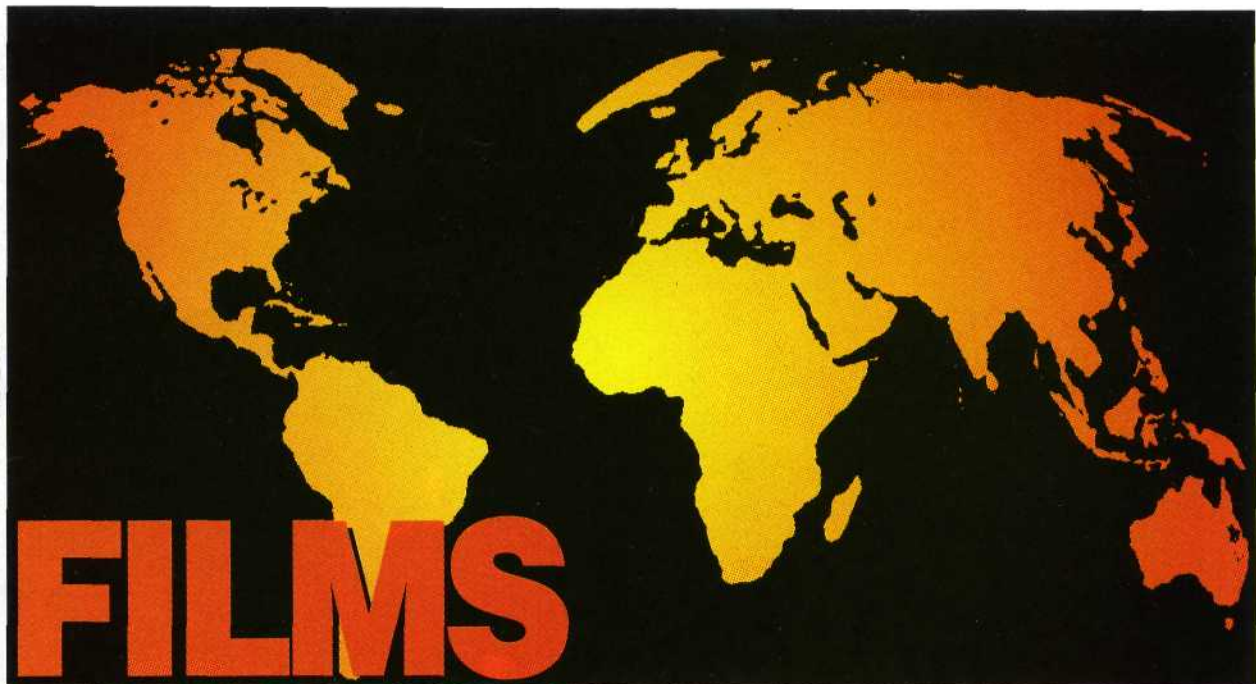


15

BEST FILMS FOR TRAVEL



By the Editors

What do you, as a traveling photographer, want out of your film? Probably, on the most basic level, the assurance that your photographs will faithfully embody what you saw when you took them. So, you want film with good color reproduction and image quality, just as all photographers do. However, you also want film that can withstand the rigors of travel: temperature and humidity changes, airport X-rays—to name a few. And you want film that will handle a wide variety of shooting conditions: bright sunlight, night festivities, rainy days, interiors, posed shots and action shots.

As you can probably guess, no one film can satisfy all these requirements. Color-print films have great exposure latitude, but their prints lack the complete tonal range of color slides. Slow films provide superb image quality, but won't let you shoot fast-moving subjects, or in dim light (unless you're shooting a stationary subject and using a tripod, or using a flash unit). "Amateur" films, and films designed for photo-journalists, will better withstand travel rigors than most "pro" films. And no film will withstand repeated exposure to high-level X-rays (fast films are most susceptible to X-ray damage than slower films).

But don't despair. You can get around these problems by taking 3-4 different film types on your trips, to cover a wide variety of situations. And you can deal with X-rays by putting your film cassettes (removed from boxes and plastic containers) in a clear baggie—exposed rolls in one baggie, unexposed in another—and asking for a visual inspection. If you are polite, and have your film baggies ready to inspect, you should have no problems getting a visual, rather than an X-ray, inspection.

