

A top-down photograph of a still life featuring pastries, coffee, and herbs on a textured surface. The scene includes a basket of powdered pastries, a small white plate with two pastries, a cup of coffee, and fresh rosemary sprigs. The text 'how to plan a successful shoot' is overlaid in a large, white, serif font.

how to plan a successful shoot

**MY TOP TIPS FOR MAKING ANY
SHOOT A SUCCESS, AND CREATING
PHOTOS YOU'RE PROUD OF**

- 1. QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF**
- 2. BACKDROPS + PROPS**
- 3. SHOT LIST + ASPECT RATIOS**
- 4. SKETCHES**
- 5. TIME TO HAVE FUN!**

**GRAB YOURSELF A PEN AND PAPER.
LET'S GET STARTED!**

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questions to ask yourself

HOW MANY VARIATIONS OF MY SUBJECT AM I SHOOTING?

Sometimes process shots can be just as beautiful as the finished article. I also personally love ingredients shots, shots with hands and action shots. Do you want to shoot an entire cake, a slice being cut from it or individual portions on numerous plates?

WHAT'S THE THEME, MOOD OR FEEL?

Are these shots for a particular time of year? Is it seasonal or do you want these images to be evergreen? How do you want your viewer to feel? What colours are going to evoke that, and how can you incorporate elements that add to your story? Think of colours, textures and composition to bring your vision to life.

backdrops and props

BACKDROPS

Once you've decided on colours and textures, it's time to pick your backdrop/s. Where would you dish typically be eaten? On a marbled worktop, plated up on a wooden table, bright and colourful on playful tiling? I'm a huge fan of @photosurfaces, @cblbackdrops, @poppybeesurfaces and @backdrop.woodville on Instagram amongst others. @clothhouse is great for linens and it's also easy to DIY your own!

PROPS

Curating a prop collection takes a long time and isn't the cheapest! My advice: save and invest in props that are worthy of space on your shelves. Don't just buy things for the sake of it. Rather, think carefully about how your props complement each other. What will your subject be served in? Does it need cutlery to make it feel real? Remember that ingredients can serve as "props" – a few sprigs of mint or ribbons of cucumber also add character.



shot list & aspect ratios

ARE YOU WORKING TO A BRIEF?

Create your own shot list after you've answered the very first question in this PDF and which order you'll capture everything in. If you're working with clients, be sure to ask them of specific shots they want in order to capture their food story perfectly.

WHERE ARE THESE IMAGES BEING USED?

Wherever your images are going, you'll need to think about the aspect ratios and specs. Instagram generally uses 1:1 and 4:5 for feed posts, and 9:16 for stories and reels, whereas other platforms might be different. If your images are being used for website banners or other social platforms, be sure to create with this in mind.



sketches



DECIDE ON YOUR ANGLES

Do you want a range of images to show off your star? Flatlays, front on or 45 degree angles are the most common, but have a think about what angles you're going to shoot from, and what lenses you might require. Macro? 50mm? 24-80mm?

PLAY WITH COMPOSITION

This is a chance to visualise your composition. Is your subject centre stage, or does it look better cropped out of frame? Will you use other props? What angles will they sit at? Deciding all of this beforehand speeds up the process when shooting.

USE TRACING OR PARCHMENT PAPER

Use this trick to ensure your images will look aesthetically pleasing: trace over templates of the golden ratio spiral, golden ratio triangles, thirds grid or golden ratio grid and then overlay it onto your sketches.



time to have fun

PREPARE THE DAY BEFORE

Prep any food that you can in advance so there's less cooking time on the day. Place all your props, backdrops, bounce boards, and equipment out **and remember to charge your camera battery!** That way you don't spend wasted time searching for something you can't find, or get caught short with a battery that dies 30 minutes into a shoot.

THE MORNING OF

Ensure everything gets set up the morning of: get your tripods and C-stands ready, your camera tethered and any artificial lighting rigged up ready to go.

TEST AND ENJOY!

Tests shots are number one when it comes to making sure your image is exactly how you imagine it **before** plating up your food. Mount your camera to your tripod or C-stand and position all of your props. Then take a test shot! Like the look of it? Away you go!

thank you

I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

I hope these pointers help you achieve a more streamlined and successful shoot, so you have more time to focus on creating the perfect shot on the day.

I'm also considering launching a photography-style workshop/e-course just for YOU – because it's good to dream big and make those dreams a reality. **If this is something you'd love to see, email me below to register your interest and I'll add you to my waitlist. Hugs! xo**

HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

Feel free to email me at
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