



HOW TO HAVE A
STRESS-FREE
photography
HOLIDAY

with Luminosity Photography

My friend!

Thank you so much for checking out this holiday photography guide! I couldn't be happier you're here!

In this booklet, I'm sharing all of my best tips and tricks for documenting the holidays-without getting overwhelmed! Enjoy!

XOXO, Rachel



FIRST THINGS FIRST...

One of the key characteristics of the holidays are the twinkling lights in the darkness. An open fire. Coziness. Which means holiday photos are alllllll about embracing the darkness and learning to find tiny bits of light around you.

So when you're taking photos this time of year, embrace the darkness, the graininess, and the artificial light! Push your ISO super high, drop your aperture to a very low number, and put your shutter speed down around 1/200 or so. Let in that light! It makes for a really great creative challenge, and some really magical photos!



OF COURSE, SNOW IS ALSO A HUGE PART OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON...

Snow will give you the opposite problem that dark Christmas tree shots give you. Snow can be blindingly bright, but just as much magic! So when you're shooting in the snow, make sure to drop your ISO way down, and push your shutter speed super fast! Then, in post processing, pull your "highlight" slider all the way down to capture the optimal amount of detail!



Quick tip!

Shoot your photos a little bit underexposed in the snow. You can always brighten, but it's impossible to recover details if you blow them out.

TAKE A PHOTO EVERY DAY

I know what you're thinking. "This said stress-free". But listen, when pulling your camera out for just 3-5 minutes a day becomes a habit, it really does become a lot more fun! I've done a bunch of 1 month challenges over the years, and I end up getting photos that I never would have before, because it pushed my creativity!

I've also found that when I'm committed to taking a photo each day, I tend to get a lot more organized. I'm planning ahead or thinking about what might make a great shot, and I end up with photography and creativity on the brain.

Quick tip:

Keep your camera on the kitchen counter or somewhere else that you'll see it often and can grab it quickly when something special is unfolding in front of you!



MAKE A SHOT LIST!

This doesn't have to be some big formal thing. Jot down notes on your phone when you think of them, on a piece of paper, or even just a mental list. But it's helpful to spend a little time thinking about what what you'd like photos of, and what you have going on this month. Here are some ideas:

List some of your ideas here:

- Decorating the tree
- Baking
- Christmas caroling
- Outside to see lights
- Playing in the snow
- Family dinners
- Around the fire
- Drinking hot cocoa
- Making gingerbread houses

