



Lightroom Classic Import Tips

In this lesson I'll share the import routine I used after my recent trip to the Mediterranean. I'll start by getting photos off my iPhone with AirDrop in a way that keeps the original files, then bring them into Lightroom Classic so they're moved, renamed and organized in one pass. Only a few tips are specific to the iPhone; everything else applies no matter how you captured your images.

Key Concepts

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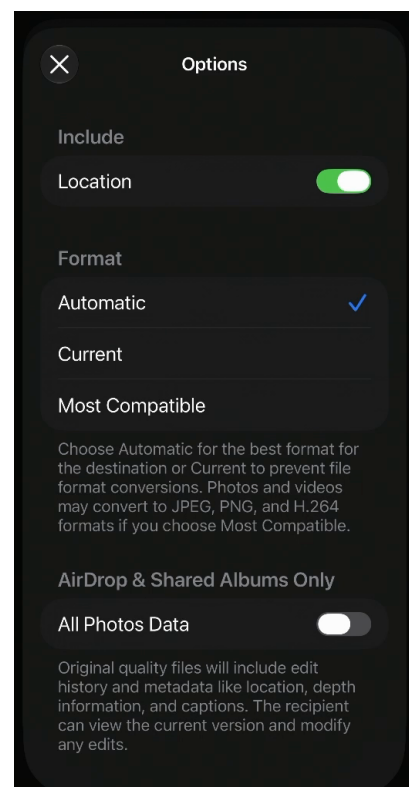
AirDrop with All Photos Data (03:03)

A normal AirDrop from the iPhone converts files for you:

RAW files arrive as JPEG or HEIC, a Live Photo set to Long Exposure arrives without the original still, and a Portrait mode image with a black background arrives without the original background.

1. **Select and Share:** In the Photos app, tap Select, drag across the images, then tap the Share icon.
2. **Open Options:** Before choosing a destination, tap **Options** at the top. Format is set to Automatic, which is why RAW files get converted. Current keeps the original format, and Most Compatible makes sure files are easy to share.
3. **Turn on All Photos Data:** At the bottom, turn on **All Photos Data**, close Options and AirDrop the images to your computer.

You'll get one folder per image. Inside you'll find the untouched original (a RAW file arrives as DNG), the edited result as a JPEG or HEIC, the three-second movie from a Live Photo, and an **.AAE** file. The AAE file holds the adjustments you made in the Photos app, much like an XMP sidecar, but only Apple software can read it, so it isn't useful in Lightroom. For Long Exposure and Portrait mode images, having both the original and the result means you can still go back to the original.



Name	Date Created	Kind	Size	Date Modified
untitled folder	Today, 8:12 AM	Folder	32.4 MB	Today at 8:12 AM
IMG_1452	Today, 8:12 AM	Folder	2.1 MB	Today at 8:12 AM
IMG_2110	Today, 8:12 AM	Folder	14.9 MB	Today at 8:12 AM
IMG_2417	Today, 8:12 AM	Folder	3.7 MB	Today at 8:12 AM
IMG_2753	Today, 8:12 AM	Folder	6.1 MB	Today at 8:12 AM
IMG_2753.MOV	10/10/26, 1:45 PM	QuickTime movie	4.6 MB	Oct 10, 2026
IMG_2753.HEIC	10/10/26, 2:18 PM	HEIF Image	1.5 MB	Oct 10, 2026
IMG_2792	Today, 8:12 AM	Folder	5.7 MB	Today at 8:12 AM
IMG_2792.AAE	10/10/26, 2:04 PM	Apple Adjustments and Edits Sidecar	3 KB	Oct 10, 2026
IMG_E2792.jpg	10/10/26, 2:04 PM	JPEG image	1.6 MB	Oct 10, 2026
IMG_2792.DNG	10/10/26, 2:00 PM	Adobe raw image	4 MB	Oct 10, 2026
Normal Airdrop	Today, 8:09 AM	Folder	7.7 MB	Today at 8:09 AM
IMG_1452.heic	9/29/26, 3:30 PM	HEIF Image	407 KB	Sep 29, 2026
IMG_E2792.heic	10/7/26, 9:46 AM	HEIF Image	3.7 MB	Oct 7, 2026
IMG_2792.jpg	10/10/26, 1:59 PM	JPEG image	1.6 MB	Oct 10, 2026
IMG_2110.HEIC	10/4/26, 7:43 AM	HEIF Image	410 KB	Oct 4, 2026
IMG_2753.HEIC	10/10/26, 2:18 PM	HEIF Image	1.5 MB	Oct 10, 2026
Multi-day Captures	10/14/26, 7:45 PM	Folder	4.43 GB	Oct 14, 2026

