



Photography: Joanie Simon

The Food Photographer's Guide to Tethering



Introduction

Food photography is on the rise. Food photography isn't new, but we need it now more than ever before because so many of us are having food delivered. People need to see what they're going to get, right? And with so many food and lifestyle bloggers out there, it seems like we look at as many online images of food as we do cats.

Ever wonder how both national chain restaurants and your local deli are posting gorgeous food shots on their Instagram accounts? We know national chains hire professional food photographers, but your local deli is likely taking shots themselves. Why does their Reuben sandwich look so darn good? They likely have the right tethering tools.

Using tethering gear, professional and amateur food photographers can shoot with their cameras connected to a computer for instant uploading. With the right cables, power, and enough creativity, tethering gives photographers almost unlimited flexibility to quickly and beautifully get that perfect food shot.

First, let's spend a moment diving into what food photography is and how it's different from other types of photography, such as product photography.

What Food Photography Is and Why It Isn't Considered Product Photography

While there seems to be a lot of overlap between product and food photography, they're somewhat different worlds.

The most important difference for photographers is that food photography is more editorial than commercial product photography. Commercial images exist to convince people to take action—to buy, eat, or do something—and when it comes to food, editorial shots are the way to go, while product photography is more calculated.



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"Tethering is an embedded part of my workflow, so to take tethering away, I would feel out of sorts. It makes my life a lot easier because nothing drives me crazier than rework or having to reshoot something. That's the worst! Tethering is how I prevent that [reshooting] from happening and save time in the long run."

-Joanie Simon

A food photographer is like a free-spirited cook, adding in a little of this and a little of that to get that beautifully unique editorial shot that will make people really want to eat that lasagna. Or double cheeseburger. Or gorgeous strawberry salad.

In other words, product photography is more like a science, like baking a soufflé, while food photography is more of an art, like creating delicious tacos.

When Enticing Food Photography Is a Must

Food photography is everywhere. On social media, amateurs turn into expert food photographers. They spend so much time shooting their evening's dinner that the food gets cold.

The types of projects that need food photography can range from something relatively short-term and simple that maybe even an amateur can do to something with complex long-term branding that requires the eye of an experienced pro.

Projects that require food photography include:



ANY AND ALL TYPES OF FOOD BLOGGING

It's crucial to inspire readers into making a recipe, whether your blog has 30 followers or 30,000.



MAGAZINE COVERS

Ever walked by a magazine and just stopped to look at the perfectly decorated cake on the cover or that mouthwatering leg brisket, perfect for the holidays? Those are food images that shoppers can't resist picking up.



ALL DIGITAL FOOD BRANDING

It's a crowded digital world, especially when it comes to food. Content creators are always looking for new ways to make their food images stand out.



RESTAURANTS

Customers vet everything online these days, from dentists to car dealerships. Restaurants are no different, and they can really up their game with a killer website. But those signature dishes need to look perfect to entice customers to make a reservation.



COOKBOOKS

What's the first thing you look at when you pick up a cookbook? The end-result photos.



MARKETING MATERIALS

This includes menus, store displays, advertising, and packaging.

How to Become the Food Photographer You Dream About

Now that you know more about what food photography is, how it differs from other photography, and how tethering can help you get to the top of your game, put some of this advice and information to good use.

See how tethering can help you get that perfect shot for your food blog, or how you can amaze a client by letting them provide live feedback as you shoot. When it comes to food photography, tethering isn't just nice to have anymore—it has become a must.



Why Tethering and Food Photography Go Hand in Hand

When you think of creating amazing food photography images, it really comes down to composition, planning, and lighting. Being able to use a tethered setup means you know that you will always have the shot and can test the scene to ensure everything is ready before you bring the food into the picture.

Tethering can help shorten your shoot time so your images are captured when the food looks its best. Plus, once you have your tethered setup ready to go, it makes taking different shots from different angles much easier than you might think.



How Tethering Helps with the Delivery Demand on Food Photography

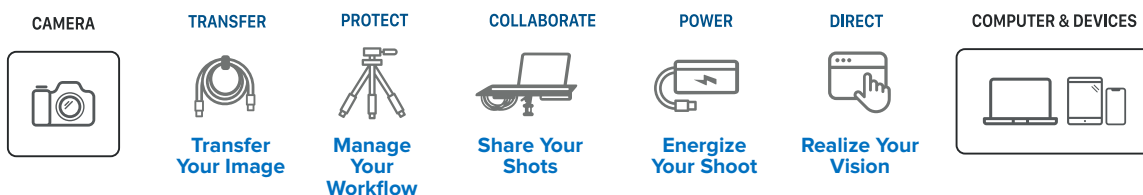
Most of us have used a food delivery service in the past few years, and their popularity isn't going away anytime soon. Gone are the days of calling for pizza delivery and waiting for a car to magically pull up. These days, restaurant and food delivery apps literally give you GPS access to track your driver—and of course, the apps have great images of food.

For big chain restaurants, it's not a problem. They already have professional images of their food on their menu or even the restaurant's own app. But for the independent, mom-and-pop restaurants, there's suddenly a lot of pressure when taking a shot of the daily special. Customers and audiences today are more sophisticated. They will bypass a blurry picture of a great Cuban sandwich for a lovely shot of a lesser-quality Cuban sandwich.