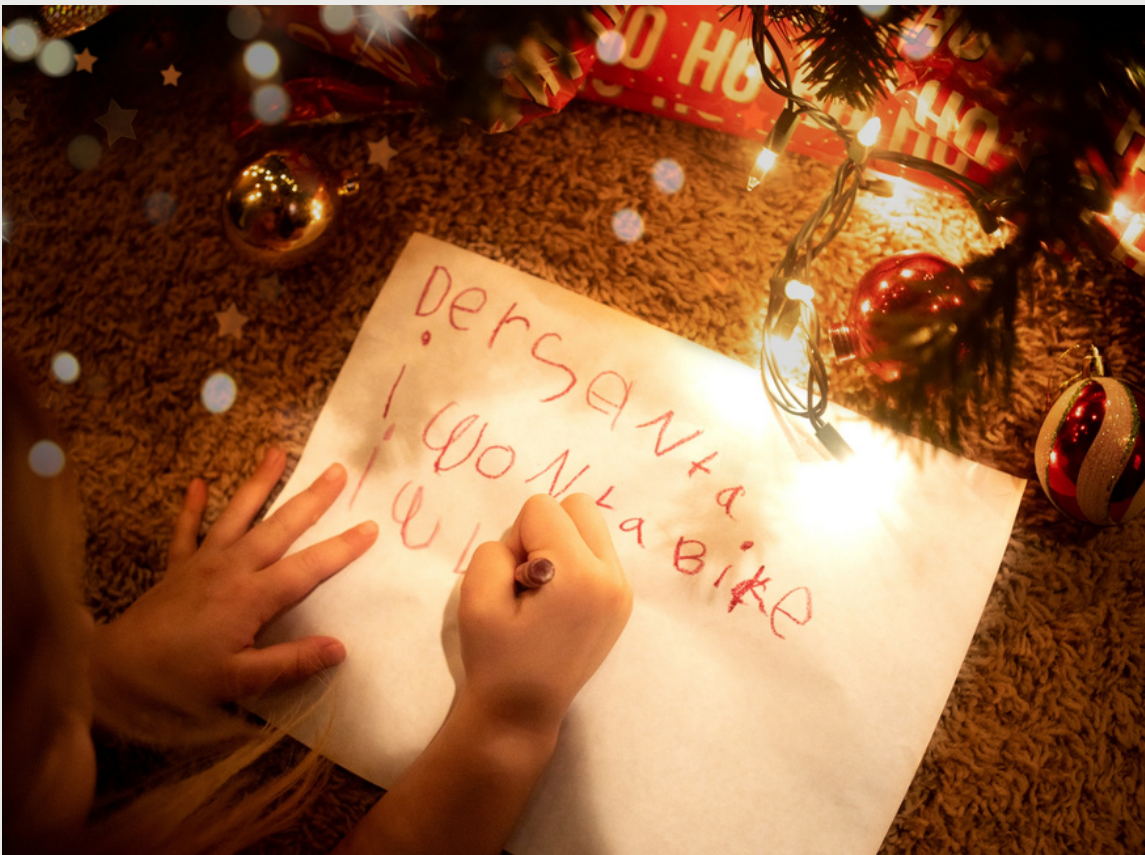
Your ideas can be vague (like I want a photo with my kids making cookies), or more specific (I want to take a close up photo of my kids making cookies, close up, during the afternoon with warm golden light).

And don't feel like you have to plan out 30 different photos. Plan a few, but also leave a little space for spontaneous creativity!

DON'T FORGET THE DETAIL SHOTS!

One of my favorite ways to spark creativity is to change my perspective. So I ALWAYS recommend you get detail shots! Hands, eyes, hair, toes, etc. make great closeup shots.

This shot came about because I just LOVE 1st grade spelling! So when my daughter was writing her Christmas list, I moved her over by the Christmas tree, and then got in close. I love the way the Christmas lights light up the paper. So festive!



USE ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

Like I said earlier, artificial light is essential to magical holiday photos!

--Bump up your ISO super high--

--Put your aperture at a really low number (like 2.0)--

--Try to keep your shutter speed at 1/160 or above--
(or you'll start to get blurry photos)



Examples of types of artificial light you can use to light your subject for your image:

- Christmas tree lights
- Fireplace
- Oven
- Christmas village
- Street lamp
- Reading lamp
- An Ice Light

(a handheld light stick, which is what I used for the photo here)



Be creative with your lighting. Is there light around you? Use it!

ADD LIGHT BOKEH

Something you can do in post production to really amp up your holiday images?

Christmas light bokeh!

"What's that?" you may ask.

In photography, bokeh is the aesthetic quality of the blur produced in out-of-focus parts of an image.

In other words, it's the blurry lights come out circular in photos!



this is bokeh!

You can achieve this effect either by putting your aperture really low and moving your subject 5+ feet away from the lights (photo on the right). OR you can download bokeh overlays to use in post. I love getting mine from creativemarket.com! (Photo on the left.)



A few last tips!

- IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH YOUR ARTIFICIAL LIGHT COLORS, MAKE IT BLACK AND WHITE!
- FOLLOW MY INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT ALL MONTH FOR DETAILED TUTORIALS, EASY TRICKS, INSPIRATION, AND FUN CHALLENGES!
- AND ABOVE ALL, STAY PRESENT! IF IT'S TOO MUCH, TAKE A BREAK.

This is meant to be fun for you! I hope you enjoy your holiday season and get some gorgeous photos of the people you love most this year!





Thanks for being here!

I hope you join along
with my 30 day holiday
photography challenge
over on Instagram!

@luminosityphotography

See you soon!

Rachel