

Infrared Photography with your digital camera

Any digital camera with manual facilities can be used to produce stunning infrared images.

All you need is an infrared filter (Cokin and Hoya both make them), a tripod and a sunny day. The tricky part is determining the length of exposure; because infrared light focuses on a slightly different plane than visible light you need to use a fairly small aperture to ensure sharpness. Shoot in RAW mode if your camera supports it and keep your ISO setting low, you can always add grain later to get that gritty film look if you want. The advantage of shooting in RAW is that you can still tweak the exposure when processing the image but it's still worth bracketing a couple of stops either side.

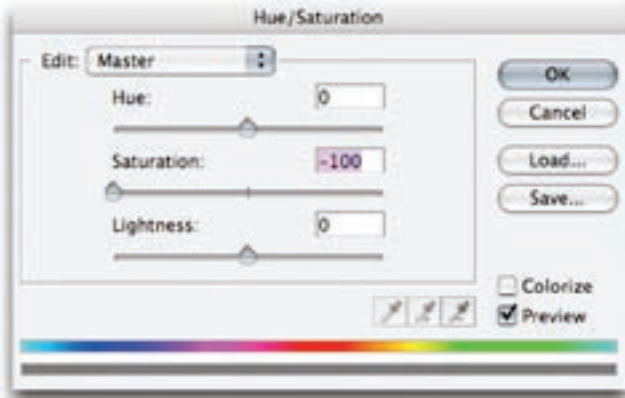


Nikon D70 • ISO 200
4 seconds at f/13

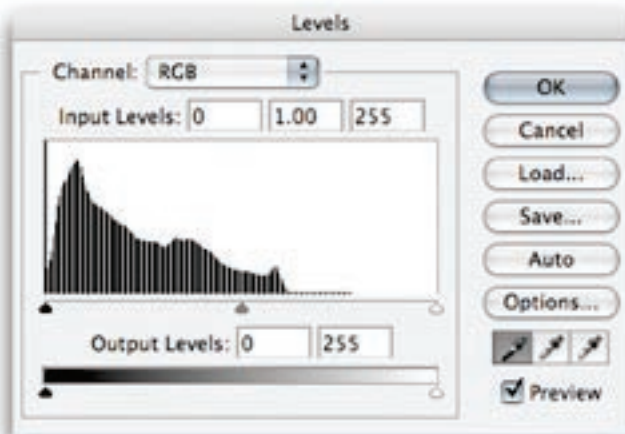
Cokin P007 Infrared filter



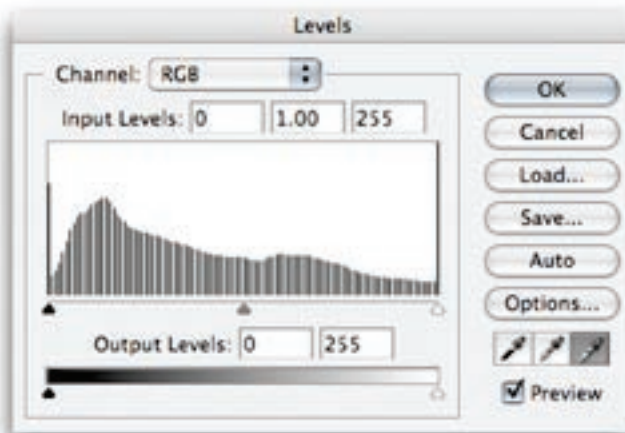
When editing your images try and look for a shot with the widest tonal range. Don't worry that the image looks rather flat and red, a little manipulation in Photoshop will sort out the contrast.



Firstly remove the red cast by de-saturating the image using the slider. I find it best to completely remove any trace of colour and add it back later if you want to achieve a toned effect.



Using the black eye-dropper, select the darkest area within the image and click to set the black point. In this shot I used the base of the trunk. When it comes to setting the white point, it's often easier to drag the slider by hand if you can't see an obvious highlight.



Your levels should now look something like this. Don't worry that the levels look banded, the tonal range of infrared is far less than that of visible light

For maximum effect tweak the curves to achieve maximum impact and experiment with a colour tone using the colour balance palette.

