

BY CHRISTINA GREVE

# DAY 3 | STYLING TIPS



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# STYLING IS TELLING A STORY WITH PROPS

There are endless factors to making your images outstanding, but in food and still life photography **STYLING** plays a very important role. Why? Because styling is about awakening the senses, and bring memories to the viewer.

Styling is how you tell a story with props. And storytelling is all about emotions and atmosphere. Memories of how homemade bread smells and how the bread feels in your hands when it's warm and newly baked.

Styling is a super creative process that adds to the joy of photography. But for beginners styling can also be tricky to learn because "*what are the rules?*" and "*how do you apply them?*". That's what we will be looking at in this lesson.







## THE ART OF LAYERING

One of my best styling tips is layering with different textures. It's a pretty simple technique. All you do is placing different things of different material on top of one another. On top of the layers, you put your main object; food or flowers. If you look at the photo above you see layers; table, tray, cutting board, herbs, spill from oil and salt, a spoon and then finally the soup; my star of the image.

Everything you put on the surface - yes, even the little sprinkles and drips adds to the visual feeling of layering. Layering can add character and storytelling to the photo and make it look more authentic. The layers are creating a story around the subject and helps compose the image and adds interest and character.









## SHOW INGREDIENTS

One of the most straight forward and honest ways to present your food styling is to simply show some of the ingredients you used when making the dish. Ingredients can look so beautiful when added to the scene and it creates a feeling of LIFE, action and movement. While the final dish might be the star of the scene, the dish could not have been made without the ingredients.

Showcasing ingredients is a great way to practice styling, when you're just starting out, because you don't have to look for expensive props or wonder what to put into your frame for storytelling. Ingredients are right there with you, ready to be used.

A good tip is to make the ingredients look USED. In stead of just placing ONE piece of chocolate; chop it up - make it look authentic and real. Slice that lemon, cut that tomato, spill some of that oil. It makes the scene look messy, alive and juicy.





## SHOW THE TOOLS

Just as you can style with ingredients in food images, you can style with tools in your flowers images.

Don't just show the final image of the flowers. Show the preparation process. The tools you used; scissor, ribbon, cutting knife, floral tape, wire, wrapping paper and so on.

You can also spread out a few flower petals on the scene to make it messy and come alive.









# Use a Simple Color Palette

I always style my images around a color theme that inspires me. When you style a photo with color tones from the same “color family” it can add balance and sophistication. Styling with “tone-in-tone” is pleasing to look at simply because it's calming to the eyes.

After deciding my background I start finding props that match the surface as well as the food or the flowers I'm photographing. If I'm in doubt about a color I take it out. If it does not match or "talk" with the rest of the colors I will not use it, because it will take too much attention.

I find that when I style my photos within the same color range it becomes much easier to match a series of photos. Like the two photos below; they are not photographed on the same day but they match one another well because I have used the same color palette in both photos. The more simple your color palette the more timeless your photo will appear.









## STYLING WITH TEXTURES

Another key element to styling and design, is the use of different textures. Textures will help you create a mood and make your image come alive. You can do this by using textured objects like paper, fabric, metal, sand, stone, concrete, marble, linen, iron, paper, porcelain, glass, silver, yarn, plastic, lace, feathers, ribbon, buttons, silk and nature elements, just to name a few. The more texture you can fit into the frame, the better. The camera simply loves texture!

Consider which types of textures will fit your food and the theme of choice. Once you become more aware of how textures enhance or distract from your subject, it will become easier to know what your photograph needs. Aim to mix two or four different kinds of textured objects to create a stylish image.







## STYLING WITH SPRINKLES

If your styled scene looks a bit "flat" or like it's lacking something.... try to add what I like to call *sprinkles*. You can use all kinds of sprinkles; chopped nuts, dried fruit, bread crumbs, flour, sugars, salt flakes, granola, black pepper, dried herbs, dried flower petals, all kinds of berries and even tea can be really pretty. It all helps tell the story and make your photo real and authentic.

By adding sprinkles, you make the viewer curious and help them believe the story. No matter what kind of food you choose to photograph, you can almost always find something to sprinkle, either on the side or on the food it-selves. In the photo above you can see how I used sprinkles of oats and nut flakes to illustrate an authentic atmosphere.





## TAKE ACTION

Alright, now it's your turn to put these tips into practice. With the styling strategies in mind take about 15-30 minutes to play with one or two of them.

If you feel adventures, you can try to implement more than one styling factor into your photo. Remember it's not about creating a perfect photo, it's about learning, playing and experimenting until you find something you like. The more you play and experiment, the faster you'll find your own voice and style.





Christina Greve is a Lifestyle Photographer, Stylist, Empowerment Coach and Holistic therapist. She provides tools, education and inspiration designed to help multi-passionate women, artists and creative souls find direction, push through self-doubt + make a living doing what they LOVE.

Her work has been featured in numerous magazines, blogs and books worldwide. After a decade of working with psychology, Christina's passion for photography evolved into a full-time photography and coaching business.

Today she runs a thriving + fast-growing international empire specializing in professional online training, motivating and engaging female photographers, designers, bloggers, makers and creatives. She has coached thousands of fabulous women from more than 40+ countries.

With her Podcast "The Empowered Creative," her popular Instagram posts, and quickly sold-out workshops, Christina has become the go-to person for many creatives seeking like-minded sisterhood, real support and heartfelt encouragement.

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