

How to take food photos worth sharing on social media

We've all seen it: social media foodtography that probably tastes great but looks terrible. Social media users frequently and fervently debate the value of food photos; it was one of the earliest criticisms of social media.

Despite those early criticisms, social users don't hate food photographs. In fact, food photographs that tell a story have great potential for going viral.

Sites like [Pinterest](#) are tracking food dominance on their site with a food discussion rate of 57 percent in 2013. Another statistic from [leaderswest Digital Marketing Journal](#) food retailers may find interesting: 42 percent of consumers look to blogs for information about potential purchases with 52 percent actually following through with that purchase.

Additionally, food photos that are tied to a cultural trend tend to dominate in the social media world. For example, look at the meme #Kalepower in honor of paleo dieter and San Francisco Giants outfielder Hunter Pence. If Pence makes a powerful move on the field, fans tweet with that hashtag or post photos of kale.

When photographing your food to share on social media, don't skimp on the small details. Preparing a dish for a photo shoot requires a different skill set than those used to prepare a dish for taste. Professional and corporate food photographers are known for using a handful of unexpected tricks to create the illusion of the perfect dish. There are tales of photographers replacing cereal milk with glue and swapping out ice cream for mashed potatoes. One could devote their career to styling food and preparing it specifically for ad campaigns.

However, majority of us want to eat our food after it is photographed so the key is to keep it simple and employ as many of these professional tricks to help tell a personal or brand story without disturbing the flavor.

1. Photograph foods that are full-bodied

Photograph food that looks full-bodied and fresh. When food cools it settles and flattens, so get a photo in while it's still piping hot. To make food look fuller, you can stack it or hide something underneath it to prop it up. If you are photographing a pie or cake, remove a slice to show the depth of the dish.

2. Choose foods with color variety

Knowledge of the color wheel is extremely helpful when preparing food for a photo. When styling food, use colors that are contrasting or complimentary. Garnishes work well for contrasting colors. Look for items like chili pepper, herbs or colorful sprinkles. One can also incorporate props like table settings but choose white, solid or muted plates over decorative ones. If possible, use dishes with a thin rim to avoid showing too much white space.

3. Provide your food with the perfect lighting

When photographing food, avoid flash at all costs because full frontal light flattens food. The best conditions are either natural lighting with the sun coming over the photographers shoulder, or there is currently a trend in low light food photography that highlights dark and moody foods like chocolates.

4. Use interesting angles with a purpose

There are two types of angles in food photography: birds-eye view and side angles that show the foreground or background. Shooting directly above the food is useful for closeups of the dish or for showing the table setting. Side angles incorporate props that add interesting shapes and draw the eye towards the dish.