

Beef Up Your Food Photography

Sponsored by the
Minnesota Beef Council

Presented by
Alice Seuffert, Dining with Alice

Minnesota Blogger Conference
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www.diningwithalice.com

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About Alice

Alice Seuffert is a parenting and food blogger in Minnesota. Alice is the author of [Freezer Meals for Moms](#). Alice cooks regularly on television as the Kitchen Star on Twin Cities Live.

Alice blogs about creative comfort food recipes, motherhood and Minnesota at www.diningwithalice.com and also contributes recipes and parenting pieces to several Minnesota and national web pages. Alice is a Minnesota State Fair blue ribbon winner and has trained her kids to be excellent egg crackers with the hope that one day they will make her breakfast in bed. If her husband had a blog, he would call it, "Dishwashing with Will."



Recipes



Motherhood



Minnesota

Alice's Experience

AS SEEN ON



FREEZER MEALS
FOR MOMS

ALICE SEUFFERT

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About the Minnesota Beef Council

Mission: To enhance opportunities for growth and success in the beef industry.



Minnesota Beef Council Priorities & Programs:

- Consumer Education
- Promotion
- Industry Information
- Research
- Producer Communication
- Collection & Compliance

Resources for you:

<http://www.mnbeef.org/>
(recipes, tips and safety information)

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Today's Discussion

- Why does Food Photography Matter and how can it change your blog?
- Challenges to Food Photography
- Food Photography Fundamentals
- 10 Free Things You Can Do Now to Take Better Pictures
- Social Media Sharing and Editing
- Photo Challenge: Minnesota Beef Council

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Wait!
I'm not a
food blogger!

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Why does Food Photography Matter and how can it change your blog?

- More Social Media Interaction
- Potential Sponsors and Return Sponsor Business
- Potential Media Appearances
- Potential Contributor Opportunities
- Return Readers
- Readers moving around your web page and reading more content
- Circle of life: More social media->more readers->more sponsorship, media and contributor opportunities.

“Food Photography matters because it's your opportunity to get readers and that opens other doors.” [@diningwithalice](#) #mnblogcon



What does the photography on your
blog say about you?

or

What do you want the photography on
your blog to say about you?

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Food Photography Challenges

- Finding your style
- Minnesota-Hours of Daylight
- Buying groceries, testing a recipe, shooting a recipe, editing photos, writing a post, sharing on social media.
- Having the right equipment and knowing how to use it.
- Some foods are messy and sometimes, not the most beautiful looking food (think MN casseroles!)
- Lifecycle of food
- Life (job, family)

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Food Photography Fundamentals

4 Fundamentals to Taking Better Food Photos

1. Use Natural Light
2. Understand the importance of Depth of Field, Background and Rule of Thirds
3. Style Food to Create Emotion
4. Use Props and Backgrounds that Make Sense

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Use Natural Light

- You don't have to be outside to use natural light.
- Turn off your camera flash.
- Turn off lights inside the room you are shooting.
- Do a natural light inventory of your house-find your best light at the specific time you like to shoot. You don't have to take photos in the kitchen.
- Explore front, side and back light. Move around the photo to get both the left and right side light. And above! See how the emotion changes with each and what reflects the mood of your dish or the photography message you want for your blog.
- After you have mastered the above, your next step is to learn to control the light and explore what controlling does to your photo. For example, diffuse light with a curtain or paper, bounce light with a reflector, if using a DSLR, play with your aperture, shutter speed and ISO.



My own bad food photos.



Understand the importance of Depth of Field, Background and Rule of Thirds

- What is going on in the background of where you are shooting? Visually crop the photo while you are shooting.
- Changing depth of field (aperture) is handy for brand placement and for evoking emotion.
- How does the reader flow in the photo? Is the focus clear and brings back the reader to the food?
- Rule of Thirds: Grid the photo you are taking in your mind and get the food hitting those intersection points. What's your focal point? Intersect there.

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Style Food to Create Emotion

- Start with a clean presentation: examine dishes, utensils.
 - Style can be messy but don't overlook the first glance (fingerprints, hair, scratch, chip)
- The “process” photos don't have to happen live, example cooking pot. What is the process story?
- What are the potential garnishes?
- Plating and Portions
- Is it served family style?
- Use garnish, melted butter, meat juices to make food look fresh and colorful

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Use Props and Backgrounds That Make Sense

- Focus on the fundamentals first.
- What is the emotion you want your reader to feel in the photo?
What is the context for this photo?
 - What questions does your reader have?
- What are the ingredients? Use food as the props. What are you cooking it in or on?
- What would your reader be doing when eating this recipe?
- What's the mood? Light and healthy? Cozy and Warm? Pick your boards and props based on this.

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Low-Cost or Household Props

- Foam Boards
- Ceramic Tiles
- Old Cookie Sheets and Pizza stones
- Cooking tools like pans and cookware
- Large pieces of paper, plastic or board backdrops
- Scrapbook paper
- Parchment paper
- Ramekins
- White dishware
- Textured dishware/simple patterns with color
- Dishtowels
- Fabric
- Silverware
- Vintage kitchen items

Ten Things You Can Do Right Now to Take Better Pictures-And they are all free!

1. Use natural light.
2. Pay attention to what is in the background and use rule of thirds.
3. Use your iPhone's filters and settings: Light (exposure, brightness)
Color (contrast)
 - Instagram: Brightness, contrast, warmth
 - VSCO: Exposure, contrast
4. Try out props and various surfaces (explore colors and backgrounds).
5. Shoot multiple servings.
6. Make big portions.
7. Use garnish, melted butter, make food look fresh and colorful
8. Take numerous pictures including shots from above.
9. Look at your photos as you go.
10. Take pictures in different lights, in many locations around your home and at different times of day-don't be afraid to move around! Do a light inventory.

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Beef Specific Tips

Beef Selection

- Choose the best cuts of beef and dishes for the season you are cooking.
 - In Fall and Winter: Roasts, Stews, Sandwiches and Chili

Photographing and Styling Beef

- Keep the plating and setting simple. Too much can make the photos very distracting and you want the beef to be the star.
- Keep garnishes and color simple.
- Off white creamy plates help to warm up the beef.
- Pair with sides that make sense.
- Trim any large amounts of visible fats from your cuts of beef.
- Be sure to cook beef medium rare (at least 145 degrees) will prevent a gray appearance. Ground Beef should always be cooked to 160 degrees.
- Allow beef to rest after cooking to enable natural juices. Use the juices to touch up the surface of beef.

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Social Media, Editing and Next Steps

- Know the right sizes for social media sharing.
- Take vertical AND horizontal photos.
- Use an online photo storage system.
- Label photos correctly for SEO.
- Use Online Photo Editing resources.
- Use resources on Social Media (filters and editing).

Next Steps:

- Inspiration: Look at food sharing web pages and check out how other food bloggers are taking food photos. Or Google food type.
- Reshoot: Focus on your high-traffic posts.
- Keep learning: Engage in structured learning opportunities and have fun on places like Instagram where you can practice new ideas.
- For more resources I suggest, visit:

<http://diningwithalice.com/bloggng/>

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Photo Challenge: Minnesota Beef Council
Baked Roast Beef Sandwiches from Alice Seuffert



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Alice Seuffert

651-247-1034

alicejseuffert@yahoo.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/diningwithalice>

Email Newsletter: <http://eepurl.com/54nq1>

Twitter: @diningwithalice

Web Page: www.diningwithalice.com

Instagram: @aseuffert

Twitter: [@MNBeefCouncil](https://twitter.com/MNBeefCouncil)

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