

The best way to create a calendar with your own photographs

There are three different ways to make your own photo calendar. If you have many photo prints which you prefer to stick onto paper and if you want to add hand drawn images, an old style pre-printed calendar template will still be useful. More versatile and interesting is making photographic calendars through software, and the result looks most professional when printed by a proper photo service. For this you normally have to use the software which the (online) photolab provides (usually) for free. We have tested three of the leading services and resumed the main advantages and disadvantages below.



FotoInsight, Online Photo Service

Support: Tel. 0044 (0)8700114911; FAQ and Email Support
Internet: <http://fotoinsight.co.uk/calendar>

Photo calendar formats (W x H in cm):

A3-Wall Calendar - 13 pages, 29.7 x 42 cm (full A3 page)
Year planner - one page in poster size
Kitchen Calendar - 13 pages, 13 x 29.7 cm
Table Calendar - 13 pages, 29.7 x 10 cm
Desktop calendar in tin box (photo paper), 13 pages, 12.5 x 14.5 cm
Desk top time planner 13 pages, 29.7 x 13 cm
Decorative calendar - 13 pages, 21.0cm x 25.5 cm
Photo calendar - 13 pages, 29.7 x 42cm (spirale in the centre)

How to order:

Online shop. Four of the eight calendar models can be ordered through the webbrowser as well, without having to download the software tool. However, ordering through the

web browser limits the layout to one image per month (plus cover). The free software tool FotoInsight Designer is highly recommended, it makes the design process faster and much more flexible. Ordering with the software is safer and re-ordering a modified layout becomes very easy.

Delivery time:

Say "3 -7 working days", the photo calendar reached us in 3 to 5 working days.

Pro:

- + Best print quality
- + Crisp font print, easy to read text
- + Calendar can start any month (convenient for birthday presents)
- + All TrueType Fonts on a PC can be used
- + Save a layout of one calendar as a present, modify it for someone else and order them together through the basket feature.
- + Ideal for presents: ships directly into 32 European countries with separate delivery address with no extra costs
- + Wall calendar up to size A3 professionally printed and bound

Contra:

- No Mac OS software version (Mac users can only order online through their browser)
- 13 pages maximum

About FotoInsight:

FotoInsight offers wall and desktop calendars. All calendars are printed professionally on 250 gr/m2 paper using Indigo technology (except the Desktop calendar in tin box which is processed on photographic paper) and cost between £4.99 and £16.99 per calendar plus £2.80 delivery (Europa wide, also with separate delivery address).

Printing-1, photo book specialist

No telephone support; only online support

Internet: <http://www.printing-1.co.uk/>

Promotions: first order gets £5 off.

Photo book calendars (bound photo books with calendar templates; H x W):

- Pocket: 5.8" x 4.1" / 14.8 x 10.5 cm stapled or spiral
- Compact: 8" x 5.9" / 20.4 x 15 cm soft or hardcover with up to 144 pages
- Original: 7.3" x 7.3" / 18.5 x 18.5 cm soft or hardcover with up to 144 pages
- Classic: 8" x 10.6" / 27 x 20.4 cm, hard cover, up to 250 pages
- Maxi: 12" x 12" / 30 x 30 cm, hard cover, up to 250 pages
- Panorama: 8" x 12" / 29.7 x 21 cm (DIN A4 wide), hard cover, up to 250 pages
- Premium: 12" x 16" / 40 x 30 cm, hard cover, up to 250 pages

How to order:

Online only.

Delivery time:

Say "9 working days after payment". Needed between 9 and 14 calendar days.

Pro:

- + paper feels strong, good touch
- + Easy to use templates
- + Large calendar books with up to 250 pages
- + particularly strong bound

- + Option for matt or glossy
- + online photo book sharing with direct print ordering
- + Also offer a Mac OS version
- + Ideal for presents: ship to different countries, including the USA

Contra:

- no wall calendars
- layout is less flexible
- cover design is limited

About Printing-1

Template based layouts enable the application to change the format or size of an existing design. The independent option for photo book calendars for Mac OS and Windows PC users, but no wall calendars. Printing-1 websites includes a kind of photo sharing service, which allows to show the layout to others online prior to a print order.

Greenstreet Online Ltd., software developer; Art & Craft line

No telephone support; only online support

Internet: <http://greenstreet-online.com/offers/iitm-calendar/index.htm>

Promotion: 25% off - when buying the software enter voucher code "TEST0825".

Photo calendar formats:

Unlike printing services, Greenstreet is a software developer and charges for its software applications. Calendar pages can be designed in the usual paper formats (up to A4) for inkjet or laser printers.

How to order:

Software can be ordered on CD or as an Internet download, printing to any printer at home or in the office.

Delivery time:

Immediate.

Pro:

- + easy to use templates
- + handy for last minute gifts
- + photo calendar software and templates can be used in any of five languages
- + the software can remember birthdays and other repeating events up to the year 2099
- + Apart from annual calendars it can also do calendar for a month, term, semester or other periods
- + Calendars of any size with a sheet per month, week, day, term, year,...

Contra:

- prints only up to A4
- software has to be purchased
- proper binding is difficult at home
- photo paper and ink are expensive when using the domestic inkjet printer
- results at home do not reach the quality of online specialists like FotoInsight

About greenstreet

Greenstreet is a well established software developer with a long pedigree in graphic software applications. Wizards help with the calendar design.

Hints for your photographic calendar design

No more sticky photo corners

If you want to create a calendar with hand drawings or pre-digital photographs simply buy a pre-printed calendar from an office supply to stick the prints in. If your images are digital you will get much more and better results using editing software like "FotoInsight Designer", "Printing-1" or "greenstreet Art&Craft". To make the calendar look professional use only one large photo per page and keep backgrounds in classic white or black.

Templates

All the three calendar options described here offer a variety of templates, so that the area for photos can be maximised or more room can be given for notes on the calendar. Digitally designing a calendar also allows to save and re-use the design as a template. That way the calendar for Granny can easily be changed to make another variant for an Uncle...

Birthdays

Creating calendars with digital images in calendar design software makes it easy to insert passport-type images with birthdays. With image editing programmes the exact date can be written onto the image and this can be reused year after year. As the photo calendar applications described here allow to start a calendar any month of the year, this also makes calendars a very personal birthday present.

Image editing

Today digital cameras can produce more pixels than necessary. 200 ppi (pixel per inch in the corresponding size) are sufficient, and jpegs can be smaller than 1.5 MB. For images which don't have to fill a full page jpegs of half a Megabyte usually suffice. Those who favour Photoshop, Fireworks or similar applications can create whole page images in their photo editing software and impose them as a full page (set as background) into their calendar.

What is the best way to design a photo calendar?

If you want to design, print and bind the complete calendar in your own home, you will enjoy calendar software like the "Art&Craft Calendars&Diaries" from greenstreet. This also allows to freely choose special papers, even when this may be more expensive in the end. If you want to create a thick photo book calendar with many notes and pictures you should choose Printing-1. By far the best desk top and wall calendars come clearly from some of the online photo services like FotoInsight.