



What's New is Old Again: Converting Your Photos to Sepia

The latest trend to hit the world of scrapbooking can be summed up in one word: VINTAGE! We love to make all our new scrapbook pages look antique. Sepia tinted photographs are the perfect addition to those collage or shabby chic style layouts we have become so fond of.

If you're not familiar with the term "sepia," then here's a quick history lesson. Sepia ink is a reddish-brown ink made from the ink sacs of squid or cuttlefish. Historically, artists used it for their pen and ink drawings. Today, however, the term sepia is used to describe the brownish tint of old photographs. Rather than being true black and white photos, they have a warmer wash of brown over them. Converting the photos we take today to a sepia tone presents a strong visual cue of classic antiquity – perfect for our vintage layouts.

There are several ways to achieve a sepia look to your photos.

Digital Camera

If you are fortunate enough to own a digital camera, then it's time to haul out the User's Manual! Many digital cameras have a sepia setting; you just have to know how to access it before you take your photographs. Once it's set, then snap away!

Of course, using a digital camera is a great way to create sepia photos . . . but what about all of those great photographs you're already taken (digitally or with film) in color or black and white?

At the Printer

The fastest and easiest way to reproduce your existing photographs with a sepia tint is at the printer! Your color inkjet printer may have a built-in sepia setting, so again, check that User's Manual. Also, many of those in-store photo machines (like the Kodak Picture Maker) have a sepia option. Your local or online photo developer may also offer sepia prints from your color or black and white photos as well.

Software Manipulation

While your camera and printer may have built-in sepia modes, they are limited. The result is not bad, but you have little or no control of how the sepia tone will be applied to your photo. Often they will appear washed out, or the brown tint will be different that what you had expected.

If you use a photo editing program such as Photoshop, Paintshop Pro, or PhotoDeluxe, you will have far more control over the final product. By manipulating the settings, you can control the contrast of the photograph, or select just the right color brown to coordinate with your scrapbook layout.

If you are scanning a photo to manipulate, you will get the best results if you scan at no less than 300 dpi. This will ensure you get the professional print quality that you desire.

Once you have a photograph in digital form, you need to open it up with your photo editing software. I have tried this technique in both Adobe Photoshop and JASC Paint Shop Pro. However, I am certain that most other photo editing software packages would be able to perform the same functions. Again, check the User's Manual! (Do you see a theme here?)

After doing some research, I realize that there are many different ways to achieve a sepia tint with the software. Some methods are more complicated than others; I will share my favorite method because it is the quickest and easiest to achieve! In brief, first you will "colorize" your photo, which means you replace all of the colors in your photo with a single color. In effect, you are making a monochromatic image. After you have colorized your photograph, you then need to adjust the hue (the color) and the saturation (the vividness of the color) until you get your desired result.

In **Photoshop**, you bring up the Hue/Saturation menu with (CTRL+U). You can use the pull-down menus as well by selecting "Image," then "Adjustments," and then "Hue/Saturation." Click on the "Colorize" check box. If you have the preview option checked, the image should now appear to be a tinted black and white photo. Next, adjust the "Hue" to 35 and the "Saturation" to 25. Hit "OK." Voila! Instant sepia photo! If you want, play around with the hue and saturation values a little bit until you achieve a sepia tone you are satisfied with.

In **Paint Shop Pro**, the steps are slightly different. To bring up the Colorize menu use (CTRL+L), or select "Adjust" then "Hue and Saturation," and then "Colorize" from the pull-down menus. When the Colorize box appears, adjust the hue and saturation accordingly. Oddly, to achieve the same sepia look to my photo that I created in Photoshop, I had to set my hue to 20 and my saturation to 40. I don't know why they turn out differently, but they do. Again, play around with the hue and saturation until you're pleased with the results.



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