Corral Hundreds of Folders (04:29)

One folder per image gets messy when you transfer hundreds of photos. If you're at the Mac when the transfer finishes, press **Shift-Command-N** to make a new folder first. When the notification appears, click **Show in Finder**; all the new folders will be selected, so you can drag them into the new folder in one move.

Start an Import by Dragging a Folder (10:29)

On a Mac, drag a folder onto the Lightroom Classic icon in the Dock. The Import screen opens and the Source panel on the left is already set to that folder. (That may not work in Windows; there you can choose the folder in the Source panel or use Add Folder, covered at the end.)

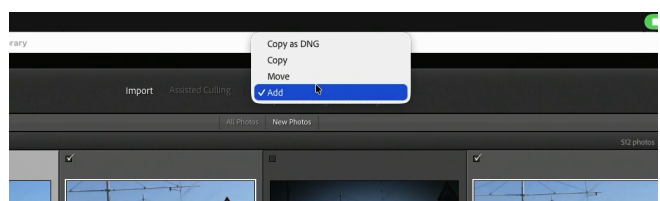
Skip Live Photo Videos (11:05)

Every Live Photo comes with a three-second video. I only use those on my phone, so I keep them out of Lightroom. The **Check All** and **Uncheck All** buttons at the bottom of the Import screen change when you hold **Option** (Alt in Windows): they then apply only to videos. Hold Option and click **Uncheck Videos**, and only still photos will be imported.

Move Instead of Copy (11:55)

At the top of the Import screen, **Add** leaves the files where they are with their current names, so you won't get renaming options.

I use **Copy** or **Move** instead. Copy leaves a second copy in the original location, which can fill up a laptop when you're importing a week of travel photos. **Move** keeps only one copy, so that's what I use. Choosing Copy or Move also gives you more options on the right side.

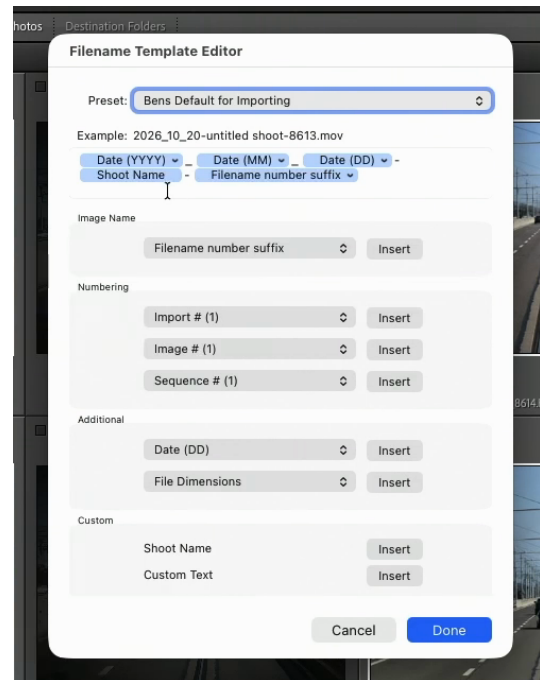


Rename Using the Original Number (13:26)

Turn on **Rename Files** in the File Renaming panel.

Files that belong together share a number: the Live Photo still and its video, or a RAW original and its edited JPEG (IMG_8613 and its movie, for example). I want to keep that relationship.