Now, here are 15 color films that our editors and contributing editors have used successfully for travel photography (or expect to, in the case of some promising new films), presented in order from slowest to fastest.

KODAK EKTAR 25

Ektar 25 is the image-quality king of color-print films—the sharpest and finest-grained available—and it provides good color reproduction. If you want to make huge blow-ups of your travel photos, this is the film to use.

However, it is not without a few drawbacks. At ISO 25, it's very slow, requiring fairly bright light levels (i.e., bright sunlight) or the use of a tripod (the tripod, though awkward for travelers to carry, is a good idea when shooting with this film, as it will optimize image quality—if your images are blurred due to camera shake, you won't get good blow-ups, despite the film's inherent superb quality). And it has less exposure latitude than most color-print films—it's best used by knowledgeable photographers in 35mm SLR cameras, not by point-and-shooters with point-and-shoot cameras. But if you do use a good





Fujichrome Velvia; Palm Springs balloon race

camera and lens, hold it steady, and expose the film properly, you'll get unbelievable image quality.

Eastman Kodak Co., 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650; 1-800-242-2424.

AGFACOLOR ULTRA 50

The slowest (ISO 50) member of Agfa's Triade color-print-film system, Ultra 50 offers richer-than-life colors, slightly higher-than-normal contrast (making it excellent for punching-up muted colors in scenics), and excellent image quality in terms of grain and sharpness, for travel photos that really "pop." (Other Triade films include Optima 125 and 200, with "natural" color and contrast, and Portrait 160, with muted colors and softer-than-normal contrast—there's a Triade-family film for every need.)

Agfa Corp., Consumer and Professional Div., 100 Challenger Rd., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660; (201) 440-2500.

FUJICHROME VELVIA

This superb color-slide film has it all, just about: rich, gorgeous color reproduction; incredibly fine grain; pinpoint sharpness—the benefits of Kodachrome, with the added advantage of readily available E-6 processing. Velvia also has rather high contrast, however, and is therefore not the best suited for shooting high-contrast scenes, such as noon sunlight. For anything but high-contrast subjects, though, Velvia is an ideal film.

Fuji Photo Film U.S.A., Inc., 555 Taxter Rd., Elmsford, NY 10523; (914) 789-8100.



KODACHROME 64

Long a favorite of travel pros, Kodachrome 64 color-slide film has reasonable speed (ISO 64), beautiful and accurate color reproduction, and superb image quality. Its main drawback is the required K-14 processing, which is available at relatively few labs. Most K64 users take Kodachrome processing mailers with them, and mail the rolls to the lab for processing as they finish shooting them, then find their slides waiting for them when they get home. Kodachrome images tend to be more stable and longer-lasting than those of the E-6 films.

KODAK EKTACHROME 100X

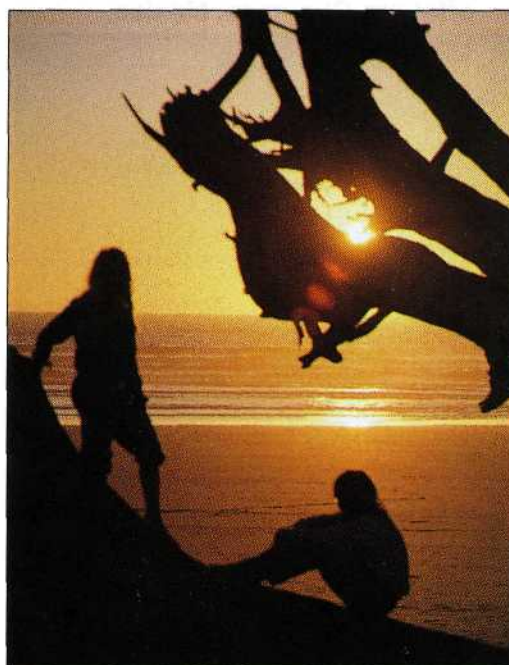
This new, warmer Ektachrome color-slide film offers the popular ISO 100 speed and E-6 processing. It has less tendency to go blue in cool light than its predecessors, making it great for many travel situations. It's also ideal for really enhancing warm scenes, such as sunsets. Ektachrome films in ISO 64 and 100 speeds have long been preferred by many professional photographers, and the new, warmer X versions are the best Ektachromes yet.

