Basics of Food Photography

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We All Eat

- And that means that someone is cooking, yourself or someone you know
- Food photography is a great introduction to stock photography
- It’s a great introduction to commercial work
- You learn tons about lighting
- It’s fun
- Sometimes you can even eat the subject!
- 2nd most popular subject on social media after selfies

Getting Started

- Camera
- Lens
- Tripod
- Continuous lights or flash with light shapers
- Reflector cards
- Colour Checker
- Cable release
- FOOD
- Food stylist or skills in food styling

What to Shoot?

- Full meal plates
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Breads and Cereals
- Wine & Cheese
- Environmental food, ie cooking or food service

Basic Set

- Tablecloths stretched over foam core and taped tight
- Vinyl / wallpaper attached to foam core
- Clean unscratched utensils
- A variety of plates and bowls with simple colours and patterns
- Clear glassware

Tools

- Tweezers, picks, pins
- Glycerine spray, water spritzer bottle
- Tacky-wax
- Clear oil and small brush
- ScotchGuard or dulling spray
- Foil card and scissors
- Black and white foam core
- Birthday candles
- Paper towels
- Lint free cloths

Setup

- Use a colour checker for each lighting setup to get the right white balance
- Use wooden blocks to “mark” placement
- One light from the rear or 3/4 rear
- Front or side light for fill
- Small reflectors made of foamcore
- Start simple

Advanced Set

- Glass blocks
- Props
- Gaffer tape
- Small V-Flats
- Fakes
- Clear / tinted plexi
- Fake Ice
- Splashes and Pours
- Glass sheets
- Flags
- Fabric Steamer
- Cucoloris

Tips for Getting Started

- Place food so it looks centred on the plate from your shooting angle
- Use leading lines
- Light left to right
- Use tape to mark front edges of plates
- Make compositions inside compositions
- Use margarine to be butter
- Never use a spice shaker, use your fingers
- Brush on oil to make food shiny

Tips Cont’d

- Have more food than you expect to need
- Men’s hair cream makes a good sub for milk
- Use props to tell a story
- Frost a glass with ScotchGuard and water spritz
- Small pieces of paper towel under food elements prevent grease from showing
- Let the plate be seen
- Consult recipe books to learn food styling

And some more

- To make bubbles in liquids, wisk up egg whites and deposit with an eye-dropper
- Mashed potatoes can fake out ice cream
- Add soda to colas to make them lighter
- Place a foil card in the shape of the glass behind a clear glass to push light through it
- Use foil card to fill shadows under plate rims

Exercise - Peas on a Spoon

- Use tack wax to attach spoon handle to holding stick
- Use clamp on stand to grasp stick
- Use frozen veggies because they hold shape
- Use tweezers to place peas in the bowl of the spoon
- White cards to put reflections into spoon metal
- Use black tape to create depth in spoon bowl
- Use complementary background colours for the peas
- Match utensil size to food size
- Try different utensils and foods

Where to Learn More?

- KelbyOne - Joe Glyda
- Food Photography: From Snapshots to Great Shots by Nicole S Young
- Food Styling and Photography for Dummies by Alison Parks-Whitfield

Go Make Images