

PICTURE THIS

Summer rays and memories may fade, but photographs are meant to last and last. These days, technology makes it easier than ever to snap pictures—but, arguably, harder to enjoy them after the moment has passed. If you're stuck on your phone or computer, it's time to find some meaningful ones and learn some clever new ways to display them. Think beyond frames and albums—print photos onto fabric or decals and use them in simple, crafty projects that you can appreciate every day, for an instant escape all year round.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LINDA PEARL/ISTE



OFF (AND ON) THE WALL

Change up any room in the house—long-term or just temporarily—with durable but removable vinyl decals that make a bold statement. They're often used on walls but can be trimmed to fit a piece of furniture. Use them to upgrade vintage pieces or as fitting embellishments for a special event. Our wall and chair decals were printed with photos that Martha took on a misty morning at her farm; each brings a lush, green view of nature indoors.

Pearl linen throw, *alder* and *coshop.com*.

PRINTS CHARMING TECH TIPS

When reproducing a picture—especially if you're enlarging it—you want to start with a good-quality, or high-resolution, image.

Digital photos are made up of colored dots called pixels. The more pixels in an image, the higher the resolution; the higher the resolution, the larger you can make the picture before it becomes grainy. The number of pixels is expressed as a dimension—e.g., 640 by 360. The size of the file (in megabytes, or MB) can also be used as an indicator of quality, but pixels are a more consistent guide.

Today's digital cameras (both point-and-shoot and the more sophisticated digital single-lens reflex, or DSLR) and smartphones can take good-quality images. Generally speaking, if your device shoots in eight megapixels or higher, it is capable of taking a picture that can be enlarged well.

However, several factors can lessen the resolution. Cameras

can be set to take pictures at low resolution to save space, so check your settings. Emailed photos may have been sent at lower resolutions. Cropping a photo also makes it lower-resolution. Taking photos through apps such as Instagram or Facebook, or uploading them to a site, often makes files smaller for use online. So use your phone's camera instead (and save the original, rather than relying only on the online version).

Many photo-printing websites have guidelines on reproducing images. As an example, one recommends a minimum resolution of 540 by 360 pixels for a four-by-six-inch photo, and a minimum of 2,100 by 1,400 for a 20-by-30-inch poster. The projects here (with the exception of the two that call for professionally printed materials) can be printed at home on most inkjet printers.

Expression Home XP-420 Small-in-One printer, *epsonstore.com*.



PHOTO TIP

Many cameras and phones come with photo-editing capabilities, and apps offer even more options. These can give interesting results, but for the most natural effect, use them with a gentle hand.

ENDLESS SUMMER

A seashell pendant makes a lovely natural backing for landscape photos. The images take on a dreamy, painterly quality when printed on decal film and smoothed onto the shells. Thread them with leather cord for necklaces that are far more stylish than your average seaside souvenir. **OPPOSITE** Personalize your home décor with printed-photo fabric that can be sewn into pillows; these beach and boat scenes go beautifully with blue-and-white patterned fabrics. (For more details on these projects, see page 93.)



PHOTO TIP



Shoot at the "golden hours" whenever possible. In the early morning and late in the day, when the sun isn't as high, the light is softer and subjects are bathed in a flattering light. In the middle of the day, shooting in shade is more forgiving than bright sunlight, which creates strong shadows.



PHOTO TIP



Obey the rule of thirds: When taking a picture, imagine that your image is divided into thirds horizontally and vertically—as if you'd drawn a tic-tac-toe board on it. Rather than putting the subject of your photo in the center square, put it anywhere else (as shown, left and right).

LIVES OF THE PARTY

Put a personal spin on party supplies with family-vacation memories. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** Hang fluttery no-sew pennant garlands, made by printing photos directly onto cotton fabric; mix shots of people, scenery, and objects for an artful effect. Wrap decals around pale-glass bottles and votive holders for table decorations with a charming sea-glass look. Tack photos printed on cotton to place mats to hold flatware—you can even use ones of your guests to function as place cards (remove the photos before washing the mats). Weigh down napkins and tablecloths on breezy days with découpaged rocks (or use them on your desk as paperweights); printing the images onto thin rice paper lets the texture of the rock come through, so the image appears painted-on.

