



# CREATIVE MEDIA **FUNDAMENTALS**

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## **PHOTOGRAPHING THE NIGHT SKY**



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CMF011

# PHOTOGRAPHING THE NIGHT SKY

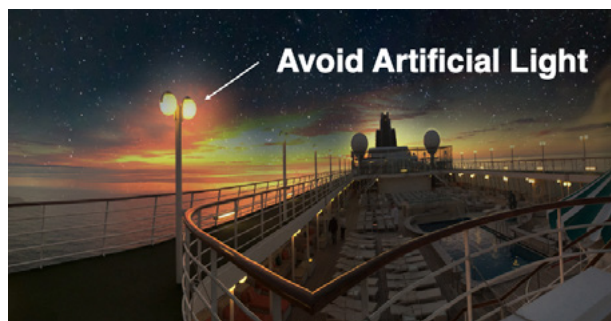
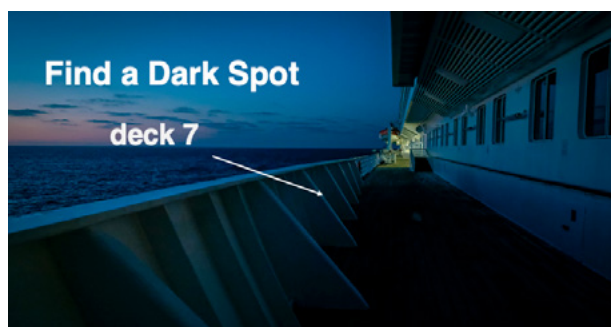
Using your mobile phone to take night sky images on a cruise ship can be challenging due a variety of factors, such as ship movement, light pollution and limited camera capabilities. However, here are some tips to help you overcome those hurdles:



## FIND A DARK SPOT:

Look for a location on the ship with minimal light pollution. This could be a top deck, the side of the ship on Deck 7 or even from your balcony. Just avoid any areas with strong artificial lighting, as it can wash out the stars in your photos. If shooting from your balcony, make sure to turn off the lights in your state-room, as they can interfere with your night vision.

It can also be useful to take a flashlight with you. A red light flashlight will minimize any loss of your night vision.



Red Flash Light (\$8.99)

[Purchase on Amazon](#)



Red Key Chain Flash Light (set of 6 \$7.99)

[Purchase on Amazon](#)

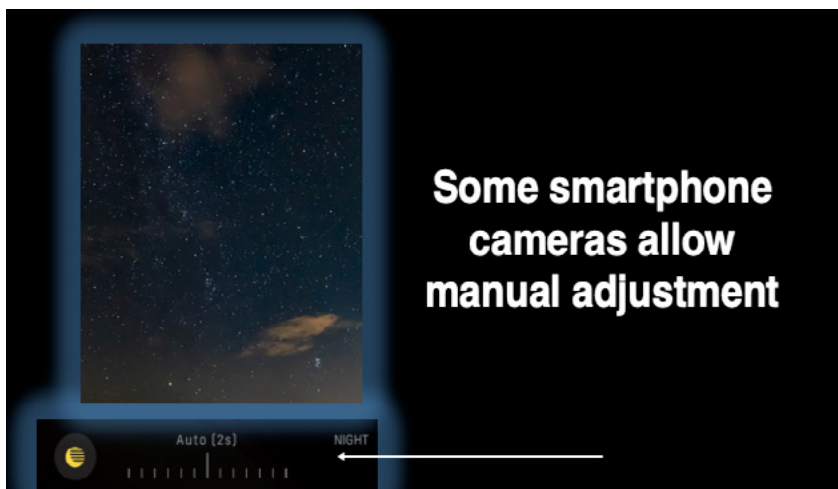
## USE MANUAL MODE OR NIGHT MODE:

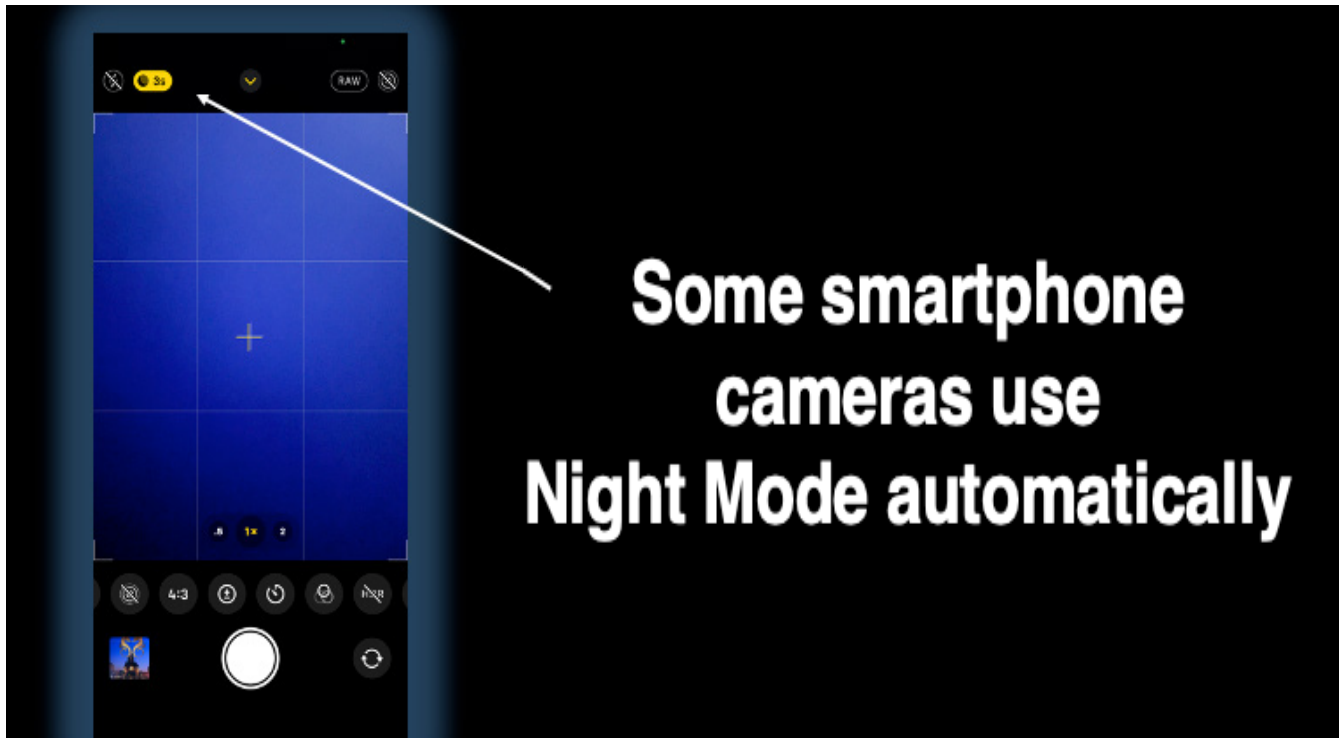
If your mobile phone camera has a manual mode, you can use it to retain more control over your the camera settings. Adjust the ISO, shutter speed and focus manually to capture clearer and brighter night sky photos.

When the yellow icon is visible on your iPhone (shown at right), it means that Night Mode is available. If the icon is yellow, then it has automatically been turned on and will indicate the number of seconds that it thinks is needed to properly expose the scene. Be sure to hold still for that length of time after pressing the shutter to avoid producing a blurry result. You can also tap on the icon, which will cause an additional setting to appear.

The Night Mode setting will only appear when the camera detects a low-light environment and it will turn on by default. The capture may be fast, or up to a few seconds long, depending on how dark the scene is. If the scene is very dark, the camera will need to be held very still in order to prevent motion blur.

The shutter button allows you to adjust the length of exposure. This way, you won't be stuck with the default auto-calculated setting. If you take a photo using Night Mode and you find it to be too dark, increase the exposure length. Decrease the exposure length if it was too bright. To turn off Night Mode, tap its icon and then adjust the exposure length to zero.





## **STEADY THE PHONE:**

For the best results, hold your iPhone steady until the capture completes. This can be easier if you place your iPhone on or against a solid and secure surface. You can also use a tripod to increase stability and control of the exposure clarity. Many compact tripods are now available for smart phones.

With iOS 14, if your iPhone detects movement when you're trying to capture a photo, you can align the crosshairs in the frame to help you reduce motion and improve the shot. To interrupt a Night mode photo mid-capture rather than waiting for the capture to finish, just tap the stop button below the slider.

