

FNQ

# FOOD INCUBATOR

CREATE | INNOVATE | ACCELERATE

## MODULE 12

*Mouthwatering Food Photography*

### On successful completion of this module you will be able to:

- Create a unique setting and style for your own food photography
- Compose a variety of mouthwatering food photographs that tell your products story
- What really happens behind the scenes
- Basic presentation and preparation skills for a shoot
- Photography kit for food – best equipment
- Props on a budget
- Food styling - tricks of the trade
- Table dressing for events
- Basic presentation skills for preparing for a shoot



Foodpreneurs are a savvy lot. Building award-winning businesses based on notes hastily scribbled down on the back of a paper napkin; cooking up innovative best-selling recipe ideas using an aged, but much-loved family heirloom mixing bowl; improvising sensational one-of-a-kind packaging prototypes with cardboard and paper salvaged from the recycling bin.

It's hard to deny the energy, enthusiasm and creativity of those entrepreneurs who have chosen food and beverage as their profession of choice. From pioneering their prodigious new product ideas to improvised 'recycling bin origami', it seems there's nothing a fearless foodpreneur can't handle!

But, when it comes to food photography, we often find that our normally bold and courageous food and beverage clients don't feel their regular confident and gutsy selves. And I suppose it's not so surprising. With the advent of social media, there's now a superabundance of dazzlingly stunning food pics floating around cyberspace. There's a massive, inescapable emphasis on product imagery. In fact, it's quite overwhelming – just log into any major social media platform and you'll feel you're almost being accosted by a profusion of beautiful imagery.

In particular, we're thinking of Insta, Facebook and Pinterest. Sometimes, the very idea of competing with the sparkling photography presented on these platforms can feel so insurmountable that the pressure just gets too much. It's easy to be frozen by a sense of inadequacy and inferiority.

We say let's bring the fun of photography back into focus; it's time to expose the easy-peasy steps that will help you develop some tasty shots.

# Be Discerning - Only Post Your Best Pics

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We know that it's tempting to post lots of images to fill up your photo feed, especially when you're a newcomer to a particular platform. But we say, "hold your horses there, newbie!"

You don't run with every new product idea that enters your head. So, nor should you share every single product photo ever saved to your smartphone's memory. Quality control is a major part

of running a successful food or beverage business. Likewise, a strict quality control rule should always be applied to your photo feed.

If in doubt, ask the opinion of a friend or family member. Just don't start seeking too many opinions or you're likely to be stifled by well-meaning but conflicting advice!

## Get Your Lighting Right

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If you've ever had more than a five-minute chat with a professional (or even a hobbyist) photographer, you'll probably have had your ear bent in regard to the importance of natural light. So, you've heard it before and we'll reiterate it here: natural daylight really is the food photographer's very best friend.

Take heed and don't allow shyness to ruin your ideal photo opportunity. Wherever you find yourself taking foodie photos, do one simple thing that will enhance and beautify even the simplest of shots – move towards the light!

Ignore the curious stares of passersby as you move your plate closer to a window or door to get the best photo.

### TIP:

*If you're using an iPhone, make the most of your iPhone's exposure settings by tapping the darkest area of the image to bring light to the whole photo; boost the exposure levels for maximum effect.*

## Be Prop Prepared

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It's time to become a photo prop nerd! Stock your cupboards with interesting-looking crockery, cutlery and napkins. Curiously, smaller looks better on screen so remember to sniff out accessories that are on the dainty side, rather than oversized.

Unfortunately, we can't all be blessed with strikingly beautiful marble worktops and rustic wooden dining tables. Why not go budget and set the scene with reusable printed vinyl backgrounds?

If your brand vibe is a little retro or alternative, try exploring vintage markets for characterful jars, rolling pins, weighing scales, tablecloths and napkins. Remember, you can always lean on a supportive friend by borrowing extra chopping boards, jars of herbs and napkins etc. Just don't forget to return the bits and pieces you borrow or you might soon find you're down a 'like' or two on social media!



## Plan Ahead

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No one ever cooked up a storm in the kitchen without planning a list of key ingredients and heading out for some essential shopping. Similarly, if you're serious about nailing your #foodporn post, planning and a healthy dose of patience are imperative. Plan in advance what you're cooking/eating/baking/prepping that day and

which produce would work aesthetically for Instagram and other social media. Think bright colours, intriguing textures and gorgeous fresh ingredients that will pop off the plate. Props and flowers need to be ready to go. No one wants a carefully set scene to wilt and fade while you're busy with the washing up!

## Act Fast

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Again, we're espousing the art of preparation.

Food starts to look tired very quickly, so you'll have to work fast to get the most appetising picture. Try laying out your props before cooking, then plating up only when everything's completely ready.

### TIP:

*If you're worried about fresh herbs starting to flag, keep them on ice or in a cold place until you're ready to snap.*

## Don't Be Precious

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When it comes to food and beverage photography, perfection is not your friend. A slightly off-kilter sprig of garnish makes the scene more realistic.

