

# Food Photography & Styling

Joe Khoury Studio x Alt Summit 2020



Hello Alt 2020 community,

Thanks for joining my "Food Photography & Styling" workshop!

Taking professional images can be easier than some people may think. Preparing in advance and understanding the basics of food photography can help you overcome challenges on set and get the results that you want.

This workshop is divided in two sessions:

1. Presentation
2. Hands - on

## **Preparation is key.**

- Know the **space**
- Prepare your **equipment**
- Follow a clear **direction**
- Gather all your **props**
- **SHOOT!**

Pro-tip: Provision in advance

*You'll avoid having "ready to shoot plates" in a non "ready to shoot environment"*



## **Building up your story.**

- **Follow your research and mood board**  
Having this ready beforehand will ensure you are on the same page with the client or with yourself/your vision. This will help you gather your resources and ingredients and to make sure you will include everything you want.

Pro-tip: Make a check-list

*And the only thing you'll forget is saying: "Oh, I forgot that"*

## - **Backgrounds and Backdrops**

This is the base element where you are going to start building up your composition. This will also set a mood/color story.

## - **Props**

They can add texture. Add or remove relevance of elements on the set or focus on the main subject.

Props will help telling your story- even without a subject- (old or new, classic or old, rustic or cosmopolitan). They resonate with your audience.

- Samples/ Props library
- Transportation
- Searching for props (picking dishes, linens, unique surfaces and utensils)

Pro-tip: Build your own library

## - **Light sources**

- Natural

Can be available everywhere (no need of extra equipment) It's the best light for color rendering with respect to the human eye. This will probably result in less need for color correction/ editing depending on your camera settings.

- Flash

Allows you to have a controlled lighting environment (darker/ lighter moods regardless of the day or set conditions). Plus, with advanced flash settings you can freeze motion of water, splashes on set.

Disadvantage: the result will be different than what you see in set. You'll need to really understand your flash settings and controls for a controlled outcome

- Continuous

You can see the "end result" More control over shadows and highlights  
Also useful for shooting video.

## - **Modifiers**

They will help you "modify", direct, bounce, fill the light.

- Soft boxes

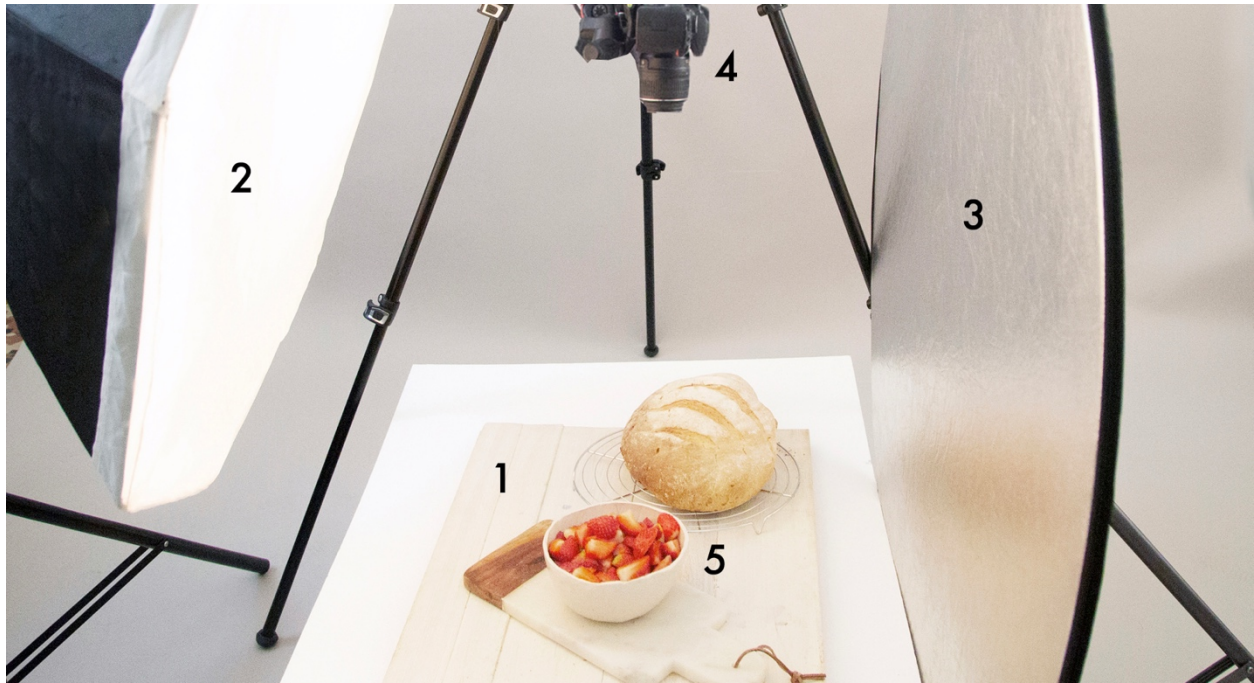
They will diffuse the light (of a flash)

- Reflectors

transparent (diffuse the light), black (intensify shadows), white (fill shadows), -silver (fill shadows/stronger), gold (fill shadows with golden tint)

- **Set up**

1. Background/ Backdrop
2. Light Source
3. Reflector
4. Camera
5. Subject (Food)



Pro-tip: In the option of a natural light source, use the same setup and always shoot close to the window. The reflector can be replaced with a white foam board.

**All about the food.**

- **Finding great ingredients**

The greater the ingredients (freshness, colors, shapes) the better the image (less retouching, more appealing, better colors, more inspiring)

- **Making your dish look interesting**

micro greens, accents, toppings, styling to the camera.

Pro-tip: Have choices

If you have great ingredients and a wide variety, it will be easier to “layer up” your plate composition

- **Focusing on the drool factor**

The image triggers an emotional response, the food has to be fresh. Sensibility of lighting, color palette, composition & angle. You’ll be able to achieve this, by working your main elements (equipment, props, food) through your **composition**.

The “drool factor” is anything that will make you and your audience think:

*“I can’t wait to dig in”*

Try different elements like:

- Composition
- Angles
- Focus (DOF)

- **Composition techniques (most of these can be found in Photoshop Crop Tool)**

- Negative space
- Rules of thirds
- Rule of odds (used widely in arts)
- Repetition
- The waterfall technique (dripping, drizzling)
- Leading lines
- Golden triangle

Pro-tip: “layering” will help you

- It’s great for stop motion videos
- You can always go back a few steps and re-direct
- You will gradually build up your ingredients and (hopefully) notice before it’s “too much”



- **Angles**

- 90 degrees (tabletop/overhead) great for showcasing what's in the Plates/Bowls, and for a variety of dishes. Great for a deep depth of field  
Most elements in focus
- 45 degrees  
Great for a shallow depth of field, to highlight on a specific part of your subject, Common for food since it's the angle we perceive the food when seated at a table
- 10/20 degrees  
This angle is middle line between the 45 and the Horizontal
- Horizontal  
Great for stacking food and for the waterfall technique, to showcasing the filling of a subject (burgers/sandwiches.)

HAPPY SHOOTING!!

Feel free to connect with me [here](#) or check my work at [www.joekhourystudio.com](http://www.joekhourystudio.com)  
& on social media @joekhourystudio