

# STUDIO brand

A DESIGN + DIGITAL AGENCY

## TOP NINE FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS + TRICKS



\*\*All images represented are property of Studio Brand Collective and feature actual client campaigns.\*\*

# 1. PLAN AHEAD

Prior to the shoot, discuss with the chef the different courses he or she will be plating or pouring (Pro Tip: add special cocktails and or wine that pair well with the dishes should be in the shoot). This menu will guide your vision for the shoot and help determine if you'd like to add any accessories, such as flowers, specific-colored napkins, plates, glasses, or tablecloths. This will set the tone for the mood-board aesthetic and will help you decide which dishes to place together, saving you time and allowing the photographer more time to take more photos.



## 2. STYLING—YES, FOR FOOD!

Food styling is important, as you want your food to shine in the best angle. For example, soups capture beautifully in overhead shots, but drinks are harder to shoot from overhead. It's best to know the entire list of what's being shot and how they're being served. Finally, make sure everything is spotless the day of the shoot. The plates should be clean and the backgrounds neat. Pleated lines or wrinkles in the tablecloth are big no-nos!



# 3. MOOD BOARD

If a photo shoot is taking place, it's vital to create a mood board prior to the shoot. A mood board is a collage of inspiration, designed to provide be a guide for the shoot's aesthetic. These collages are simply pictures showing placement, color scheme, and style. They offer ideas for settings and are usually only a single page in length. Mood boards define the goals of the shoot and are a wonderful way to get everyone—client, photographer, and marketing team—on the same page to ensure the final result of the shoot is what everyone has in mind.





## 4. TABLE-SCAPE + SINGLE-DISH SHOTS

The photographer should find a sweet spot for capturing table-scape and single-dish shots. The overall goal should be to get pictures that can be used in as many ways as possible—on a website, social media platforms, press releases, and more. The more, the merrier rings true here. Single shots are important, specifically when it's of a new menu item or an item the client would like to highlight. Table-scape photos are supposed to be fun and playful. These are overhead shots of a table containing various dishes and drinks. Want the perfect table-scape shot? Arrange your dishes and drinks to form triangles. Layering these triads will give you a dynamic but balanced shot. These triangles create both structure and simplicity when done right. Take some time to arrange this specific look—it'll be worth it.



## 5. CLUTTER IS BAD

We get it—when a customer is dining in, you'll offer them the works. Salt and pepper shakers, condiments, forks, knives, menus, water glasses, and more! But these items are unnecessary for the shoot. The fewer items in your photos, the more the eye will be drawn to the things that matter: the dishes. The main goal is to inspire your target audience to come to your restaurant and try your food. Therefore, your biggest selling point is the cuisine itself. The dishes should make mouths water. Focus only on the dishes and/or specialty cocktails. And don't forget, the dishes need to be clean and styled. Wipe them before each shot, removing specs and straggling crumbs. Everything shows on camera!

## 6. NATURAL LIGHTING

Natural light is one of the most sought-after resources for a photographer shooting at a restaurant. All you need is a single window that brings in light from the back or side, creating the right shadows and highlighting the texture of the cuisine. Never use the camera flash. A flash creates harsh reflections and makes your food look fake. We understand that natural light is hard to control and photoshoots often take several hours, in which time the lighting can change. Using a soft light box will help balance out the lighting, making it look more natural, even when natural light begins to disappear or move away.



# 7. PHOTOGRAPHY TECHNIQUES

Two basic principles of photography are handy when taking food photos: depth of field and the rule of thirds. Depth of field refers to the range of distance that is in focus in a photo. It is common technique because it draws eyes to focus on the most important area of the photograph. For example, it's best used when highlighting the main dish in focus, with pairing dishes such as appetizers, mini desserts, and baked goods are slightly blurred around it. The rule of thirds is another important concept, making photos more appealing when the dish is not directly in the center of the photograph. Instead, it is in one of the thirds of the shot. It's simple, but can make all the difference.





## 8. OIL + WATER

Just because your ingredients are fresh, doesn't necessarily mean that will translate in the photo! To make your salads and veggies more appetizing, add a splash of oil or spray with water and watch them gleam! This will highlight the freshness of the ingredients.



## 9. ADD HANDS

Wining and dining is a communal affair, offering intimacy and togetherness. Adding a human element, such as a hand holding a drink, a dish, or reaching for an appetizer, is a wonderful way to make the photographs feel more real to the audience. Make sure the hand is not the main focus of the photo, and ensure the hand is clean—we don't want half-off nail polish! Hands should be cleaned and manicured with little to no jewelry.



S T U D I O  
brand

A DESIGN + DIGITAL AGENCY

**THANK YOU**

[WEARESTUDIOBRAND.COM](http://WEARESTUDIOBRAND.COM) | 713.863.1141 | [HELLO@WEARESTUDIOBRAND.COM](mailto:HELLO@WEARESTUDIOBRAND.COM)