

# Maghull and Lydiate U3A – Digital camera group

## Food Photography – An Introduction

By Darren Rowse

### 1. Lighting

Treat the food you're photographing as you would any other still life subject and ensure that it is well lit. Many of the poor examples of food photography that I've come across in the research for this article could have been drastically improved with adequate lighting. One of the best places to photograph food is by a window where there is plenty of natural light – perhaps supported with flash bounced off a ceiling or wall to give more balanced lighting that cuts out the shadows. This daylight helps to keep the food looking much more natural.



### 2. Props

Pay attention not only to the arrangement of the food itself but to the context that you put it in including the plate or bowl and any table settings around it. Don't clutter the photo with a full table setting but consider one or two extra elements such as a glass, fork, flower or napkin. These elements can often be placed in secondary positions in the foreground or background of your shot.

### 3. Be Quick

Food doesn't keep its appetizing looks for long so as a photographer you'll need to be well prepared and able to shoot quickly after it's been cooked before it melts, collapses, wilts and/or changes color. This means being prepared and knowing what you want to achieve before the food arrives. One strategy that some use is to have the shot completely set up with props before the food is ready and then to substitute a stand-in plate to get your exposure right. Then when the food is ready you just switch the stand-in plate with the real thing and you're ready to start shooting.



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### 5. Enhance it

One tip that a photographer gave me last week when I said I was writing this was to have some vegetable oil on hand and to brush it over food to make it glisten in your shots.

### 6. Get Down Low

A mistake that many beginner food photographers make is taking shots that look down on a plate from directly above. While this can work in some circumstances – in most cases you'll get a more better shot by shooting from down close to plate level (or slightly above it).



### 7. Macro

Really focusing in upon just one part of the dish can be an effective way of highlighting the different elements of it.

### 8. Steam

Having steam rising off your food can give it a 'just cooked' feel which some food photographers like. Of course this can be difficult to achieve naturally. I spoke with one food stylist a few years back who told me that they added steam with a number of artificial strategies including microwaving water soaked cotton balls and placing them behind food. This is probably a little advance for most of us – however it was an interesting trick so I thought I'd include it.

Read more: <http://www.digital-photography-school.com/food-photography-an-introduction#ixzz1ZhobRe58>

