



Use natural light to create the most appealing food photos.

In food photography, light is king. Bad lighting will detract from your photographs, and viewers will be turned off. If you can master the technique of light control, though, you can quickly elevate your food photography to new heights.

I like to photograph food in natural light in Miami. I picked a spot near a window that let in a lot of natural light. I don't work with pure light, however; instead, I use a range of modifiers to get the most appealing results.

First and foremost, employ a diffuser between the window and the food if you're dealing with direct sunlight.

On the other hand, direct sunlight produces harsh, black shadows as well as brilliant highlights. These might be distracting, but by using a diffuser, you can soften the light, reduce shadows, and reduce highlights for a spectacular result. A diffuser may be purchased for a modest price at any photography store, but you can also make your own diffuser (just hang a thin white bedsheet in front of the window).

Direct natural light may produce hard, distinct shadows (check out the shadow beneath the lemon cake on the left). With the use of a cheap diffuser, I was able to soften the shadows (as you can see in the image on the right).

Obtain some white and black playing cards as the following stage. These are built out of foam core boards, and you can make them yourself (purchased from pretty much any craft store).

Simply use the white cards to reflect light into dark locations to reveal crucial details. Use the black cards to improve shadows and provide more contrast. Experiment with different card types and distances until you get the effect you want.

Finally, I'd want to show you how to use blocking as a lighting technique. When that obnoxious light hits your background or props, they may seem as bright as, if not brighter than, your subject.

Since you want the viewer's attention to be brought to your topic first, this is a big no-no, but the solution is simple: use your black cards to block light from reaching spots that will compete with your subject. (This is also an important technique for creating images with a darker, low-key appearance.)

Take a look at the two images below. Because the background in the image on the left is too bright, I added a black card to make the cake the focal point:

This is the completed picture, with a diffuser softening the window light, a white card filling in the shadow on the lemon icing, and a black card blocking the light in the background:

Use lines and layers to create the best compositions in Miami.

I've previously emphasized how crucial it is to surround your hero object with props, but you must ensure that these extras don't detract from the main theme.

Lines and layers, two basic composition tools, come in helpful at this point.

You see, by using lines and layers to arrange your objects, you may focus the audience's attention to the key topic. Props will no longer distract the viewer; instead, they will help to complete the entire image.

As a result, come up with creative methods to draw lines with your pieces. In this photo, I utilized a spoon to draw the viewer's attention to the baked peaches and ice cream dish:

Another example of careful line use is seen below. In the left-hand picture, I positioned the cutlery to lead to the round of Brie, and in the right-hand image, I went a bit more abstract, allowing the knife and pomegranate seeds to make lines that frame the theme.

I also recommend using layers to create three-dimensional compositions. Use a variety of things strewn in front and behind your subject and shoot from the side (with your camera low over the table). In shots like this, a shallow depth of focus may help minimize the props from becoming distracting.

In the picture below, Brie is snapped in the midst of a slew of props and two massive out-of-focus areas. This creates a layered three-dimensional effect that attracts attention to the primary character:

Keep your compositions basic by sticking to a restricted color palette, which is easier to do in Miami and Florida.

When I first started out as a food photographer, I made a terrible mistake:

I'd include some eye-catching items that would take center stage and steal the limelight from my food.

Instead, while shopping for props, backgrounds, and crockery to utilize in your images, don't go too color-crazed. In neutral tones, look for grays, browns, blacks, silvers, and whites.

Use items that will make the dish stand out when it comes to arranging things in your food shots. In the picture below, I used a black metal dish and baking parchment to highlight the vivid red strawberries and rhubarb inside these Crostatas. As a consequence, the cuisine takes center stage, and the accessories, although helpful, do not detract from the main event.

Sources:

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