

Next Level

*Food
Photography*

THE ART
BEHIND
CREATING
MOOD AND
INSPIRING
IMAGES

READY TO START SHOOTING FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

like a seasoned pro?



It's often said that words inform, but images persuade. Take the experience of dining out: the image of food has a greater influence on a majority of us than the description itself.

A restaurant could hire Walt Whitman, C.S. Lewis or J.D. Salinger to depict a dish in the most elegant, mouth-watering prose imaginable, but if the photograph fails to support the text, it most likely will not be ordered.

The difference between an article, description or food blog that's merely interesting and one

that truly captivates is the photography.

While food photography is not the easiest of the arts, a few quick tips can help any amateur serve up appetizing imagery to their audience. One of the best resources a rookie photographer can have is advice from an accomplished photographer.

I am a professional commercial and lifestyle photographer and the co-founder, photographer and set stylist of Little Rusted Ladle (www.littlerustedladle.com). I can't wait to dig in and share my knowledge with you!

HI, I'M JENA

THE OWNER AND PHOTOGRAPHER FOR LITTLE RUSTED LADLE

Food and Lifestyle photography is my heart! I have been honing my skills in food photography for many years; I worked under some of the best food photographers around, and used these experiences to cultivate my own signature style.

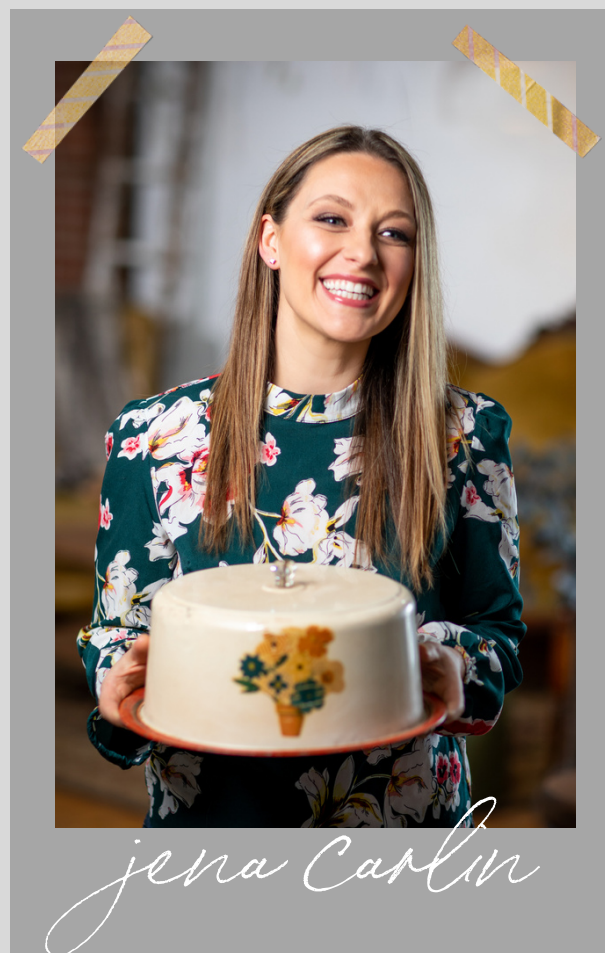
I have a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in studio painting with a Minor in photography. In my senior year, I got an internship at one of the largest food photography studios in the nation, Reader's Digest, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. While there, we worked on magazines such as Taste of Home, Everyday with Rachael Ray, and many more!

My work is now featured both in print and on websites such as Martha Stewart, Kohls, Maurices, Sift Magazine, and others.

I live in the middle of Wisconsin in dairy farm country with the three boys who stole my heart: my husband Brandon and my children Austin and Elijah. When I am not crafting or photographing gorgeous food, you can most likely find me spending time with my family and of course, prop shopping.

Are we Instagram friends yet? If not, **find me here**. I'd love to see what you are sharing and connect!

See my full bio [here](#) for more information.





YOUR JOURNEY TO BETTER FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

Starts Here!

I find the four most essential elements of food photography to be: lighting, subject, composition, and styling. While each is important, none can stand alone. Combining all four elements along with the right tools is what separates amateurs from professionals.

- 01 EMBRACING YOUR LIGHT
- 02 KNOWING YOUR SUBJECT
- 03 COMPOSING YOUR IMAGE
- 04 STYLING THE SET
- 05 ESSENTIAL TOOLS





Food Styling by Jim Rude

01

Embracing Your

Light

Beautiful results can be achieved with the help of natural light, even on a limited budget. Find a window or patio door that lets in diffused light, or, you can create diffused light yourself using white sheer curtains in lieu of professional materials. Decide early on what's the best placement for your subject in the light so that the food, props and surface textures are enhanced.

To maximize depth, try a light source to the side or behind the subject.

Basic white or black foam-core or poster board is essential in any lighting set up. Place them strategically around your set; on the opposite side of your light, use white foam-core to open shadows and black foam-core to deepen shadows. Other items to have on hand to manipulate light are mirrors and silver or gold reflective paper. I use mirrors to redirect light back into the set from different angles, to highlight different areas on the subject. Reflective paper is used in the same way as the mirror, but provides a more subtle effect.



The light coming from camera
back left scrapes across the set


accentuating
the pizzas' fresh toppings.

Knowing Your

Subject

Photograph something interesting if you have the opportunity. Remember, the goal is to elicit powerful responses like, “Wow, I want to eat that right now!” Or better yet, “I am making that tonight!” Examine your subject from every angle for the shot, concentrating on what makes this particular dish appealing or unique. Try an overhead, a straight-on, and a three-quarters view to start with. Determine which of the three angles (or somewhere in-between) best suits your dish.





