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How to Choose Rental Photo Equipment

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Why Rent?

There are a few main reasons to rent equipment:

- A. To try something out before you actually buy it.
- B. To use something very expensive which you would not use often enough to justify the purchase price.
- C. A third reason applies only if you are a professional shooting on assignment. If there is some piece of equipment that you need but don't have or can't justify buying because of how infrequently you'd use it, the cost of rental can usually be added to your invoice. (But the cost of purchase usually cannot.)

General Guidelines

When renting, here are some guidelines on what to look for.

- Shipping in both directions included in the rental cost. You should not have to fork out extra to either get or return the equipment you rent.
- Combined shipping for multiple items. If you rent more than one thing, the rental house should combine them and ship them together. This saves both of you money. Some rental houses also offer local pickup.
- Insurance. Very few insurance policies will cover high-end camera equipment. Don't fall into the trap of believing your homeowner's policy covers it. There is usually a cap (Probably around \$1,000). If you have a photography related business, you may be covered by your commercial policy but double-check to make sure.
- Cost of the item. Rental cost will vary and generally you pay less per day for longer term rentals. Expect to pay around 5% of the purchase price for a week's rental, and about 10% for a month. These are very rough guidelines. In any event, the total cost should be clearly spelled out with no surprises.
- Plan to get your equipment 2-3 days before you will actually need it. This allows for shipping delays and also gives you time to familiarize yourself with the new equipment.

- Some rental houses will let you take things out of the country but they usually want to know the details beforehand. Others will not allow international travel with their gear.

If renting a very high-end lens

- Make sure you know the size and weight. Most people who have not handled one are unprepared for just how large and heavy some of these lenses can be.
- Make even more sure that you have a tripod capable of supporting it. Otherwise, rent one.

If renting a camera body

- Make sure of whether or not it comes with memory card(s) and that the battery will be fully charged.
- Find out if a battery charger, card reader, cables or any other accessories will be included as part of the rental.
- Find out if a user's manual or any other documentation is included. (The camera may have some features that are unfamiliar to you, either because they are not found on your own camera or they are different from what's on your camera.)

If renting lighting equipment

- Make sure of exactly what will be included and ensure it includes everything you will need.
- Check on power usage and make sure the place you plan to use it can handle the draw.

Resources

Here are a few equipment rental places we know of and the brands they carry:

United States

www.BorrowLenses.com (Canon, Nikon, Sony, 4:3 & micro 4:3 mount)

www.cameralensrentals.com (Canon, Nikon, Pentax)

www.ProPhotoRental.com (Canon, Nikon, 4:3 & micro 4:3 mount)

www.lensrentals.com (Canon, Nikon, Sony, 4:3 & micro 4:3 mount, Leica, Hasselblad)

Australia

www.cameraelectronic.com.au (Canon, Nikon, Pentax, Hasselblad)

Canada

www.vistek.ca/rentals (Canon, Nikon, Zeiss large format)

lenslenders.com (Canon, Nikon, 4:3 mount)

Europe/Asia/Africa

Sadly, we currently know of no rental places in this part of the world.

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