

# Sunny 16 Rule

The Sunny 16 Rule (also known as B.D.E. or Basic Daylight Exposure) is a way of determining exposure without using the camera meter. Using the weather as a guide, Sunny 16 is an easy way to accurately predict correct exposure factors.

The rule is as follows:

In sunny weather, your exposure is **F16 at 1/ISO** of the film you are using.  
For example, using Fuji Velvia: F16 at 1/60 (ISO 50)

## Remember:

Pick the shutter speed closest to the ISO you are using. If you do not expose film at the manufacturer's selected speed, determine shutter speed from the ISO you are actually using.

As the weather changes, you will open up (add exposure) in all instances except one, **bright sun, bright conditions.**

The sun must be high enough to be bright to use the Sunny 16 exposure and a majority of the photo should be in the sun. Sunny 16 favors the sun; shadows tend to go dark.

If you bracket, open up only. If you are concerned about shadow detail, you might like to open up one stop from Sunny 16 as your norm. Experiment to see what you like.

When using filters, remember to add the filter factor to your exposure.

## Sunny 16 exposures:

Bright sun (the "average" Sunny 16 exposure): F16 at 1/ISO

Bright sun, bright conditions (white sand, snow): -1 stop or F22 at 1/ISO (the only time you use less than Sunny 16)

Open shade (blue sky above): +3 stops or F5.6 at 1/ISO

Back light (when you do not want silhouettes): +2 stops or F8 at 1/ISO

Heavy overcast: +4 stops or F4 at 1/ISO

White, hazy day: F16 or F22 at 1/ISO (These days can be quite bright.)

## Use Sunny 16 when:

You don't have time to meter.

Your meter is broken and your camera will still let you make photographs.

You want to check your meter for accuracy.