



# Building a Brand for Local Meat PHOTOGRAPHY

June 2018



## Designing Your Brand Identity: Photography

### Techniques and Considerations

Taking great photographs requires a certain frame of mind. There are many factors that go into a good picture, but the camera takes only a split second to snap the picture, and it is hard to focus on everything at once during that moment.

While trained professionals will always take the best photos, there are things you can do to take great photos for your brand on your

budget. Keeping your goals in mind can help you to snap the right shots. Thinking about photographic elements can help take your photography to the next level.

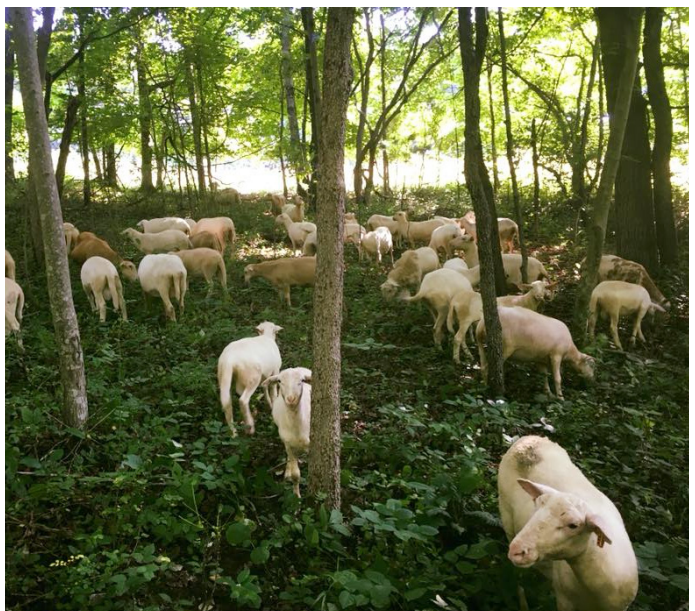
### Your Brand's Photographic Style

Keeping your brand's photographic style in mind will help to keep your photos on track! Your imagery should revolve around your products. Capture not only the garnished final products, but all stages in the process. Photograph the sources of ingredients and nutrients, the processes of food creation, creative chefs at work, and wise farmers perfecting their craft.

Portray the lifestyle that comes with local food. Convey a strong sense of unique place and atmosphere. Capture what is unique about your community and each dish. Capture different dining atmospheres. Portray hard work, business development, and success along the way. Look for genuine smiles!



Happy hogs enjoy local Snowville Creamery treats, these images were used in a successful crowdfunding campaign that raised over \$10,000. Image courtesy of Pork and Pickles.



Ruffwing Farms shares a pleasant spot in the shade that their sheep call home. Photo courtesy Ruffwing Farms.

## Image Quality

Use a quality image capturing device. The first step to professional looking photos is having the right tools. Use the best device that is accessible to you.

Auto-focusing cameras don't always correctly guess what you are taking a picture of. Make sure that the important part of the photo is the part in focus. Stand still to take photos. Make sure your lens is not foggy.

Don't distort images by disproportionately stretching, squashing, or skewing them.

Pork and Pickles shows her brand fans what goes in to butchering a whole hog and producing high quality end products



## Resolution

All digital images are made up of **pixels**, which are tiny, square, solid blocks of color. When pixels are small enough, they blend together to trick our eyes into seeing a smooth, realistic image.

**Resolution** refers to the density of pixels in an image. It is measured in pixels, or dots, per inch (ppi or dpi). When a photo's resolution is lower, each pixel is bigger and takes up more space. The bigger the pixels get, the easier it gets to tell that the photo is actually just a bunch of tiny colored squares, and the blended image gets disrupted. This is called pixelation.

The resolution of a photo is inversely proportional to the current size of the photo. This means that as you stretch a photo to make it bigger, the resolution goes down. If you shrink a photo to make it smaller, the resolution goes up. Each photo has an original size that corresponds with its original resolution. Being aware of these details can help you to share quality photos to represent our brand.

If you're able to control resolution and size in your camera's settings, set it to at least 300ppi and base the size on any possible intended uses for the photos.

In a printed document, the standard minimum resolution for high quality printed images is 300 pixels per inch.

On a digital screen, the standard minimum resolution for digital images is 72 pixels per inch. Our eyes can be more easily tricked when we are looking at a screen.



## Framing

Consider the entire frame of your photographs. Primarily, your focus will be on your subject, but the rest of the frame is just as important. What is in the foreground, in front of your subject? What is in the background? Does anything in the photo make the scene feel unprofessional or interfere with the mood you want to convey? Do you need to rearrange or alter the scene to control what is in the frame?

Is anything being cut out or cut off? What else could be included in the frame if you zoomed out? What could be really focused on if you zoomed in?