Present your shot creatively, with a dash of adventurous spirit. We find that pomegranate seeds, fresh herbs and coconut shavings can really make

your food produce pop in a picture. Don't be overly cautious; don't consider the purists' potential reaction to your choice of trimmings or ornamentation. Just get the shot that will attract attention and hopefully become a conversation-starter among your potential clients!

## Embrace Odd!

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Here's another tip from the world of creative arts: Food photography is all about the odds... odd numbers of dishes, glasses and accessories look best, but don't get too particular – now is not the time to spend valuable minutes counting out apples or other smaller foods.

When you're ready to shoot, follow every creative genius's rule of thumb: the rule of thirds. Split your image into nine parts with horizontal and vertical gridlines; your dish should sit on one of the four points where these gridlines intersect.

# MOUTHWATERING FOOD SHOTS

**Businesses like restaurants, food trucks, bakeries, grocery stores and more thrive on the strength of their food photography. A photo that perfectly captures the essence of a dish can make or break a food business's social media marketing strategy, blog post, or product photo—and that can mean the difference between massive sales and massive loss.**



“People who love to eat are always the best people.”

– *Julia Child*





# 1

## ONLY POST YOUR BEST PHOTOS



ks\_ate\_here • Follow  
Chick 'n' Sours

ks\_ate\_here at @chicknsours getting my chick on with this special little number; the GRAND TAMARIND EXPRESS. How good does a fried boneless thigh @burger with coronation kewpie, tamarind chutney and a coconut and green chilli sambol sound right about now? Yea...exactly. Believe in the dream. P.S. Best fried chicken in London. Just saying. TAG A FRIEND WHO IS SICK OF SEEING PICS OF PANCAKES.

|||||

Load more comments

knight\_of\_flower I just well you know 😊😊

bellynam @dehancox show this to guy

ks\_ate\_here @savlafaire haha right?!?

ks\_ate\_here @katymarketfresh haha that's



1,430 likes

9 HOURS AGO

Add a comment...



When you're new to Instagram, it's tempting to post lots of images to fill up your photo feed, even if they're not that great.

However, you should always apply a strict quality control rule to ensure you only post your very best photos.







# 2

## GET YOUR LIGHTING RIGHT



sarkababicka • Following  
Whitstable Beach

sarkababicka Sunset seafood dinner and prosecco with friends on the beach. It doesn't get better than this!

#onthetable John Dory ceviche, tuna carpaccio, fried squid, herring roes, king prawns and scallops

audrey.laure.celine Beautiful!

ngoldsborough @bethanyh1986

jo\_rodgers Heaven! 🙌

food\_to\_glow What a lovely feast!

sarkababicka #onmyplate #feedfeed #foodphoto #foodphotographer #buzzfeast #foodandwine #eeeeeeats #TODAYfood #huffposttaste #travelereats #foodvsco #nothingisordinary #makeitdelicious #yahoofood #verilymoment #beautifulcuisines #eattheworld #f52grams #theartofslowliving #



1,132 likes

APRIL 18, 2016

Add a comment...



You've heard it before, but natural daylight really is the best lighting for any foodie photograph.

If you're tucked away in the corner of a restaurant, don't be afraid to move your plate closer to a window or door to get the best shot and make the most of your iPhone's exposure settings – tap the darkest area of the image to bring light to the whole photo, then drag the exposure levels up.



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# 3

## BE PREPARED



sarkababicka • Following  
Icetank Studio

sarkababicka Really enjoyed styling this pizza last night at #foodstyling & photography workshop I co-hosted with @amyskitchenuk. Such a fun evening with delicious food and lovely people. #styledbyamys

View all 24 comments

sarkababicka @candidbyjo it's always my favourite part of the styling process 😊

sarkababicka @mariannejacobsen\_ pizza must be my fav food to style (and eat) 😊

sarkababicka @siobhan\_andrews Thank you for having me! I'm still buzzing from the evening! 🍷

amozeshakasi 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

busolaevans So lovely to meet you last night! Will be posting my pizza shortly (which naturally doesn't look anywhere as



968 likes

MAY 25, 2017

Add a comment...



Stock your cupboards with interesting-looking crockery, cutlery and napkins – remember, smaller looks better on screen. We're not all blessed with marble worktops and rustic wooden dining tables, so set the scene with printed vinyl backgrounds, chopping boards, jars of herbs and an array of napkins instead.









# 4

## PLAN AHEAD



sarkababicka • Following

sarkababicka Mango and coconut porridge to brighten up this rainy Monday morning. Did I mentioned that I love these flowers?! 🥰🌸

candidsbyjo 😂 I'm obsessed with mine too, it just adds so much to a room

sarkababicka @candidsbyjo they must be the most beautiful flowers I've seen! I want a new bouquet every week! 😊

cashewkitchen Looks really yummy! And beautiful styling as well ❤️

chockywoky So, so love them too ❤️❤️

qvintessentials Stunning colour! 🌸

jo\_rodgers This looks wonderful Sarka!

yicyyyy Love the flowers

nourishingamelia Love it 💜

downshiftology Love the colors! 💜💜



1,237 likes

FEBRUARY 22, 2016

Add a comment...



