

Set the "date taken" on photos with ExifTool

Scanned or undated photos often have no EXIF date, so photo libraries (Immich, PhotoPrism, Synology Photos) sort them by file date. ExifTool can set it.

Install

```
sudo dnf install perl-Image-ExifTool    # RHEL/Rocky (EPEL)
sudo apt install libimage-exiftool-perl # Debian/Ubuntu
```

Set one fixed date on every JPG in a folder (recursively)

```
exiftool -r -ext jpg -ext jpeg -AllDates="2005:11:06 03:20:00" /path/to/photos
```

`-AllDates` sets DateTimeOriginal, CreateDate and ModifyDate together.

Copy DateTimeOriginal into the other date tags

Quote the argument. Unquoted, bash reads `<` as "read input from a file".

```
exiftool -r -ext jpg '-AllDates<DateTimeOriginal' /path/to/photos
```

Backups

ExifTool keeps a `name.jpg_original` copy of every file it changes. Once you have checked the result:

```
exiftool -r -delete_original! /path/to/photos
```

Or use `-overwrite_original` up front if you have your own backup.

As a tiny script

```
#!/bin/bash
dir=${1:-.}; when=${2:?usage: setdate <dir> "YYYY:MM:DD HH:MM:SS"}
exiftool -r -ext jpg -ext jpeg -AllDates="$when" "$dir"
```

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