



Food Writers New Zealand
HANDBOOK
food styling

FOOD STYLING

Assemble a full equipment kit for your needs: this may include sharp knives, tweezers, scalpels, small scissors and other dental/ dissection equipment, a selection of good quality artists' brushes in various sizes, spritzer and squeeze bottles, straws, pins, Vaseline (great for glue), florist wire, paper towels, cotton buds, heat gun, blow torch, palate knives, thickeners, sauces, chopping boards and various kitchen tools.

DISCUSS WITH ALL CONCERNED

What are these shots being used for?

- Photography for editorial often has a more causal look and feel and you can therefore do more in a day.
- Photography for advertising is often very precise and takes more time.

Style, props and backgrounds.

- Depending on the type of job it is the props etc will be looked after by a separate props stylist (will they be on set?), the photographer (if in their studio they might have a collection) or yourself.
- Discuss with the photographer how the shots will look, including angle, lighting, scale.
- Discuss the balance of colour, texture, shapes and space.
- Always keep up to date with trends, styles etc.

Are recipes required? If required by you, these should be charged out separately.

ATTEND TO BUSINESS

- Give an accurate estimate of costs and charges for approval in writing.
- Ensure everything is confirmed prior to shoot.
- Who will pay you – the photographer, client or the agency?
- Do you require an advance/float (this is often needed on TV commercials or very large shoots).
- Do you need a purchase order or order/job number to invoice?
- Keep good records.

BE WELL PREPARED

Prior to the shoot

- Obtain or have the recipes ready. Test any that you are unsure about (baking recipes can be especially tricky as ovens, technique etc can vary).
- Are there any that need to be made in advance (need to set or freeze etc)?
- Are there any food requirements that are hard/impossible to get? What are the alternatives?
- Obtain any products specific to the shoot to test. Aim to solve any problems prior to the shoot.
- Check the following: location, is there a kitchen? If not what do you need to bring (gas burners, kettle, trestle table etc).

- Is there electricity, lighting, running water, proximity of work space to the set, rubbish disposal, access to shops, parking.
- Consider any special equipment you might need.
- Obtain a call sheet, where relevant.
- Shop in plenty of time.
- When shopping you will need extra product in most cases. When buying items that need sorting, e.g. with a bag of rocket, many leaves will be broken or brown, if the shot is close up, you will need perfect leaves and have to sort through a lot to get a few nice ones. Ensure this has been costed in.
- Prepare as much as possible ahead.

At the shoot

- Be there and ready to start on time.
- Liaise with the photographer/director on shot sequence and timings.
- Work quickly and stay one step ahead.
- Wear practical clothing and comfortable shoes.
- Be concerned with the total picture.
- Present the finished product as in the recipe or as required. If necessary, note any changes or additions that need to be passed on.
- It can be a good idea to take notes of what you have done on various shoots, should you need to go back to them or recreate them.

Our first handbook was produced in 1991, with the purpose of providing a reference tool that in turn would establish standards for New Zealand food writers. In 1999 the handbook was updated to reflect the growing needs of members.

Food Writers New Zealand is indebted to our hardworking, talented, innovative and active contributors who provided their specialist input for this latest edition.

Thank you to Pip Duncan for her many hours co-ordinating this project.

KATHY PATERSON, PRESIDENT, 2016

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