Food Photography Tips

A successful food photo is one that makes the viewer hungry.

1. Natural Lighting – lighting is one of the biggest factors that affects the quality of the photograph

- Turn OFF your camera flash.
- The best lighting is natural light that shines on the food from the side or the back to bring out the shape and color of the food
- Don't be afraid to redirect light with white pieces of paper or sheets to shadowed sides of your food, just make sure the paper is not visible in your shot

2. Background – the surroundings that your food appears in are almost as important as the food itself

- Make sure the background elements compliment your food, rather than distract from or overpower your food
- Make sure plates and settings are clean – spots of food where they shouldn't be can ruin a photograph

3. Camera Angle – the best angle depends on the type of food being photographed

- Try shooting from all angles to find the best view
  - A 45-degree angle above the food gives the impression of a consumer looking down at the item
  - A shot directly from the side to captures food that has height or is stacked – this can help to showcase ingredients

4. Fill the Frame – the food is the center of attention in these photos

- To create the most mouthwatering photos, fill up the entire shot with your food.
- The food should be the focus, and in-focus on the camera – background images can be left out of focus

5. Fresh is Best – photograph the food how you want to eat it

- Shoot the food while it's still fresh – either very hot from being cooked or ice cold before it melts
- Showcase even more mouthwatering goodness by cutting open a section of your dish and showing the camera what's inside (if it makes sense for your food item)

See Pages 2-3 for Do's and Don'ts of Food Photography Examples!

*The purpose of this document is for successful and appealing food photographs and does not list requirements.

Photography Examples

Example A: Deep-Fried Oreos

Do
- Create soft, natural lighting
- Showcase ingredients by cutting open
- Choose a side angle to highlight the height and serving size
- Allow the camera to focus on the food, background can remain tastefully out of focus

Don't
- Take a photo with poor lighting, shadows
- Leave viewers guessing as to what's inside – especially with deep-fried items
- Allow an overhead shot to leave items looking flat

Example B: Poutine

Do
- Create soft, natural lighting
- Feature items in an attractive container – but remain true to the way it's served
- Allow the camera to focus on the food, background can remain tastefully out of focus

Don't
- Use your camera flash – creates harsh lighting
- Allow the photo to become blurry or out of focus
- Feature an unattractive container or background

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Example C: Caramel Apples

Do
- Fill the entire frame with the food dish
- Create soft, natural lighting
- Use a simple, white background
- Take advantage of the foods strengths - caramel shines as if freshly dipped

Don't
- Shoot with distracting/unattractive background elements (equipment, stray peanuts, tipped caramel apples, etc.)
- Allow a busy frame to distract from focus on the food

Example D: Corn Dogs

Do
- Create soft, natural lighting
- Allow the background to compliment dish
- Use an attractive angle
- Fill the frame with appetizing goodness

Don't
- Use your camera flash – creates harsh lighting
- Use a background that appears unprofessional and distracts from food
- Allow an overhead shot to leave items looking flat

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