If you're serious about nailing your #foodporn post, patience is key. Plan what you're eating that day and which meals would work aesthetically for Instagram – think bright colours, interesting textures and fresh ingredients.

Have all your flowers and props ready in advance so your scene doesn't wilt while you're washing up.



# 5

## ACT FAST



sarkababicka • Following

sarkababicka Hello Saturday! Let's start the day off with a simple toasted homemade sourdough bread topped with scrambled eggs & avocado plus some crunchy watercress. Oh yes and green tea!

View all 25 comments

embuscadeembargo @sarkababicka Perfect lunch ❤️

\_mariannejacobsen\_ Looks so delicious dear! Have a lovely weekend ❤️

benjaminsutu Yum yum! That looks divine!

thelittleloafblog Watercress is my fave! ❤️

genieinabubble Eggs and avooo 🙌

onlyminimal So good dear! ❤️

kelinator\_fitfoodie Nadherny ❤️

lemonpiy Everything in this picture... 😍

sarkababicka @kymqrimshaw best colour



1,810 likes

DECEMBER 12, 2015

Add a comment...



Food starts to look tired very quickly, so you'll have to work fast to get the most appetising picture. Try laying out your props before cooking, then plating up only when everything's completely ready.

If you're worried about fresh herbs starting to flag, keep them on ice or in a cold place until you're ready to snap.







## 6 DON'T BE PRECIOUS



sarkababicka • Following

sarkababicka An attempt to satisfy my sweet cravings ( I blame it on the weather). Figs roasted with agave syrup and hazelnuts served with creme fraîche and fresh mint.

[View all 31 comments](#)

[cookie\\_cottage](#) Perfect for the weather in Holland too ;-)

[n.ziggy](#) [@stefansiegfried](#)

[mllecoton](#) ♥

[myhealthybites](#) OMG ♥

[katarzynastepien](#) Need to try this 🍷

[studiohejki](#) Wow looks delicious ♥

[lisastrube](#) Hell yeah! Such a pretty serving at that. 🍷

sarkababicka [@lavinia\\_cernau](#) thank you 🍷

sarkababicka [@chevronseclairs](#)



1,812 likes

FEBRUARY 27, 2015

[Add a comment...](#)



Garnishing a meal with extra ingredients from your dish; pomegranate seeds, fresh herbs and coconut shavings can really make your meal pop in a picture, but don't be too cautious. Choose a garnish in a bright colour, then sprinkle a handful over your dish.

A slightly off-kilter sprig of garnish makes the scene more realistic.





# 7

## DON'T GIVE IT ALL AWAY



sarkababicka • Following

sarkababicka Any day is a good day for lemon & thyme roast chicken.

[View all 22 comments](#)

eyecandypopper Except Meatless Monday 😂😂 haha 😊

johngs Love it

tvaldivia77 @o\_rayshell with roasted vegetables!

officialorama 📺🎥

sarkababicka #sundayroastonfriday #onthetable #feedfeed #foodphotographer #f52grams #huffposttaste #foodphoto #homemade #vscofood #lifeandthyme #buzzfeast

sarkababicka @dribbledots thanks!

sarkababicka @eyecandypopper haha that's right! 😂



1,225 likes

DECEMBER 12, 2015

[Add a comment...](#)



Sometimes it's what you don't see in a picture that makes it feel alive, so don't struggle to fit your entire summer barbecue spread into your iPhone screen. Let dishes, plates and chopping boards fall outside of your photo and viewers will automatically imagine the scene continuing.

# 8 EMBRACE ODD



sarkababicka • Following  
Druid Street Market

sarkababicka A Saturday afternoon well spent at @druidstmarket. I had to go back for these delicious chargrilled oysters with loads of butter and cajun spices by @decaturlondon

View all 26 comments

kelinator\_fitfoodie 🍷

driamurphy 💜

crumms\_uk Nice snap!

decaturlondon Yeaah! Thanks for coming back for round two 😊! Also 🍷 @candidsbyjo !!

ptg\_msc @manordeman

oystour Yessssss 🍷👍🍷

inahalfshellblog This looks divine!

sarkababicka @druidstmarketu My fav Saturday place! 😊



1,316 likes

AUGUST 30, 2015


Add a comment...



Food photography is all about the odds: odd numbers of dishes, glasses or foods look best, but don't spend time counting out apples or other smaller foods.

When you're ready to shoot, follow the rule of thirds: split your image into nine parts with horizontal and vertical gridlines, then your dish should sit on one of the four points where these gridlines intersect.





“To me, food is as much about the moment, the occasion, the location and the company as it is about the taste.”

*- Heston Blumenthal*



**Food photography is an art, not an exact science. While these are some rough guidelines that will help you get better pictures of your food, don't let them stop you from experimenting with filters, lighting techniques and composition that can bring a creative edge to your photography.**

**A unique take on the concept of the food photograph is a great way to give your pictures an edge. The more unique a perspective you can bring to your food photography the more likely you are to catch the attention of those social media users scrolling through their feed. And at the end of the day, catching people's attention—and hopefully their tastebuds—is what's most important.**