



Photoshop Tutorials: Enhance Colors With Photoshop's Photo Filter

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In this **Photoshop tutorial** on **digital photo editing**, we're going to look at how to tint and enhance colors in a photo using Photoshop's Photo Filter.

If Photoshop's Photo Filter isn't one of the most widely used features in the program, it certainly deserves to be.

Not only is it easy to use, it's the only feature in Photoshop that lets you choose colors simply by selecting color names from a list! It also has several valuable uses, one of which we've already looked at in a previous tutorial - [Neutralizing Color Casts With The Photo Filter](#) - and this time, we're going to learn how to use it to tint and enhance colors in an image.

At its most basic level, the Photo Filter can be used to warm up or cool down the overall colors in a photo, but since we're going to be using the **adjustment layer** version which comes with a built-in **layer mask**, we can combine multiple Photo Filters to tint and enhance specific areas of an image individually, which is what we'll be doing in this tutorial.

Here's the image I'll be working with. I took this photo during sunset on a recent trip to the lake, and the colors that evening were spectacular. The sky was full of pinks and purples and the ground was almost glowing in a warm orange. Unfortunately, my digital camera didn't quite capture things the way I saw them, and the colors in the photo ended up looking a little dull:



Thanks to Photoshop's Photo Filter though, I can easily bring back the colors the way I remember them, and even take them further if I want:



The colors look much brighter and more vivid now, which makes the image itself more visually appealing, and it was all done with just a couple of simple Photo Filter adjustment layers. Let's get started!



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Step 1: Select The First Area You Want To Work On

As I mentioned, I'm going to be using a couple of Photo Filter adjustment layers to enhance the colors in specific areas of the image separately, and the first area I want to work on is the sky, so before I add my first Photo Filter, I need to select the sky. You can use whichever selection tool you're most comfortable with (Lasso Tool, Pen Tool, etc.). I'm going to use the Lasso Tool for this, so I'll select it from the Tools palette:



Photoshop Tutorials: Selecting the Lasso Tool from Photoshop's Tools palette.

I could also press **L** on my keyboard to access it with the shortcut. Then with my Lasso Tool selected, I'm going to draw a selection around the sky:

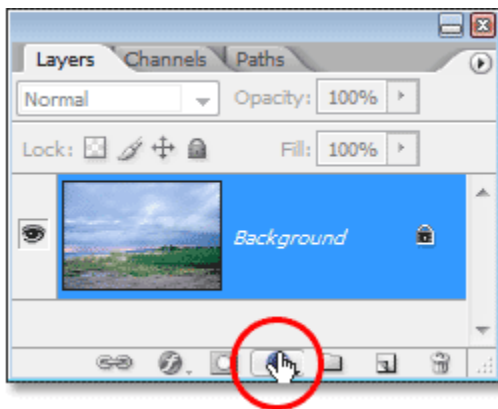


Photoshop Tutorials: Using the Lasso Tool to draw a selection around the sky, which is the first part of the image I want to work on.

You can see the selection outline in the image above.

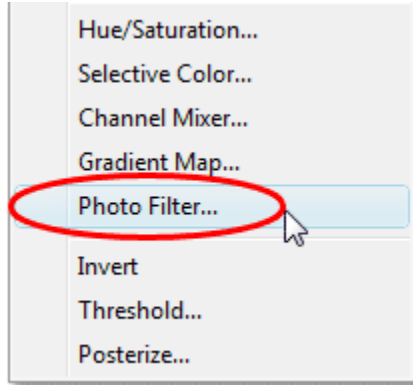
Step 2: Add A Photo Filter Adjustment Layer

Now that I have my sky selected, I can add my first Photo Filter. To do that, I'll click on the **New Adjustment Layer** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette:



Photoshop Tutorials: Click on the "New Adjustment Layer" icon at the bottom of the Layers palette.

Then I'll select **Photo Filter** from the list of adjustment layers:



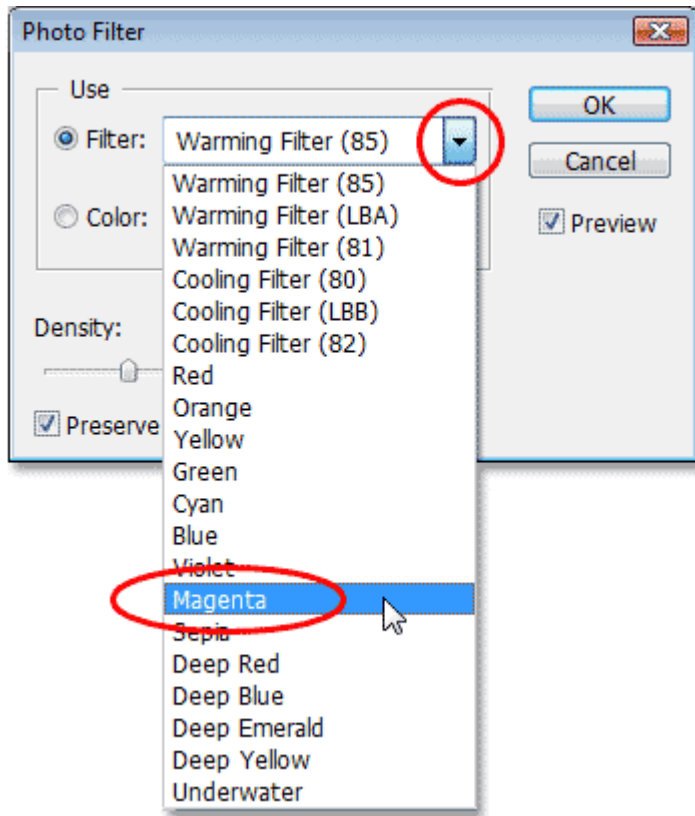
Photoshop Tutorials: Select "Photo Filter" from the list.

This brings up Photoshop's Photo Filter dialog box, and since we selected part of the image before adding the Photo Filter, only the area we selected will be affected by it.

Step 3: Choose The Color You Want To Tint The Selected Area With

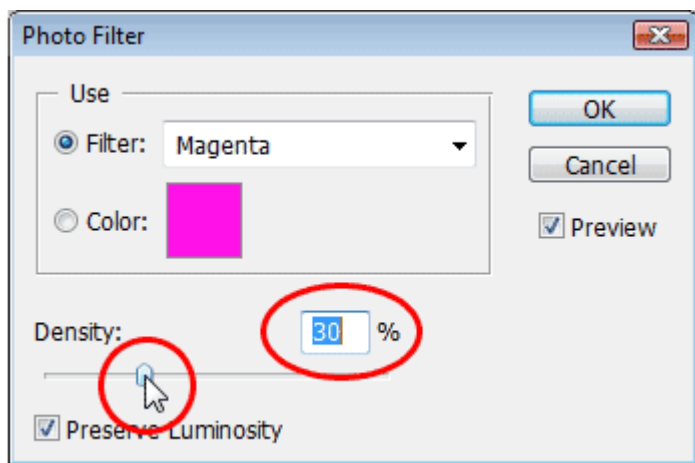
The Photo Filter is based on the idea of photographers adding colored filters to the camera lens to tint the photo, and we can achieve the exact same effect in Photoshop but with a lot more flexibility, since we can change the filter color to anything we want.

The Photo Filter gives us two ways to choose a color. At the top of its dialog box are two options, **Filter** and **Color**. They both do exactly the same thing, which is allow us to choose a color to tint our image with. The only difference between them is that the "Filter" option allows us to select from a list of preset colors, including some that are based on common warming and cooling lens filters (they have the words "Warming" and "Cooling" in the color names), while the "Color" option simply brings up Photoshop's Color Picker and allows us to choose exactly which color we want. I'm going to stick with the preset colors since they'll work just fine for my image here, and I remember from when I took this photo that the sky had a lot more pink and purple in it than what the image is currently showing. Unfortunately, the Photo Filter doesn't have a preset pink or purple color for me to select, but it does have magenta which will work nicely, so I'm going to click on the down-pointing arrow for the "Filter" option and select "Magenta" from the list (of course, you can choose whichever color you like for your image):



Photoshop Tutorials: Select the color you want to tint your image with from the "Filter" preset list of colors, or choose a color from the Color Picker by clicking on the "Color" color swatch.

Now that I have my color selected, I want to increase the intensity of the color a little, and I can do that with the **Density** option. Dragging the Density slider to the right adds more of the color to the image for a stronger amount of tinting, while dragging it to the left reduces the amount of color for a more subtle tinting effect. You can see a preview of what's happening in your image as you drag the slider. I'm going to increase the intensity of my color a little by dragging the Density slider to around 30%:



Photoshop Tutorials: Increase or decrease the amount of color added to the image by dragging the "Density" slider to the right or left.

Make sure the **Preserve Luminosity** option in the bottom left corner is checked so you're not darkening the image. When you're happy with the tinting you've applied, click OK in the top right corner of the dialog box to exit out of it. Here's my image after tinting my sky with magenta. Notice that only the sky is tinted. Everything below it remains untouched:



Photoshop Tutorials: The sky now appears much more pink and purple after tinting it with magenta.

Now the sky looks a lot more colorful. I may have taken things a bit further than what it actually looked like that evening, but I like the overall effect and there's no law in Photoshop that says you always have to strive for realism. The ground definitely looks less colorful than I remember it though, but I don't want it to be pink or purple. It needs to be warmed up with some orange, which means we're going to need a second Photo Filter set to a different color.

Since I want only the ground to be affected by my second Photo Filter, I'm going to have to select it, but since I've already selected the sky, selecting the ground is going to be easy, as we'll see next.