



Salt of the Earth's Simple Guidelines for Digital Photographers

"What's the best digital file format for my images?"

For giclée printing's high-end reproduction, you will get the best results when you send us large TIFF or PSD files at 300/360 d.p.i. We've provided a free link on our website Home page so you can FTP images quickly and easily. You can send just one, or a whole load of files of varying sizes. Add your own instructions about what paper or canvas you want, size, number of prints, borders (if not our standard 2 cm. all round) – and we'll take it from there!

Important Tip: Shoot your pics in the right format.

Great prints start with BIG files. Don't shoot and save tiny low resolution JPEGs, which squeeze out vital colour and detail. These compressed files are only OK for emails or websites. You can't convert them to a higher resolution quality later.

"How should I shoot images intended for giclée printing?"

If your digital camera is capable of shooting RAW – that is, straight from the camera's image sensor, you should choose the RAW setting. If it doesn't have this capability, go for the highest setting it offers. Digital cameras have an integral "computer" to process images, but this has very limited processing power and functionality when compared to a Mac or PC. That's why pro photographers shoot images in RAW, then process and edit on their computers. The advantage is that your computer accesses all the information your camera saw, while your software – e.g. Photoshop, gives you full control over editing and refining each image.

"What size should my digital images be for giclée prints?"

First, decide on the size of the print you'd like. Salt of the Earth offers a wide variety of print formats – e.g. 1:1, 2:1, square and classic 3:2 ratio – all in a variety of sizes. Just consult the size chart on the reverse of our 2012 prices and choose the format and size you'd like. The size chart shows the maximum image size that fits on each format variation e.g. Classic 5, Square 2, Long 3, Extra Long 1 etc. Your image should easily fall within one format/set of dimensions.

Once you've decided on the dimensions of the print you want, simply scale your image using Photoshop or Aperture so that it fits within the maximum image area shown on the size chart. Please do not give us any white borders. We'll add those!

You'll obviously need borders in order to mount or frame your prints. We allow a standard 2 cm/.78 in. white border on all sides, unless you instruct us to provide wider borders when you order. If you are having prints on canvas, let us know the depth of your stretchers so we can allow enough border to wrap around and attach at the back.

"What about colour management?"

When you're working with Photoshop or a similar processing application, set your colour preference to "Adobe RGB 1998". This has a better colour gamut than sRGB (the default setting in digital cameras), and gives your images greater colour depth.

Tip 1

Avoid compressed files. Great prints need large files. Small JPEGs squeeze camera data down for use on emails/websites and omit vital colour and detail that can never be replaced. Even "fine" JPEGs are a quality compromise. But if that's all you have, we'll do our best for you.

Tip 2

Scaling your image up? Use "Perfect Resize" software, rather than Photoshop. This fractal process intelligently "grows" your image without introducing unwanted artefacts or fringing.

From Camera to Final Print:

Versatile digital cameras plus software such as Photoshop and Aperture offer a huge range of possibilities. So it's tempting to believe that, with a bit of electronic tweaking, whatever you shoot can be turned into a top quality print. Not so!

If you want a final result that's full of rich colour and detail – just as your camera "saw" the subject, then you must start by shooting a large, top-quality digital file.

Ensure you set your digital camera to shoot "RAW" or at the highest resolution possible. When selecting how many images to save to its memory, always select the smallest number. (High-resolution files are BIG, so fewer can be stored.)

Next, take your files into Photoshop or similar software and save as 8 or 16 bit TIFFs at 300 d.p.i. in the Adobe RGB colour profile. Send us this file at the size you want it printed. Remember: high resolution origination + large file size = lots of image "data" and superior print quality.

Here's the same image captured in four ways.

Shot as JPEG
'Low' setting.

File size: **332KB**



Shot as JPEG
'Medium' setting.

File size: **487KB**



Shot as TIFF, 8bit.

File size: **4.8MB**



Shot as RAW image,
then processed to
TIFF, 8bit.

File size: **13.9MB**