How does the photo change if you frame it vertically versus horizontally? The frame created by your camera might not be the shape that you want in the end. What will you use this photo for? What sort of shape will you need to crop it to?



Framing Example 1



Framing Example 2



Framing Example 3



Framing Example 4

Apples – photos courtesy of ACEnet

## Vantage Point

Consider different vantage points from which to take each photo. Most people will take pictures of what they see at eye level without thinking about other views. Sometimes those pictures turn out great, but a more interesting, unique angle can be more compelling than an unconsidered, common vantage point.

What is the typical vantage point from which your subject is most often seen? What would happen if you took the photo from below? What would the photo look like from a bird's eye view? What other angles might work?

Consider all 360 degrees around your subject. If you stood somewhere else, would the background be better? Would the overall photo be better?



Vantage Point Example 1



Vantage Point Example 2



Vantage Point Example 3



Vantage Point Example 4

Vantage point photos courtesy of Pork and Pickles, photographer Alexandria Polanosky



## Lighting

Light makes photography possible. Some lighting conditions are better than others. The ideal light for photography is soft, indirect, natural sunlight. Harsh bright light can cause squinting and make subjects look unnatural or blown out.

Only use the flash on your camera as a last resort, when the scene cannot be brightened any other way.

Photos tend to be especially discolored when different kinds of light sources are mixed together, such as natural sunlight and artificial lightbulbs. Indoor artificial lighting can cause your photos to look discolored by throwing off the white balance, or the designation of what is “white,” in your photo. Try to limit your light source to one kind of light to get the truest colors. To limit artificial light, turn them off, shoot near a window, or go outside. Ways to limit sunlight include shooting indoors at night and avoiding windows. You can also combat discoloration from lighting by adjusting the white balance on your camera, if that is an option for you.

Consider lighting when you decide on a vantage point. If your light source is behind your subject, your subject will look dark. If the only light source is pointed directly at your subject, your subject may look too light or too flat. It's best to have light hitting your subject at an indirect angle.



Controlled lighting



Mixed lighting



Outside with backlighting

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Lighting – controlled courtesy of ACEnet photographer Alexandria Polanosky other courtesy of Florentine Legacy

## Tips and tricks

Your brand's purpose is to show local food in a great light, and photography is one of the best ways to do that. Whether you're photographing a plated dish, a raw ingredient, or packaged products, these techniques can help.

### Hurry!

In the case of cooked or frozen food, it won't be in its prime for long. Beware of wilting, browning, melting, or discoloring.



Try to arrange frozen or other products in an attractive way - note the difference between these two photos!



Step 1: First step



Step 2: In process



Step 3: Final roll



Step 4: Finished product

### What is most Appealing?

Think about what is the most appealing about this food and emphasize that trait. Is it the texture? The presentation? The overall scene? The color? A certain ingredient?



You can't be afraid to move the product around!

Notice how this photo highlights the the squash.





## Set a Scene

Work on presentation. Use props! Think about colors and textures that will really make this food shine.

Consider items like plates, cutlery, tables, tablecloths, baskets, cooking utensils, shopping carts, and etcetera.

Make sure your props are clean and flattering. Make sure the food looks appetizing. Consider adding garnishes, or drizzling sauces.

Photo courtesy of Pork and Pickles

## Work with your partners!

Let a retailer know in advance that you intend to photograph meat products in their store for promotion. They might have complimentary products, ideas or props to improve the presentation.



## Show real interactions

Try photographing someone interacting with the food in a natural way.



Photo courtesy of Pork and Pickles



## Photography Ethics

Stock photos and photos taken from the internet will never be truly genuine, but when we need to use them, we need to be ethical. We need to make sure that there are not copyright restrictions on them. Photographers and artists work hard to produce photos and clipart!

You will need to search for photos that specifically do not have copyright protections, because by default all images are copyrighted to their photographers. You will need to search for photos in the public domain or photos protected under a Creative Commons license. An internet search will help you find sites with photo archives in the public domain or protected by a Creative Commons license.

### Public Domain

Photos in the public domain do not have any copyright protections, for whatever reason.

### Creative Commons

Photos with a Creative Commons license will allow free use under specific guidelines. You will need to read those guidelines to find out if the photographer wants you to cite him or her as a source and if you are allowed to use it in your situation.



Free use stock photo

## Resources:

- Beginners guide to photography: <https://expertphotography.com/a-beginners-guide-to-photography/>
- Food photography : [http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/technique/camera\\_skills/food-photography-tips-people-117443](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/technique/camera_skills/food-photography-tips-people-117443)
- Find a photographer! Expect to pay around \$100-300 depending on what you're looking for. Good places to look:
  - Browse Instagram #foodphotography #foodphotographer
  - Look up photographers in local publications
  - Advertise for photographers in local publications
  - <https://petapixel.com/2016/02/26/much-photographers-charge-2016/>