

Tricks Of The Trade

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Heading to the beach in St. Augustine is a favorite past-time of locals and tourists who visit our beautiful beaches twelve months out of the year. Taking pictures of your family adventures is fun, and everyone has a smart phone or I-phone, so snapping pictures is easy. Most folks just put their subject in the center of the photo and snap away. Easy. Nice. But, ho-hum, boring. So, how can you get those really great photos of your family? How do you get that shot that is more than ordinary?



All it takes is a little forethought and planning. If you plan ahead for some photo opportunities *before* you get to the beach, you will likely be pleasantly surprised with the quality of the pictures you take. For example, when you are heading out to the beach take along a few things you would normally not bring along with you, like that huge conch shell sitting on your coffee table or a large starfish or sanddollar and use these for “props” to pose with your kids.

Placing a starfish or sanddollar into the picture makes a big difference. Try to think like a photographer, because you actually ARE the photographer and taking interesting photos requires more than just snapping away, it takes a little forethought.

A simple flower arranged in your daughter's hair while she is building a sandcastle adds that extra something special. Speaking of sandcastles, have you seen what you can create with the water and sand? Mermaidens, dolphins, a turtle, a sandman instead of a snowman if you are at the beach in December; you can have so much fun sculpting your own creations. Then snap away.

But let's take this a step further into the realm of what a professional photographer would do. Don't just take the photos standing up while your subject, is also standing up. Nice shot, but a little bit boring. So many people like to just stand . . . in one spot, while taking pictures. Move around, bend down, get on your knees, sit down in your chair or on the sand. Take an extra second to zoom in for a close up and then zoom back out and snap the same shot.

Another trick is the Rule of Thirds. This is where you have the subject to the far left or the far right side of the photo; not in the center. This is a trick you will want to get in the habit of using.

Did you know that there are two hours in the day that are very special times for capturing a special golden glow in your photographs? It is called the "Golden Hour" and you get one hour at sunrise and one hour at sunset to capture this natural phenomenon in your photos. I plan photo shoots around this time just to be sure to get these special shots.

Reflection shots are very beautiful and if you can get some shots of your son or daughter with their reflection in the sand with the water, it really adds pizzazz to your photo. In fact, I make it a point to get reflection shots in the sand whenever I do a beach portrait or beach wedding. They are my favorite.

The thing to remember for taking interesting shots is to simply plan ahead for them, have ideas for your photos before you get to the beach. So plan ahead, bring some props, try something different. Explore. Forget all the rules about centering your subject and stuff you do out of habit, but remember the tricks! Go for it and think outside your comfort zone. Take close ups, medium shots, long shots, get those crazy angles and snap those awesome photos of your family having fun. See you at the beach!