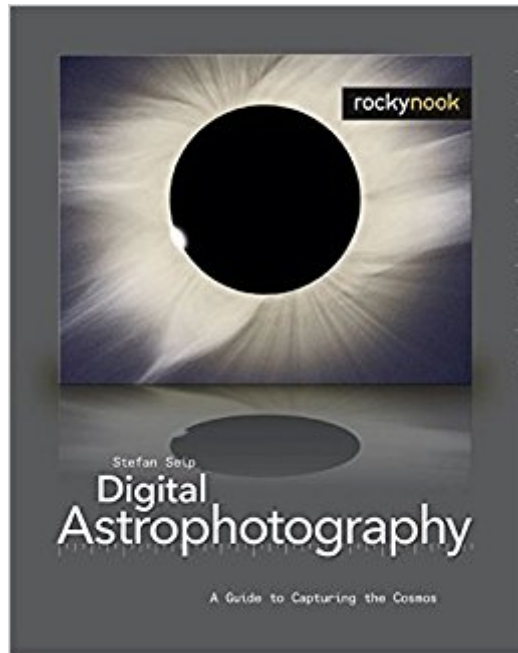




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Digital Astrophotography: A Guide To Capturing The Cosmos



Synopsis

At first glance, the challenge of astrophotography may appear daunting. But not only are spectacular results possible, they are easy to learn with the step-by-step instructions provided in Stephan Seip's *Digital Astrophotography: A Guide to Capturing the Cosmos*. Today, amateurs can produce images that only twenty years ago a large professional observatory would have been proud of; and this book shows you how.

Learn how to:

- Set up your camera for optimum results
- Focus your camera for razor-sharp images
- Take beautiful night shots with a simple compact digital camera, a tripod, and a telescope
- Use a DSLR camera to shoot the Sun, Moon, stars, star clusters, and nebulae through your telescope
- Get brilliant images of planets with a Webcam
- Capture remote galaxies with a charge-coupled device (CCD) camera just like a pro

Also included are lessons on the processing that is done in the "studio" after your shoot, including how to:

- Shoot RAW format images and improve them with calibration frames
- Take short exposures of faint deep-sky objects and combine them into a longer exposure
- Perform brightness, contrast, and color correction
- Make corrections to correct for vignetting and uneven field illumination
- Process your images for stunning results

Equipment requirements for astrophotography range from nothing but a simple camera and tripod to a multi-thousand dollar computer controlled telescope equipped with a CCD auto-guider and separate guide-scope. Researching the best equipment for your needs is a task in itself. Seip helps you to sort out which cameras are best for the various celestial objects, what to look for when buying a camera, and what accessories you really need. The rewards of this fascinating hobby, as the author says, "Grants you unforgettable hours under the night sky; it allows you to produce aesthetically rewarding and lasting results. Astrophotography is a love-match between physics, photography, art, and digital image processing. It is exciting!"

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Customer Reviews

I found the book lacking in any real examples of night sky photographic technique. Book is divided into sections which detail the types of cameras one can use with some starting suggestions of what to shoot e.g., use your point and shoot to photograph the moon. Too many words are dedicated to very basic descriptions of the different cameras and not enough to technique and examples. A synopsis of technique or specific examples of shots is (here I'm paraphrasing): "look at your camera's monitor display to check for exposure and focus" So that's a summary of how to manipulate your camera for astral-photography : check your display monitor. The Photoshop sections may be the most useful info contained in the book, but I haven't used the suggestions yet so will refrain from rating these.

Wanting to learn more about astrophotography, I purchased this book. Although I am not trying astrophotography now, this book has been very helpful. The author discusses astrophotography in general. Then he goes through various kinds of astrophotography and the types of cameras suited and/or best for a particular format. The types of cameras discussed are; Compact digital cameras Webcams DSLR Astronomical CCD cameras Each section divided into individual chapters for each type of camera 1. Applications with subheadings: a. Characteristics of the camera b. Suitable photo Photo motifs c. Advantages and disadvantages 2. Buying tips 3. Information on taking astrophotos with the particular camera (example: web cams) 4. Processing images taken with a particular camera Some of the processing directions are more detailed; depends on which camera is being discussed. There is also an appendix with a table summarizing application areas for each type of camera. There are also photos illustrating what various cameras are capable of. Overall I liked the book and refer to it often just for information. It is written in a very clear and understandable way. I would recommend it for anyone, new to astrophotography or more of an expert. Especially good for a newbie.

I am a old astrophotographer returning to the hobby after a 10 year leave of absence. I went looking for a good reference that would lead me back into the hobby. It seems that Seip has one of the few books out there so I bought it. He does an excellent job giving you a good grounding in each and

every aspect of the discipline. He has me either already doing or considering doing different aspects of astrophotography that I had never considered before. Starting with web cam imaging of planets then moving up to astrophotography with a DSLR camera have me progressing into the hobby while I build up my equipment list, my expertise using it and \$\$ which will make graduating to CCD imaging a snap. You can't go wrong with this one. Some of the references are getting a little dated but there is nothing that can't be resolved using his recommendations as a starting point and typing a few lines into a internet search engine. When he updates or writes another I'll be buying it.

First of all, I don't know anything about astronomy and astrophotography. However, I do know quite a bit about photography, but because of the first comment, I don't know anything about astrophotography. As such, I was very astonished with the relative lack of books out there in regards to this topic. However, perhaps because there is such slim pickings that people are giving this book such high marks. I'm actually surprised and disappointed that such a publisher like Rocky Nook would put out such a... lame book. Initially it appears to be a comprehensive book, in which a novice like myself would get a good overview along with specific information on how to capture astrophotography related images... but unfortunately no. For example, the most accessible / easy shot for the novice to get would be that related to milky way shots or star trails; ie using a regular SLR, tripod, wide angle lens... that's about it, no fancy telescopes, no rotating heads etc... There are literally around 2, perhaps 3 very dull and basic information related to this seemingly important subject. Like I said, this is such a dud of a book, that I'm not going to even waste the time trying to resell it; that would be a disservice to the public. One would be better served, doing some internet searching for some tutorials or e-books on the subject.

I've been reading up on astrophotography but I'm still a rank beginner, so I'm shocked to meet a book that seems too shallow even for me. Here's how the book's contents break down: 13 pages - Introduction, 22 pages - Compact Digital Camera, 26 pages - Webcam, 32 pages - DSLR, 42 pages - CCD (SBIG, Starlight Xpress). Choice of a telescope is limited to a half page discussion in the introduction. There a picture of an equatorial mounting, nothing more. The Meade LPI is given two sentences. For CCD cameras, only the SBIG and Starlight Xpress get a mention. There is no index. One interesting aspect of the book is the large number of formulas for helping you estimate optimum magnification, angle of view, etc. But overall, this book is trying to cover too much material to do any of it well.

I had done quite a bit of reading on the topic of astrophotography before discovering this book. My initial thoughts were that it was a little superficial, however on reflection this book is a great place to start if you are looking to understand the various digital camera types (Compact, DSLR, WebCam, CCD) and their suitability to various types of astrophotography (Planetary, Wide field, Deep sky etc). The pros and cons of each are concisely listed and many snippets of good practice are added with each type. If I'd found this book earlier, I'd have spent many less hours looking at the various options from many separate sources. There are other books out there that cover DSLRs or CCDs in greater depth, but if you want a grounding in the marvellous boon that digital photography is to the art of astrophotography this is a great place to start.

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