera's settings; you'll have mastered them by lunchtime! I'll take you back to basics at our first location by running through ISO, aperture, shutter speed, white balance, metering, focusing etc.

I'll gauge how much knowledge and experience you currently have and build on this throughout the day. Even if you're currently shooting in automatic mode, I promise that you'll be comfortable dabbling in manual mode by the end of the day.

Of course, there's a lot more to landscape photography than just dialling in the right camera settings. I'll help you with your compositions too, so that you can learn to capture images that convey a sense of depth.

If the light is flat, we'll look beyond 'the big picture' and have a go at photographing more intimate details within the landscape.

After the workshop, I'll email you my landscape photography eBook which summarises the key learning points, so that you can refer back to this in your own time, at your own pace.





Will there be other people on the workshop?

No, not unless you've booked a place for anyone else! Occasionally, I run landscape photography workshops for groups of up to 10 people (e.g. for camera clubs) but, generally speaking, my workshops are bespoke.

I think one-to-one or two-to-one is the most effective way to learn. I want to get to know you and your camera in order to provide focused, in-depth tuition, without the distractions of managing a large group.



What if the weather's poor?

I appreciate your workshop is an investment and it will be less than ideal if we're outside in heavy rain, high winds or thick fog. Changeable weather can be great for memorable images but can be very frustrating for teaching! Ideally, we want stable weather so that we can focus on the tuition without having to repeatedly dash back to the car to dodge the rain.

Please let me know your overall availability at the time of booking. If you're based locally, then it's more likely that we'll be able to reschedule in order to work around the weather. If you're touring the North Coast 500, I appreciate that you might only be available on one specific date. If the only option is to head out in inclement weather, then please make sure that you're sufficiently wrapped up and that you're able to protect your gear from the elements.



How fit do I need to be?

Please be honest about your level of fitness at the time of booking so that I can plan your workshop accordingly.

Walking will be generally straightforward over rough ground and good paths, with no major ascents. A reasonable level of fitness is required for some short steep sections. A walking pole can be helpful for keeping your balance on rough terrain.

My workshops are fairly leisurely but we'll typically spend up to six hours outdoors on a full day workshop (three-and-a-half hours on a half day workshop), depending on the weather and light. Don't worry if you think you might run out of energy; if so, we can reduce time at the last location, visit a café and look through your images.



Can I bring my partner or a friend?

Yes, of course! Additional charges apply, if two or more people are attending. I always particularly enjoy the dynamic when there are three of us (it's usually more fun!), so please don't hesitate to bring your partner along.

I'll gauge which level you're both at and will divide my time between you so that I can pitch my teaching accordingly. I've run many landscape photography workshops like this and it's always been a success.



What photography equipment should I bring?

Equipment is very much a personal choice, dependent on your budget, experience and your aspirations as a photographer. I've made some recommendations here but please don't rush out and spend a small fortune on new equipment specifically for one of my workshops!

You might find that what you learn on the workshop will help you decide what equipment to invest in. Also, don't bring more than you can comfortably carry! I only ever carry one camera body when I'm doing landscape photography.

Camera: I don't mind whether you're shooting with a compact camera, a top of the range DSLR or a brand new mirrorless camera system. Even a mobile phone will produce decent results in the hands of a good photographer! Whatever camera you're using, have a play around with the menu before the workshop and bring along the camera manual, if you have a copy to hand.

Camera bag: I recommend using a rucksack, as opposed to a shoulder bag, for comfort when walking. Ensure the contents are protected from the elements, e.g. with a rucksack cover.

Tripod: A good tripod is essential if you're serious about landscape photography. It allows you to carefully consider your composition and use small apertures and slow shutter speeds. Ideally, a tripod needs to be light enough to carry over long distances but sturdy enough to avoid camera shake. A carbon fibre tripod is an excellent investment if you have the budget. Don't forget to bring an allen key in case any part of your tripod works loose during the workshop. Remember to pack your quick release plate!

Lenses: For landscape photography, I use two zoom lenses covering the following focal lengths (on a full frame sensor): 24-70mm and 70-200mm. The quality of most zoom lenses nowadays is superb and they are more versatile to work with than fixed focal length lenses. I recommend you avoid shooting with an ultra wide angle lens so that the foreground doesn't lose its impact in your landscape images.

Filters: Don't dismiss filters as 'fake'. Their purpose is to help the camera to capture what the human eye sees. A selection of high quality filters are a great investment. There is little point in forking out a lot of money on quality lenses, only to screw cheap filters on the front! For landscape photography, I use professional quality UV filters, a polariser, and a range of neutral density filters (graduated and uniform). Many filters can be replicated in post-production but I strongly recommend 'getting it right' in camera.

