

PROFESSIONAL FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

Do you need it?

by Jerry Deutsch,
Food Photographer

USE YOUR SENSES

- What's the first sense that gets you hungry when you walk in the door at home?
 - Smell is a very powerful sense and conjures up memories and makes you hungry
 - Baking Cookies
 - Apple Pie
 - Burgers on the Grill
 - Bread in the Oven
- Unfortunately, your website or print material cannot address the sense of smell

CAN YOU SMELL IT?



WHAT SENSES DO WE USE WHEN EATING

- Taste
 - The food has to taste good but, that's not enough.
- Smell
 - The food has to smell good too. We smell the food before we taste it.
- Touch
 - Texture is important...Something has to feel right to the tongue...
 - It can't be too rough, too grainy, too slimy

The texture has to be right for the type of food we are experiencing

YOU SEE THE TEXTURES BEFORE YOU TASTE



SOUND

- Do you turn around to see a waiter with a plate that is sizzling?



WE EAT WITH OUR EYES

- Before you take that first bite, you look at your plate and anticipate your taste experience.



WHAT CAN YOU DO IN A WEBPAGE OR AD?

- When you are promoting your product online or in print, you only have one sense to work with...Sight.
- Food should look appealing. You should sense the taste, texture, and smell just from looking.
- Images must tell the story that you want to tell.
- Products should look perfect.

THE HERO

- An image should have one hero.
- The hero could be a product, an idea, a mood
 - Whatever the hero is, it should be obvious in the image
- The other parts of the scene are supporting actors
 - If the other elements don't support your hero, why are they there?

WHAT'S THE HERO?



WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THE IMAGE?



IS IT APPEALING?



DOES IT SET A MOOD? TIME OF DAY?



WHAT ARE THE TOOLS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER

- Good Food Styling
 - It is very rare to find someone using fake food any more
 - Food is edible after the shot but, may be undercooked or brushed with oil
- Props
 - Props help set a mood or create a scene
 - Rustic
 - Formal
 - Homey
- Backgrounds
 - Do you need a pure white background for Amazon or Overstock?

WHAT ARE THE TOOLS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER

- Composition
 - Placement of items in the frame to create interest and direct the viewer's eye
 - Leading lines
 - Diagonals
 - S curves
 - C curves
 - Rule of thirds
 - Color
 - Patterns
 - Symmetry
 - Depth of Field

A DEEP DOF PROVIDES INFORMATION



A SHALLOW DOF CREATES MYSTERY



POINT OF VIEW – TOP DOWN - GRAPHICAL



POINT OF VIEW – LOW ANGLE – SHOW HEIGHT



AND DON'T FORGET TO GET THE GOOO



COLOR



DIAGONALS



DOF



TEXTURE



PATTERNS



COLOR, DIAGONALS, TEXTURE



BACKGROUND, COLOR, BALANCE



PATTERNS, DIAGONALS, COLOR, POINT OF VIEW



PRODUCT SHOTS ARE IMPORTANT TOO



SELL YOUR PRODUCTS, DON'T JUST SHOW THEM



SHOOT YOUR PRODUCT WITH FOOD



SHOW HOW ITS USED



GIVE RECIPES WITH YOUR PRODUCT



CLIPPING PATH OR MASK REMOVES HERO FROM BACKGROUND



CLIPPING PATH OR MASK ISOLATES THE HERO



THE FOOD STYLIST IS THE TRUE HERO-USE ONE



HOW DO YOU SHOW...

- Texture
- Moisture
- Mood
- Importance
- Time of Day

All of these are created by the light...

“It’s all about the light.”

Natural Light or Artificial Light can both accomplish the same goals.

DO IT YOURSELF – SOME HELPFUL TIPS

A HIGH QUALITY DSLR IS GREAT BUT IT IS NOT WHAT MAKES GREAT IMAGES

- Light quality is very important
 - Use a window...Natural light is great.
 - Don't mix light sources-window light is blue, incandescent is yellow, fluorescent is green.
 - Stay away from direct sunlight.
 - Diffuse the light coming in from a window.
 - Soften shadows with a white card opposite the light.
 - Use AWB (auto white balance) – prevent color casts
- Light Direction is very important
 - Most food wants to be lit from behind or the side (between 12 o'clock and 3 o'clock)
 - Don't use ON CAMERA Flash

DO IT YOURSELF – SOME HELPFUL TIPS

A HIGH QUALITY DSLR IS GREAT BUT IT IS NOT WHAT MAKES GREAT IMAGES

- All photos need “Post Production”- Apple “PHOTOS” or Adobe “PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS”
- Identify the “Hero” and make it the star.
- Eliminate Supporting Characters if they don’t help tell the story
- Select the proper camera angle
 - Top Down for Graphical plating with not much height
 - Low Angle to show height
 - 45° - the eater’s perspective...as if it is a plate in front of you at the table
- Use the big screen...don’t rely on the back of the camera. View the image on the computer before you consider the shot finished.

