

CHAPTER SEVEN:

PROPS

FOR FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

This is arguably my favourite chapter. Okay, you got me, they're ALL my favourite chapters. But trust me when I say that props can make or break a photo.

In this chapter, we're talking all things props. Why you need them, when and when not to use them, and where to buy them on the cheap. (Of course, we had to talk shopping. But don't worry, we're also talking sales. It's my favourite word.) And to end this chapter, I'm sharing my list of 8 essential props that all food photographers need. You can use this as a checklist if you are just building your prop collection, or as a cheeky reminder to go shopping!

“ PROPS CAN MAKE
OR BREAK A PHOTO. ”



WHY PROPS ARE SO IMPORTANT:

When it comes to food photography, props are any items which accessorize the scene.

What it takes a lot of photographers a long time to realise, is that props go beyond plates and bowls. In fact, the most powerful prop in food photography is the food itself - adding small drizzles and sprinkles of food around your scene can really elevate your compositions.

Props are also important for filling negative space. Take a look at the two photos below. The left, of a plate of yoghurt with roasted cherries. And on the right, you'll see the same photo with props removed. The vibe is COMPLETELY different.



WITH PROPS



SANS PROPS

There's nothing wrong with minimalist compositions like the one on the right – I for one, am a big fan of them. However, if you want to tell a better story about the dish, you're going to need to 'accessorize' your photo with props.

“ THE MOST POWERFUL PROP
IN FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY IS
THE FOOD ITSELF ”

Let's talk through all the props in this photo:

1. THE GREY PLATE.

I chose to present the roasted cherries and yoghurt on a dark grey plate to contrast the creamy white colour of the yoghurt.

2. THE BAKING TRAY.

The cherries in this photo were roasted on this very baking tray. This adds a hint of the cooking process involved – I also left a few cherries on the tray along with a spoon to give the idea of the cherries just being placed on the plate.

3. THE BOWL OF FRESH CHERRIES.

This bowl is just peeking into the photo, but it reinforces the cherry theme and helps to fill some negative space.

4. THE BOWL (AND SPRINKLES OF) GRANOLA.

The granola is another key element to this dish, so I chose to include a small bowl of it in this composition. I also sprinkled the granola around the background to create a subtle S shape to the composition.

5. THE LINEN.

These are my absolute FAVOURITE food photography prop. Linens are like the hoop earrings of accessories – they just make it look like you've put in a lot of effort!

6. THE SPOONS.

Cutlery has a double purpose in food photography in that it a) gives a feeling of 'digging right in' to the food, and b) creates lines of movement to guide the viewer around the photo.

Are you sold on props yet? Let's talk essentials!