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Food Styling by Jim Rude

After capturing the main view of this Best Ever Apple Cake* looking straight on, I honed in on a piece at a three-quarters view, choosing the back for its best angle. This gave me the “wow factor” of the gooey camel texture to add to the audience’s experience.

It’s important to remember that food can lose its luster when sitting out too long. To avoid this, use a “stand in” dish of equal color and height to make your composition on set. When the set is finally ready, bring in the real dish, often called “the hero,” and be quick on the camera trigger. Work with a food stylist, if possible.

If you’re styling the food yourself, here are few essential food styling tools to have on hand:

- Assorted paint brushes: to brush on glaze or sweep away unwanted crumbs
- Eyedropper: to place drips in just the right spots
- Spray bottle: to add water droplets or an oil glisten
- Tweezers: for minute tweaks

*Produced for Little Rusted Ladle, October 2014, www.littlerustedladle.com. Food styling by Jim Rude.



Sometimes, the

ingredients

are more alluring than the final product. In this instance, the veggies were more beautiful raw than after two weeks of soaking in vodka. Don't hesitate to use this for your feature.



Food Styling by Jim Rude


03

Composing your

Image

Familiarize yourself with the rule of thirds. Most camera viewfinders, and even camera phone apps, such as Instagram, display the four faint lines that break up the image into nine parts (i.e., the rule of thirds). A quick way to remember this is to think of a tic-tac-toe board and keep your main interest at the intersections of these points.

Use design elements such as line, shape, size, space, color, texture and value to create contrast, emphasis, proportion, pattern and gradient within your composition. Pinpoint an area of focus and utilize your foreground, mid-ground and background to create depth. Practice, practice, practice! With trial and error, you will develop an artistic eye and your own sense of style.



Here is a terrific example of
creating a *focal point*
utilizing foreground, midground
and background!



See the beauty in what you are capturing; zoom in for details of not only the food, but of unique props, side dishes and anything else that catches your eye on set to tell the story.



Food Styling by Jim Rude


04 The Set

Styling

This is my favorite! Tell a story; create a mood by choosing appropriate backgrounds, surfaces and props that accentuate your recipe. You become the artist by being mindful of color, texture, balance and shapes, and the positive and negative spaces they create in your image. I paint a lot of my own surfaces and backgrounds for my projects.

The walls of my prop room are lined with antiques. I have a particular affinity for rustic wood, tattered fabric, oxidized metal, handmade dishes and anything with chipped paint.

Feel free to experiment and discover your own personal style!

A top-down photograph of several artisan baguettes arranged on a dark, textured wooden surface. The baguettes are nestled in a piece of light-colored, crumpled fabric. One baguette on the left is braided, while the others are traditional loaves, some topped with seeds. A thin wire is tied around the middle of the baguettes. A semi-transparent circular overlay on the right contains text.

The moody lighting, soft fabric
and warm wood surface tie in
perfectly for staging these
artisan baguettes.



05

Essential

Tools

Other than beautiful food and good lighting, there are a few tools and methods that elevate my work. Get all the details in the following pages.

01 RESEARCH

02 PHOTOGRAPHY GEAR

03 PROPS AND TEXTURES



Be inspired by the world of food photography! Buy cookbooks, subscribe to magazines, follow food photography blogs such as Little Rusted Ladle, create inspiring mood boards on Pinterest ([here is mine](#)). Discover what you like best about other people's work. Dissect the image to figure out how they created it and try to apply the concepts to your own photography. Look at a handful of your favorite images that you have created. Make a list of words that describe the images and mood. Narrow it down to your top three words and invest in the concept of those words to capture your style.

Research



*Produced for Little Rusted Ladle, January 2015, www.litterustedladle.com.

Food Styling by Jim Rude



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

This is the equipment/gear I use for my work:

2 Canon 5D MarkIV

Canon 100mm 2.8 Macro Lens

Canon 85mm 1.2 Lens

Canon 35mm 1.4 Lens

Sigma Art 50mm 1.4 Lens

Color Balance Card

Tripod

Pocket Wizards

Profoto D1 500/500/1000 Air 3 Light Studio Kit for Flash Photography

Aputure Light Storm LS C300d II LED Light Kit (V-Mount) for continuous lighting

Aputure Light Dome II Studio Reflector Softbox Bowens Mount with Diffuser for continuous lighting

Apple Box Set x2 (props)

Photography Gear



Food Styling by Jim Rude



At my studio I LOVE to organize my props by color. Who wouldn't, right?! This is a great way to be able to visualize what areas you might be a little thin on. This will help you to narrow down what you need when you are out prop shopping.

If storing props is an issue for you like it has been for me in the past, try staging and displaying them as a collection or artwork. This is my favorite way to showcase props!

You can see samples from around my studio on the blog [here](#) and you can see more of that on my studio tour post [here](#).

Etsy, TJ Maxx, World Market, Anthropologie, Target, Amazon, JoAnn Fabrics, antique stores, flea markets, estate sales and secondhand stores just to name a few.

Props and Textures



Produced for Little Rustic Ladle



Ready to

Learn More?

We have big plans here at Little Rusted Ladle to expand our photography education for our loyal readers, our friends (that's you).

If you are tired of

- flat images
- self-doubt
- not knowing what to charge
- how to promote your work

and want to know how to

- create mood in your images with daylight and flash lighting
- style with more intent
- go into a job with confidence

So my question is:

Are you serious about learning the art of food photography?

Keep an eye on your inbox, more details coming soon plus plenty more photography tips and yummy recipes!



Food Styling by Jim Rude



**APPLY NOW FOR A
SPECIAL TRAINING &
OPPORTUNITIES TO
WORK WITH ME**



www.littlerustedladle.com/apply

*THANK
YOU &
KEEP
CREATING!*

Little rusted
LADLE
by *jena carlin*