TOOLS OF A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

MORE THAN JUST A GOOD CAMERA

- Light
- Composition
- Props
- Backgrounds
- Styling
- Experience
- Technical Expertise
- Retouching Skills
- Aesthetic Sensibility
- Attention to minute details
- Passion

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A “SHOOT”

- Create a “Shot List” - discuss it with the photographer and food stylist before shoot day.
- Bring much more than you need. The photographer and stylist will select the best.
- If there is something to be cooked, it will have to be prepared several times to insure that the HERO is the best it can be. Greens should be kept on ice to stay fresh.
- Many foods get undercooked to keep them plump and moist looking. The outside needs to look fully cooked. (This is the magic a stylist brings.)
- The photographer will need a “stand in” to get the lighting set up. Bring lots of extras.
- Hand pick your products...if it is something that gets packaged, try to get it before it goes through the packaging process. Products need to be “PRISTINE.”
- Discuss props beforehand. There are “PROP STYLISTS” if props are an integral part of the shot. Tell the photographer the look and feel you are going for.
- Search the web for example of images that “talk to you” and offer them to the photographer as a “mood board.” Identify what it is about each image that appeals to you.

HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR PHOTOS?

HIGH RESOLUTION PHOTOS

- Print Ads
- Menus
- Table Tents
- Packing Labels
- Sell Sheets
- Brochures
- Direct Mail
- Billboards

LOW RESOLUTION PHOTOS

- Website
- Blogs
- Groupon
- E-mail

WHAT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS ARE SAYING

“It has been said that we eat with our eyes and in the restaurant industry, that couldn’t be more accurate. In this competitive business, as we all fight to reach the same consumers, having professionally produced images of your most popular menu items is key your marketing success. **Chefs take months to prepare the perfect recipe, sourcing the finest and the freshest ingredients, essentially creating a work of art. A professional photographer memorializes this art and with the use of proper lighting and staging re-creates that art for the public. It’s a team approach and, if successful, will insure a perfect marketing campaign.**”

Jeffrey Jablow

Griddlez Roadside Café

Formerly Cheeburger Cheeburger Restaurants



WHAT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS ARE SAYING

“As the owner of a small restaurant, I have tried many time to take food pictures for web site gallery and advertising specials. I was never really happy with the results. I decided to use a food photography specialist.

The level of specialization is quite impressive. The attention to lighting, angle, and positioning was amazing. The results, fantastic.

This is truly a specialized field. To create really delicious looking images requires the artistic touch and technical skill of a professional. I am thrilled with the results.”

Tony Schiano

owner

Emilio's Restaurant



WHAT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS ARE SAYING

“When it comes to selling food it is the picture that sells it. If the customers mouth doesn't water- they don't buy it. The importance therefore of top notch photos cannot be underestimated.”

Yochy Miller

Premium Chocolatiers



WHAT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS ARE SAYING

“A picture is worth a thousand words.’ As a visual communicator, photography is essential to the graphic designer in diverse ways, since images can mean a lot in communication as far as aesthetics are concerned.

Photography is also an important part of branding, hence the connection with graphic design. Graphic designers manipulate photos to communicate my ideas. I look for graphic designers with a photography background and vice versa.”

Chef Tony Merola

Recipe Developer



WHAT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS ARE SAYING

“Ever heard of famous quotes such as “Always Put Your Best Foot Forward”, or “You only have one chance to make your first impression”? – Well it’s true... especially for online businesses. Your customers are there for a split second to make a decision whether to buy your product or sign up for your service.

Nothing like great imagery will instill confidence in your prospects mind. Since most people are very visual and make their purchase decisions on how well the product looks, high quality images displaying your goods and services is what sells your brand. ”

Dianna Feldman

Royal Produce



THE LAST WORD

- Food photography is a team effort
 - Photographer
 - Food Stylist
 - Prop Stylist (sometimes)
 - Client
 - Ad agency personnel (if you use one)
 - Art Director, Account Exec
 - The photographer is the creative team leader...talk directly to the photographer about any concerns, issues or ideas.
- Be at the shoot and contribute to the process...you are the client. Everyone is there to fulfill your needs. You are the one that everyone is trying to please.
 - Let the photographer know what you like and what you don't like.
 - Listen to suggestions...the team has the experience and expertise.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING AND GOOD LUCK

Jerry Deutsch

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