1. **Edit the Template:** My template uses the year, month and day separated by underscores, then **Shoot Name**, then **Filename Number Suffix**.
2. **Use Filename Number Suffix:** This keeps the number from the original camera file name. A sequence such as Image # would give related files different numbers, and you'd lose track of which ones go together.
3. **Type a Shoot Name:** Enter the location or subject. The sample at the bottom shows the result.
4. **Reuse It for the Subfolder:** Copy the shoot name (Command-C). In the Destination panel, turn on **Into Subfolder** and name it with the year, an underscore and the month, a space, then paste the shoot name.

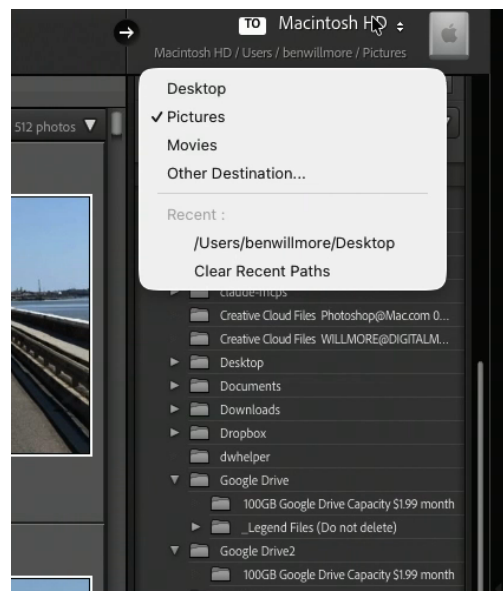


Destination Shortcuts and Into One Folder (16:57)

The Destination panel can be hard to navigate.

Click the **To** heading at the top right to get shortcuts such as Desktop and Recent locations. When I'm traveling I import to my desktop.

Then set **Organize** to **Into One Folder**. Even though AirDrop delivered one folder per image, they'll all end up in a single folder.

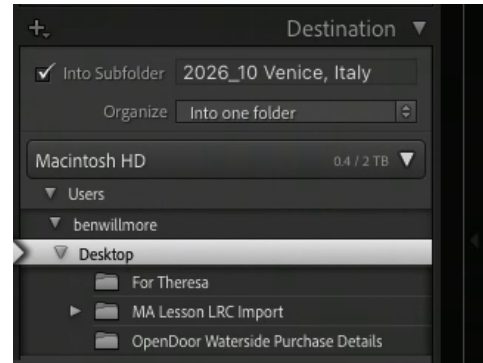


Dock Folders to Reduce Clutter (17:52)

Double-click a folder in the Destination panel to dock it: the parent folders collapse and the folders on the same level are hidden.

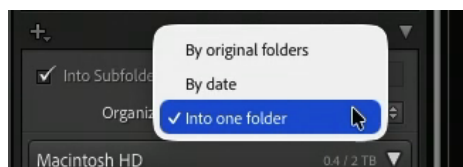
You can also right-click and choose Dock Folder. Double-click again to undock. The same works in the Source panel, which is handy if you always import from Downloads.

Then click **Import**. While the upper left shows two operations in progress, the Import button isn't available. As soon as only one progress bar remains (building previews), you can start another import.



Organize Multi-Day Folders by Date (20:07)

When a folder holds several days of shooting, set **Organize** to **By Date**. Lightroom previews one folder per day, and you can turn off the checkbox for any day you don't want to import yet. At the top of the grid, choose **Destination Folders** to group the thumbnails by those dates, expand one to see if you recognize the location, and import one day at a time if you do.