Industrial string lights and Waterscape votive, westelm.com. Glass tea-light holder, in White, hm.com. Glass water bottle with wire bail lid, in Light Green, and bottle bud vase, in Blue, jamaligarden.com. Indigo Stripe napkins, johnrobshaw.com.

TAKE IN THE SCENERY

Cover a notebook with an image from your travels and you have a journal that will bring back your trip. Print photos onto matte paper. Brush each notebook (these have a black-fabric binding) lightly with découpage glue and press the matte paper on top; let it dry, then trim the excess flush to the edge. Little canvas cases with iron-on images make excellent holders for passports as well as for mementos like ticket stubs and business cards.

Recycled-paper notebooks, muji.com/us. Premium Presentation matte paper, 11" by 14", in Bright White, epsonstore.com.

PHOTO TIP

When taking pictures of striking buildings and other architecture, try shooting from unexpected angles or going in for details to differentiate your shot from the typical postcard. Also, try to venture off the beaten track to really capture the spirit of a place.





READY FOR THEIR CLOSE-UPS

Materials and techniques used for the projects on these pages.

A. Vinyl Decals

+ Chair and wall art, page 90

Have your photos printed onto adhesive vinyl in virtually any size (you can even make a “mural”) by Fathead. Its decals are sticky enough to adhere well but are also removable and reusable, and won’t damage walls or wood. To cover something with a decal (such as the chair on page 90), start by tracing the shape you want to cover; cut a template to that size out of acetate. Have the decal made slightly larger. Place the template on the photo, framing the image in a pleasing way. Trace around it and cut it out, then adhere according to the instructions and trim with a craft knife as needed.

Custom vinyl mural print, from \$25, fathead.com.

B. Rice Paper

+ Rock weights, page 91

We used thin rice paper with a subtle texture on one side. It is slightly translucent, so once it is adhered to the rock, it becomes “part of the rock,” rather than appearing to be sitting on top. It is a little tricky to print on because of its thinness. To help it feed through your printer smoothly, adhere a strip of clear tape along one entire short edge on the textured side of the paper; print on the smooth side of the paper.

Rice paper, 9½” by 13”, \$10 for 100 sheets, dickblick.com. Découpage medium, by Martha Stewart Crafts, in Matte, \$10, michaels.com.

C. Professionally Printed Fabrics

+ Pillows, page 88

Printing your own fabric works well for some projects, but there are benefits to having your designs printed professionally. You can create larger pieces, choose from a wider range of textiles, and usually get sturdier results (with fabrics that are machine-washable, for example). We like Spoonflower, which is easy to use—you upload your image, and they do the rest. The pillows on page 88 are made with a linen-cotton blend. (For pillow-sewing how-tos, go to marthastewart.com/pillow-sewing.)

Printed cotton canvas, from \$25 a yd., spoonflower.com. (The photo designs shown here are for sale on the website.)

D. Print-Your-Own Fabrics

+ Pennants and place-mat pockets, page 91

Sheets of lightweight cotton come with paper backing, so it’s easy to feed them through a printer. The ink permeates the fabric but doesn’t stiffen it; the sheets remain soft and flowy. We didn’t hem the fabric; we like the cut edges and accentuated the effect by fringing them slightly.

Cotton inkjet fabric, by Jacquard, 8½” by 11”, \$12 for 10 sheets, michaels.com.

E. Iron-on Sheets

+ Canvas cases, page 92

Iron-on sheets are readily available and can be applied to almost any fabric. They have a plasticky feel that might not be ideal on a delicate fabric but works beautifully on canvas (as for our cases)—it gives the cloth a quality similar to that of a waxed coating. Follow the package instructions for printing and applying them. Cut the fabric a little larger than you need for your project, iron your image onto it, and then trim the edges.

T-shirt transfer for inkjet, \$14 for 6 sheets, avery.com.

F. Water-Slide Decals

+ Shell pendants, page 89
+ Glass votives and vases, page 91

These superthin clear printable decals come on a paper backing. Give them a coat of clear varnish, then soak them briefly in water—they will slide off the backing, ready to be applied to shell pendants, glass, or another smooth surface. Trim the edges more precisely once they’re applied.

Clear water-slide decal paper, 8½” by 11”, \$17 for 20 sheets, decalpaper.com. Kamar varnish, by Krylon, \$6.50, dickblick.com.

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