





Fireworks

You might imagine that firework displays, with their profusion of light and color, are difficult to photograph, but modern digital cameras are able to cope very effectively with the challenge. It's worth experimenting with exposure times for the different types of firework you're shooting. To capture the trail of an aerial firework, use longer exposure times. For exploding rockets, a briefer exposure time is required.

CAMERA MODE	LENS SETTING
 Select Manual mode and set to f/8, 1/2 sec	 Zoom to moderate wide angle
SENSOR/FILM SPEED	FLASH
 Use a low to medium ISO setting (e.g. ISO 100 to 400)	 Shoot without flash

ON YOUR PHONE AN ABSTRACT LIGHT SHOW

Fast changing light levels and movement can confuse the exposure and focusing systems of camera phones. For colorful abstract pictures, shoot away and then, using an app, adjust the color and contrast of your images.



ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

From enormous public extravaganzas to more modest backyard celebrations, firework displays are always joyful occasions. As well as explosions set against the night sky, look out for the dramatic way in which fireworks illuminate their surroundings. Your viewpoint is crucial to making the most of these events, so arrive early and set up in advance.

A firework display in an urban setting can act as a spectacular—and unusual—backdrop to floodlit buildings. Setting the exposure for the floodlighting normally results in the correct exposure for the fireworks too. Try underexposing by 1 stop for richer colors.



Unlike other fireworks, sparklers give you some degree of control over the content of your image. Get your subjects to draw patterns in the air at different speeds and then experiment with exposure times up to 2 sec. Try shots with and without flash.



Public firework displays often take place near rivers or over the sea, so make the most of the opportunity to use reflections to add even more light and color to your composition. Frame widely to ensure the whole display is captured and crop afterward, if necessary.



FOR THIS SHOT

The inclusion of figures in the foreground of this picture gives a sense of scale and helps to make the viewer feel part of the scene.

- 1 Exposure**
A low ISO setting and medium aperture setting, with exposure times of around 1/2 to 1 sec, will preserve the color and detail of the fireworks.
- 2 Focus manually**
Autofocusing systems will struggle to focus on fireworks until the display is well underway. If possible, focus manually instead.
- 3 Tripod**
Use a tripod to assist with accurate framing and to make it possible to use longer exposure times while avoiding camera movement.

