

A Monopod: the Right Camera Support for your Safari

Description

Choosing a support for your camera equipment to use while on safari is important especially if you are bringing large lenses of 300mm – 600mm image stabilization or not.

Over the years I have learned to streamline and keep my photography equipment light and versatile for use on my safari photography workshops in South Africa. For many years I used an aluminum monopod and a homemade mount. It had seen too many safaris and needed to retire. I replaced it with a new monopod system.

The system is composed of

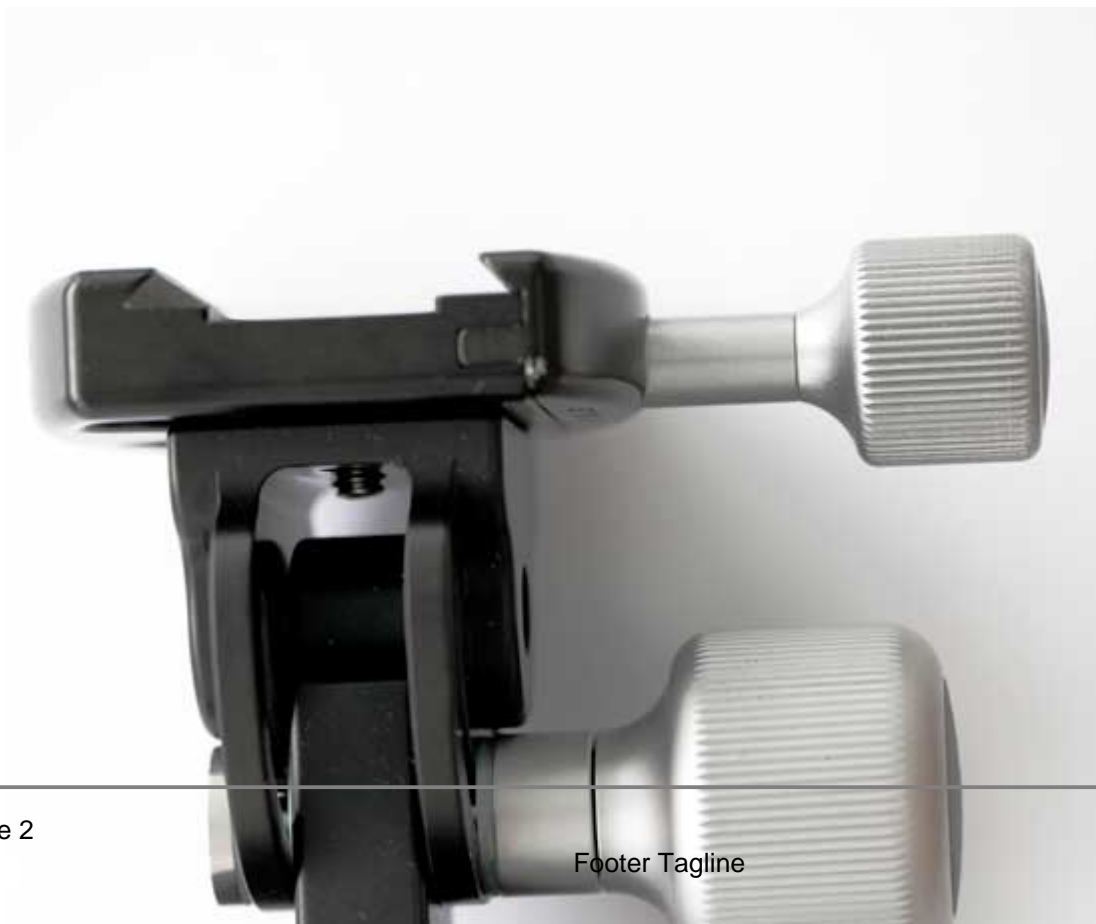
[Really Right Stuff](#) Monopod Head MH-01 and a quick detachable plate for my Canon 5D™s



Really Right Stuff MH-1 Tilt monopod head



Really Right Stuff LCF-52 foot for my Canon 5D series camera



My monopod RRS GM 2541 Monopod with a tilt head

[Gitzo](#) carbon fibre GM2541



Guests have a wide variety of monopod setups. Their relative inexpensive nature compared to tripods makes it possible to get a higher end ball attachment

The light weight and durability of these products were top criteria for me. The plate on top is quick and easy to release so I can transition to handheld instantly. The whole thing is less than 900 grams

I own a nice ball head that will fit on this monopod, but I can get a great range of movement and angles just by twisting the monopod in my hands. By the way I also prefer a lighter camera without a bunch of bells and whistles that are impossible to use out in the field while the elephants are charging and the light is changing.

Tip: When shopping for a monopod make sure it will be able to fold short enough to use from a seated position (not too tall)





other features for monopod heads

default watermark





another option for a monopod head

default watermark





Support Options for Safaris

For Southern Africa including South Africa and Botswana, the monopod is my best recommendation. Bean bags work really well in Eastern Africa where the safari vehicles are either enclosed with windows or of the popup roof variety. Some photographers even use mounts that secure a Wimberly head to the window.

These solutions are not at all useful in South Africa where the vehicles are mostly open Land Rovers with no sides and in some places fitted with canvas roofs (required in Kruger National Park). The open vehicles are much more exciting to ride in and afford more unrestricted view as well as allowing riders to see well without standing.

The vehicles do not have room for tripods, so monopods or handheld are the way to go. With a monopod your camera is supported and you are still able to move about, swivel the camera, and it is pretty easy to adjust the height. With the right mount ranging from a simple swivel with a tightening screw to a fancy ball head, you will be able to move and lock into any position. Monopods are also handy for when you are on foot and are easy and fairly light to carry or strap to a pack when not in use.



A â€œfrankensteinâ€ mix of clamp and swivel joint arm for use in a safari vehicle

My nice tripod and gimbal head will still travel with me for star photography and interior shots of the lodge

[see our Current Safari Schedule](#)

Category

1. Cameras & Equipment
2. Preparing for Safari
3. Safari Travel Tips

Tags

1. Photo safari in South Africa equipment to bring
2. safari camera support systems
3. tripod for safari
4. using monopod on safari
5. which camera support works best for safari

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