## **ADJUST THE CAPTURE TIME**

When you take a photo in Night mode, a number appears next to the Night mode icon to indicate how long the shot will take. To try longer Night mode photos, tap the Night mode icon. Then use the slider above the shutter button to choose Max, which extends the capture time. When you take the photo, the slider becomes a timer that counts down to the end of the capture time.

A couple of examples of tripods/stabilizers that you can get for your phone:

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Mobile Phone Selfie Stick Tripod with Remote [\\$29.99 on Amazon](#)

Metal Phone Tripod Mount Adapter [\\$27.99 on Amazon](#)

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## SET A LONGER EXPOSURE:

Night sky photography often requires longer exposures to capture enough light. Experiment with longer shutter speeds, typically between 10 and 30 seconds, to allow more light to reach the camera sensor. Again, using a tripod or stable surface is crucial for getting sharp images during longer exposures.

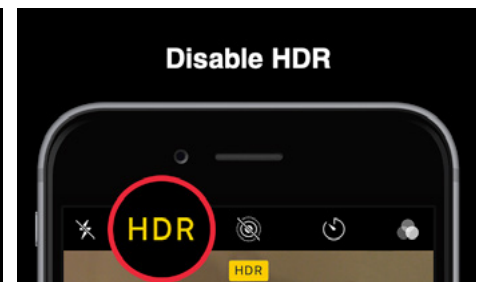


Many of the night sky camera apps provide some control for setting shutter speed.

## DISABLE FLASH AND HDR:

Turn off the flash and HDR (High Dynamic Range) mode as they are not helpful in capturing the night sky. The flash will only illuminate nearby objects and won't reach the stars, while HDR may introduce unwanted artifacts or ghosting in low-light conditions.

The Camera app's HDR setting helps you capture great shots in high-contrast situations by blending the brightness ranges from different exposures into a single image. But it may introduce unwanted artifacts or ghosting in low-light



conditions. If you have an iPhone, you can disable the HDR setting, but only if you have an iPhone 8, XS, XR, 10, 11 or 12. You cannot manually disable the HDR feature on the iPhone 13 and 14. These models use Smart HDR and will likely turn HDR off when shooting in a low-light scene.

To avoid blur in a photograph, use the Camera app self-timer. This eliminates any potential camera shake that can occur when you tap the shutter button. (Some of the dedicated Night Sky photography apps will automatically select the self timer mode.)



## EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT APPS:

Consider using dedicated night photography apps that offer more manual controls and advanced features that are specifically designed for capturing the night sky. These apps can help you fine-tune the camera settings for better results.



[Starry Camera 2 in the App Store \(Free\)](#)



[Starry Camera Pro 2 in the App Store \\$4.99](#)

(Starry Camera Pro has more manual controls and a Milky Way mode)



[\\$4.99. Starry Sky Camera. A similar star app for Android available in the Google Play store](#)



[\\$2.99. iOS NightCap Camera Sky](#) and general night photography app.



[\\$4.99. Android ProCam X General photography app with full camera controls available in the Google Play Store](#)



[\\$1.99. iOS Slow shutter Cam: A sky and general night photography app](#)  
A Similar App for Android: [\\$4.99 Manual Camera: DSLR Camera Pro](#)



[Star Walk 2](#) is a powerful, easy-to-use and informative stargazing guide. Point your device at the sky and Sky Walk 2 will show you the real-time positions of space objects in an interactive map. Available for both, iOS and Android. A free app that contains in-app purchases. There is also a paid version of the app, Star Walk 2. The content and features are the same, but Star Walk 2 doesn't contain ads.

## EDIT YOUR PHOTOS:

Once you've taken your night sky photos, use photo editing apps or software on your computer to enhance them further. Adjust the brightness, contrast and color levels to bring out the details in the stars and reduce any noise that might have been introduced during the long exposure. Some editing apps include:



Lightroom Photo & Video Editor

[\(free 7 day trial then \\$9.95 per month\)](#) works on Windows, Android, Mac and iOS.



Snapseed is a free photo-editing app by Google. It's available for [Android](#) or [iOS](#). You can take photos in the app and edit them, or edit photos already in your camera roll, including photos in JPG and RAW formats. It was created by Nik Software, and is now owned by Google. Adjust the brightness, contrast and color levels to bring out the details in the stars and reduce any noise that might have been introduced during the long exposure.