FUJICHROME 100

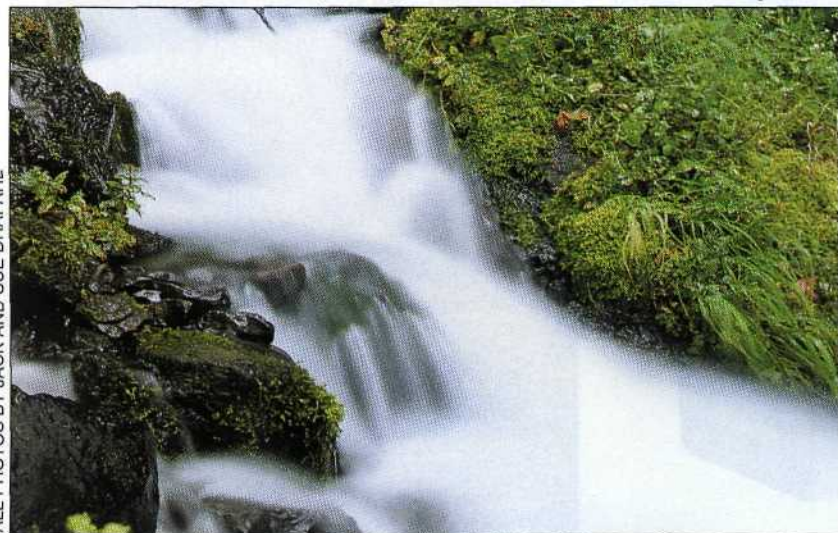
Fujichrome 100 color-slide film has been around a while, and has a wide following among travel shooters. Its color reproduction is rich and beautiful, with especially vibrant greens and deep blues (unfiltered skies almost appear to have been shot through a polarizing filter), making it great for landscapes as well as for general photography. Image quality is outstanding—



Kodak Ektachrome 100X; Rose Parade, Portland, Oregon



Fujichrome 100; Cape Mears, Oregon



Kodachrome 64; Columbia River Gorge, Oregon

Fujichrome 100 is a very sharp, very fine-grained film.

AGFACHROME RS 100 PLUS

This newly updated color-slide film offers a "European" color palette, which is preferred by many photographers, and can give your European travel shots a "realistic" look. The Plus improvements include a Gradation Steering Inhibitor that flattens the bottom section of the gradation curve for optimum tonal separation and greater depth in slides; and Gradation Steering Grain Size Distribution technology that steepens the top portion of the curve for enhanced color separation and higher brilliance. RS 100 Plus also provides excellent neutral-tone reproduction.

KODAK EKTAR 100

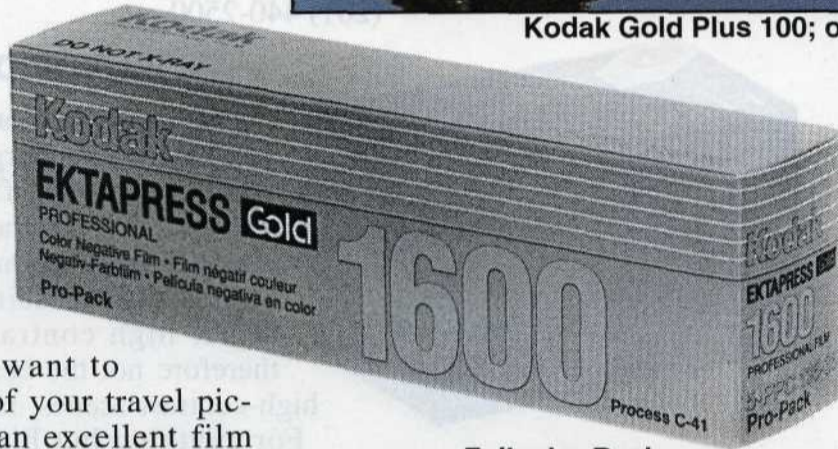
Ektar 100 is the image-quality king among the popular ISO 100 color-print films, featuring the finest grain and the greatest sharpness. If you need a film speed of 100, and want to make big blow-ups of your travel pictures, Ektar 100 is an excellent film choice. It also provides accurate color reproduction, with good saturation, and neutral gray tones. This is a great general-purpose travel film for the serious shooter.