Organize: By Date

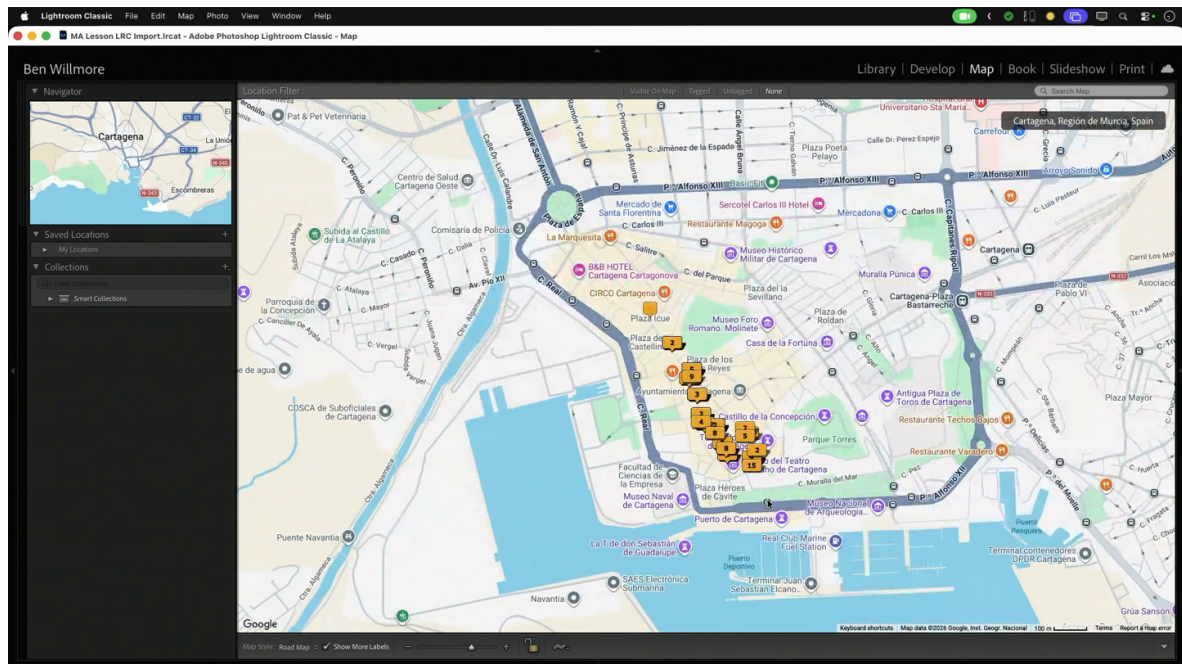


Destination folders by date

If you don't remember where you were, turn off file renaming (they'll come from different places) and turn off Into Subfolder so you simply get folders named by date.

Use the Map to Identify Locations (23:38)

Select a date folder, press Command-A and go to the **Map** module.

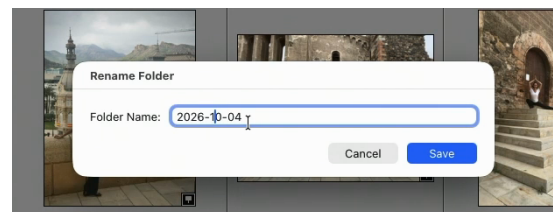
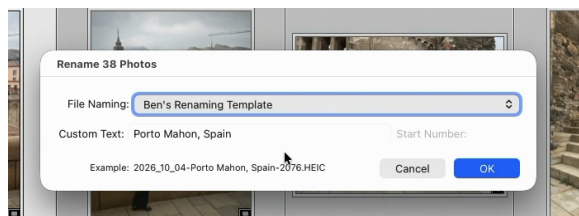


The iPhone tags each photo with GPS coordinates. In the Filmstrip, click the small GPS badge in the lower right of a thumbnail to jump to where it was taken. Zoom out with the slider or a two-finger swipe until you recognize the area, then zoom in to read the place name.

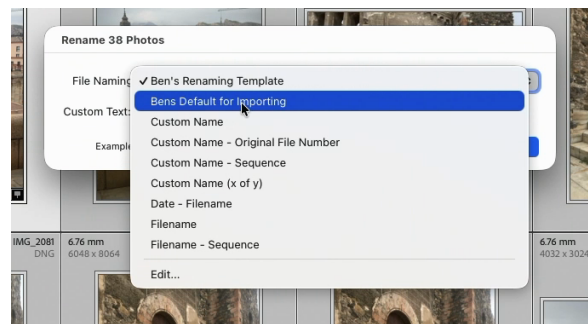
Rename Folders and Files After Import (25:00)

Back in the Library module, right-click the folder and choose **Rename**.

The date is already there, so just change it to your format and add the place name. Copy the name before you click Save.



