

Urban Exploration: An Adventure of a New Age

Urban exploration (aka urbex) has become a global phenomenon in the past few years. No longer relegated to niche communities, people across demographics are descending into abandoned buildings, underground tunnels and forgotten factories. Not only are these secretive places ripe for discovery but they also provide one of the most exciting, unique experiences available for photographers, adventurers, and history buffs.

What is Urban Exploration?

Urban exploration — or urbex — is the exploration of abandoned and decaying urban structures — from old industrial sites to empty skyscrapers and underground bunkers. These long-abandoned rooms have storied pasts and have languished untouched for decades, earning them both a place in photography history as a goldmine and in larger history as a treasure.

For adventurers, the fun is in the surprise — discovering underground tunnels, wandering around abandoned factories, walking through ghost towns that maunder toward a pre-modern time. The appeal lies in finding spaces that were once alive, and have been left to the elements, waiting to be explored.

Why Urban Exploration Is Crazy and Fulfilling

Urban exploration is all about the thrill of venturing into unknown territory. These places we refer to have, in their nature, danger in there — from structural risks, toxic substances, and the occasional animal as well. But it's the feeling of adventure that keeps explorers queuing up for more.

Every exploration brings with it a sense of history and mystery that is the best part of urbex. Why was a factory abandoned? Who did time in these buildings? What's happened to the once-bustling neighborhoods? Urban explorers feel a deep-rooted connection to these once-forgotten places and immerse themselves in the striking histories they hold.

Urban Exploration: A Gift for Photographers

For photographers, urbex photography is one of the most beautiful subjects. To ensuring a level of decay in its structures, glaringly cracked windows, rusted-out machinery, each has its own beautiful aesthetic that no other photographic interest can replicate. Photographers are attracted to the paradox of manmade deterioration as nature takes over.

Many of the most powerful images in urban exploration photography illustrate nature claiming power over man-made environments. Ovens, factories, old buildings, gassy-fuel train stations and so on — if you have a camera and a sense of adventure, are places waiting for you to capture.

Urban Exploration (the good and bad)

Although, the excitement of urban exploration is undeniable, it is important to keep in mind that these sites can be very risky. Buildings in decay often contain toxic material like lead, mold and asbestos, and the danger of the buildings collapsing is great. Because of this, urbex enthusiasts should always practice safety as a priority—using the right protective gear, researching locations in advance and not overstepping their bounds in these abandoned places.

Urban exploration is also illegal in many locations, where trespassing in abandoned buildings is frequently against the law. Explorers need to stay very aware of the legal ramifications and always conduct these types of ventures in an appropriate manner.

Intro (new): The Intoxicating Power of Abandonment

Urban exploration is the ultimate combination of adventure, mystery, and photography. For those who want to seek a thrill, there's no better way to explore history than to step into the hidden spaces of cities. As an urbex photographer, a profile adventurer, or simply a history fan, the world of urban exploration is like a treasure trove waiting to be discovered.