KODAK GOLD PLUS 100

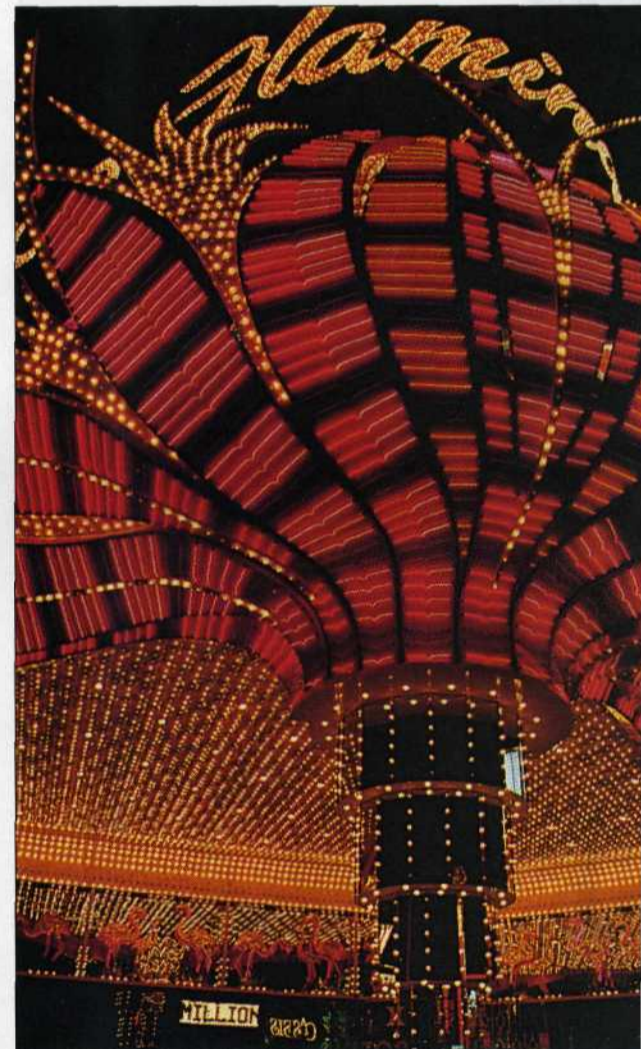
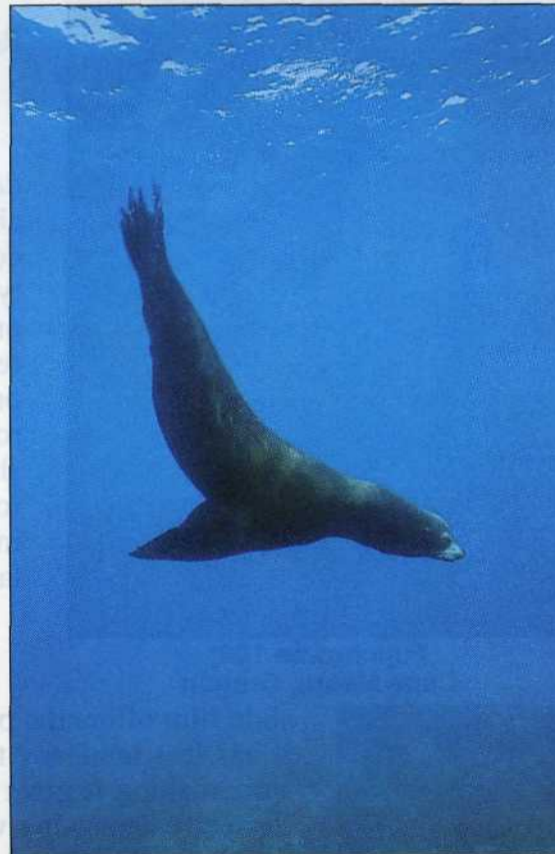
Gold Plus 100 is the latest incarnation of Kodak's long-popular medium-speed color-print film. It offers beautiful, rich colors that will really make



Kodak Gold Plus 100; outside Amsterdam, Holland



Fujicolor Reala; offshore Guaymas, Mexico



Kodak Ektapress Gold 1600; Las Vegas, Nevada



Kodak Gold Plus 400; Santa Barbara Channel, California