Rename Photos dialog



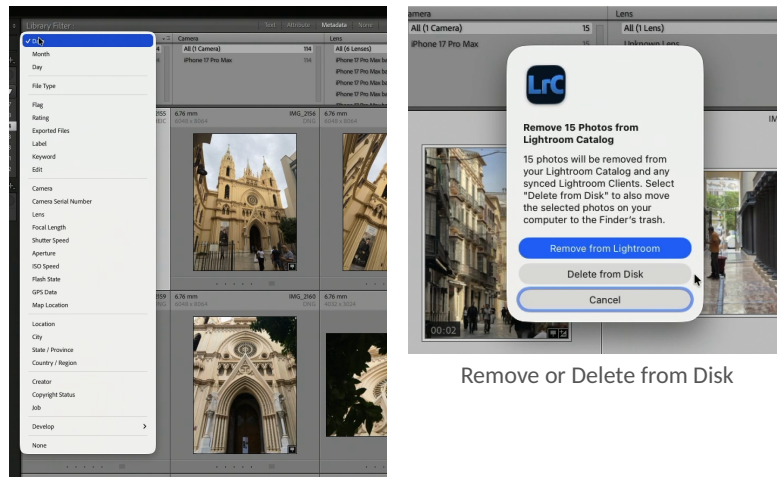
Choosing the renaming template

To rename the files, select all (Command-A, or Control-A in Windows), then click the icon next to **File Name** in the Metadata panel. I keep a separate renaming template because a template that uses Shoot Name only accepts a name during import. My renaming template uses **Custom Text**

instead; paste the name there. Because the original number is kept, related files are still easy to match. Repeat for the other date folders.

Remove Unwanted Videos (27:45)

If you forgot to skip the videos, show the Library Filter bar (View > Show Filter Bar), click **Metadata**, set a column to **File Type** and choose **Video**. Check the durations first: two- or three-second clips come from Live Photos, while longer clips may be worth keeping. You can select several folders to do this all at once. Then select the clips, press Delete and choose **Remove from Lightroom** or **Delete from Disk**.

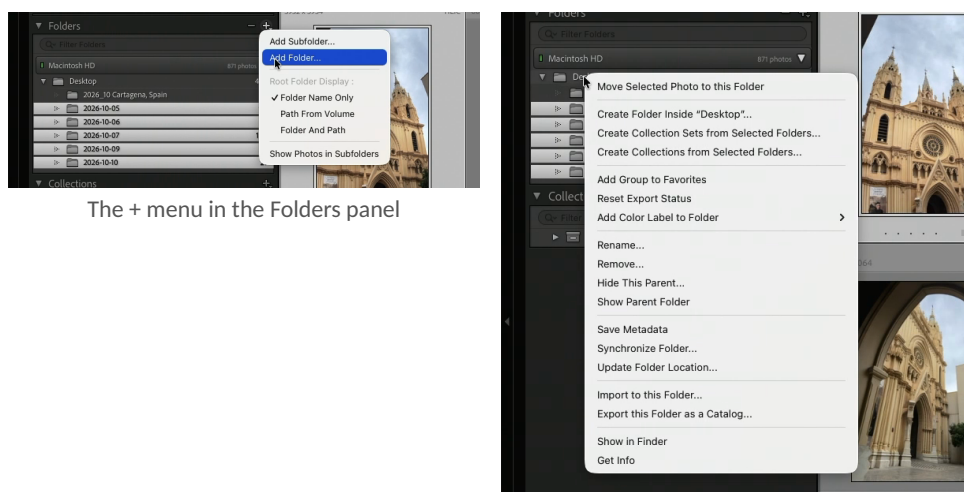


Library Filter: File Type

Remove or Delete from Disk

Add Folder and Create Folder Inside (29:42)

Another way to import: click the + next to the Folders heading and choose **Add Folder**. If the folder contains images, the Import screen opens. This is the Windows alternative to dragging a folder onto the Dock icon. To make an empty folder (for example, one named for the trip to hold all the date folders), right-click a folder and choose **Create Folder Inside**, then drag the other folders into it.



The + menu in the Folders panel

Create Folder Inside