Remote/cable release: This is an inexpensive piece of kit but essential for avoiding camera shake, even when the camera is mounted on a tripod.

Spirit level: A hot shoe spirit level is another cheap piece of kit but is useful for ensuring your horizon is level. This will save you from losing pixels in post-production from cropping.

Backup and storage: Ensure that you bring sufficient memory, especially if you're shooting in RAW. If you're not already shooting in RAW, then expect me to persuade you to do so on the workshop! If you're attending a multi-day bespoke workshop, bringing your own laptop will enable you to back up and process your images and will facilitate critique sessions.

Spare batteries: Bring all of your spare batteries and pack your charger! Your camera will be on for hours and you might be surprised by how quickly your batteries drain, especially if you're using a mirrorless camera and/or are using your LCD screen a lot. If you bring your charger, we might be able to boost one of your batteries at lunchtime.

Lens cloth: This is useful for removing spots of rain. A small towel is also useful for drying your camera and lenses after shooting in the rain.

Diffuser/reflector: A collapsible diffuser is extremely useful for removing harsh shadows from 'detailed shots' if shooting when the sun is out.



What personal equipment should I bring?

I drive a Skoda Karoq which has a reasonable amount of boot space but it fills up quickly with camera kit, especially if there are two or more people booked on the workshop.

Try to pack as lightly as possible without compromising on safety and comfort. The key is to stay warm and dry under a variety of weather conditions. Please be aware that we will be standing around for a while at each location that we visit.

The following is a good starting point:

- Walking boots and/or wellies
- Gaiters
- Spare socks
- Walking pole
- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Fleece
- Gloves (even in summer!)
- Handwarmers
- Hat for sun protection and warmth
- Midge head net
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Drinks container, e.g. 2 litre water bottle
- Small flask of tea or coffee



Do I need insurance, and what are the terms and conditions of booking?

Insurance isn't a condition of booking but it is recommended, especially for any multi-day landscape photography workshops. In this scenario, it is advisable to be insured for medical and personal accident risks, as well as cancellation, curtailment and baggage.

Your workshop may involve travel in remote areas where amenities and medical facilities are not readily available. Workshop participants must accept the risks and hazards involved in visiting remote areas and rugged terrain and must agree to comply with the decisions taken by Karen Thorburn Photography at all times.

Karen Thorburn Photography will take all reasonable efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of participants but will not accept liability for any bodily injury or illness incurred on the workshop nor accept responsibility for any lack of fitness, carelessness or negligence. Personal items, including photographic equipment, remain the responsibility of workshop participants at all times.





"I took up photography about six months ago and booked a day on the Black Isle.

Karen quickly worked out what level I was at, and planned the day accordingly.

I gained a lot of new knowledge on the day, which I think will be of great use moving forward.

As well as the learning, the day was really enjoyable and Karen was great company. The day passed too quickly!"

Kevin Thomas



Summary and Booking:

Half Day Workshop

Duration: 09:30-13:00 (half day)

Start/Finish: Culbokie

Suitability: Suitable for beginners and intermediate photographers. All locations are within a short walking distance, but over some rough terrain. Average level of fitness required. Lunch and waterfall photography not included.

Price: **Half day workshop:**
£200 for up to 3 people

Gift vouchers are available.

[CONTACT KAREN](#)

The price includes the following:

On a full day workshop, a light lunch served with a hot drink and a sugary treat!

All transport during the workshop and pick-up and drop-off in Culbokie.

One-to-one in-depth tuition covering camera settings and composition.

Auto to manual camera settings in one day.

Feedback session delivered in a positive way.

Access to a comprehensive landscape photography eBook.

The price does NOT include the following:

Any additional meals or snacks, alcohol, gratuities, insurance, equipment, or any other items not referred to in the itinerary.

Summary and Booking:

Full Day Workshop

- Duration: 09:30-17:00 (full day)
- Start/Finish: Culbokie
- Suitability: Suitable for beginners and intermediate photographers. Afternoon session involves 3km of walking, along an uneven woodland path, to photograph waterfalls. Average level of fitness required. Lunch included.
- Price: **Full day workshop:**
£425 for an individual
£450 for 2 people
£475 for 3 people
- Gift vouchers are available.
- On a budget?
Scroll up to my half day workshop.

[CONTACT KAREN](#)

The price includes the following:

On a full day workshop, a light lunch served with a hot drink and a sugary treat!

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