Restaurant owners and managers don't have to hire food photographers—though we certainly wouldn't discourage it! But cell phone cameras have come a long way, and the right tethering tools paired with some good photography advice (ahem!) can turn a professional restaurateur into a pretty decent food photographer.

Perfect Your Process

Tethering simplifies workflows so you can place focus on your subject.



How This Professional Food Photographer and Educator Uses Tethering

Photographers who are accustomed to tethering don't know what they'd do without it. For them, it's not a thing they have to do; it's just part of their workflow.



Joanie Simon is an expert food photographer who you may know from her photography courses on [The Bite Shot](#), her [YouTube tutorials](#), or her [Instagram](#) account that is filled with gorgeous food shots. She also literally wrote the book about food photography (*Picture Perfect Food: Master the Art of Food Photography with 52 Bite-Sized Tutorials*) and is kind of a big deal when it comes to shooting food.



"Way back when before blogging was super cool, I lived in New York for a while and was eating out at a lot of cool restaurants and wanted to share the food with my family back home in Arizona. I had my little point-and-shoot camera and was running around to restaurants in New York and just creating content online—and I think that my millennial self just loves to put information out on the internet."



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When she advises others about shooting food, she notes how important tethering is when talking about what equipment she uses. She talks about tethering not as some extra thing she does or some additional step. She uses tethering as part of her workflow.

Pro Tip: What Joanie Simon has to say about the Onsite Relay C Camera Power System: "Onsite Relay with constant power is my favorite thing; If you take it away, I get upset. We're shooting for a lot of long hours and I don't want to deal with batteries. I'm plugged in and ready to rock all day long."

-Joanie Simon

How Tethering Benefits Food Photography

We've identified the top benefits that tethering works into a photoshoot setup and workflow if you are a food photographer.

1 FREEDOM

Photographers can create images for brands all over the world in the comfort of their own studio. They're able to work more directly with brands and marketing agencies, including food brands.

2 QUALITY

Because an LCD screen on the back of a camera is so small, shooting tethered inside a restaurant allows the photographer to know they have tack-sharp focus on their image.

3 WORKFLOW

Tethering prevents the photographer from having to reshoot and save times in the long run. It makes life a lot easier.

4 VERSATILITY/ MOBILITY

The real power is in live view. Social media is a popular avenue for photographers to record themselves behind the scenes. Strong composition is also important. Food photographers who shoot editorial style images, negative space is critical.

What a Tethered Food Photography Scene Looks Like

The Studio

Consumers are savvier, cameras are better, and in the studio, the trend is getting real food at its most pristine. (Forget the days of using glue as cereal milk. Today's consumer wants real milk.) A high-quality camera tethered to a large screen can check live view and focus, and the setup is ready to capture food at its best.

On Location

When you're on location, it's all about perspective and power. The majority of the job is successfully capturing the atmosphere and the energy of whatever space you're in. For instance, in a restaurant there might be fire in the background or a bar with retro booths—it's all about accurately portraying the atmosphere, and tethering frees photographers to best do that, while also providing a case relay system so you never miss a shot.



Flat Lay

Flat lay, or overhead shots, aren't going anywhere anytime soon; not as long as Instagram and other social networks exist. To get the perfect shot, an overhead mount with a tethered monitor is clutch. This is what your friends on Facebook are doing to get those amazing shots of the TikTok dinner recipe their family loved.

Quick Content

Use a point-and-shoot camera with a wireless connection for quick social sharing and a tethered microphone for a video component. It's not high budget, but it is high volume. This is what your local deli is doing with the daily special.

Atmosphere

Use tethering to set the scene, filling space with ambience, including people, kitchen gadgets, tables, props, and textures. Think of a shot of a dinner party with shabby-chic decor, eclectic glassware, and antique light fixtures or a VIP section of an upscale restaurant complete with bottles of champagne, modern lighting, and plenty of cool cocktail glasses.



How to Use Tethering to Elevate Your Food Customers' Experience

The freedom, versatility, quality, and mobility that tethering brings to your food photography workflow help elevate your customers' experience.

Connecting with—and Marketing to—Global Clients

Creating food shots for a client across the world? No problem. Want to show a prospective client how the technique you used to shoot food outdoors would work perfectly for their cookbook? You can do it in a snap. Tethering allows you to sync your shots with clients just about anywhere—even if you're in the U.S. and they're in Tokyo or London or even just an hour away.

Getting Real-Time Feedback to Prevent Reshoots

With food photography, sometimes it takes a lot of work to make the recipe, and the cook won't want to recreate it. Reshoots are timely and expensive. If you can get real-time feedback from your client on shoots as they happen, nobody has to do it twice. Tweaks and pivots can be made during the shoot.

Establishing and Scaling Your Own Brand

Tutorials, video, podcasts, social media, blogs—the food world has so many connections. Being flexible and showing up tethered and ready to go is impressive to potential clients. You'll not only help create your own unique brand, but you'll also grow it.



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Create Your System

Configure a tethered workflow with the gear that's right for your food photography business.

TRANSFER



TetherPro USB Cables

PROTECT



StrapMoore

COLLABORATE



Tether Table Aero &
Rock Solid Tripod Roller

POWER



Onsite Relay C Camera
Power System

DIRECT



Smart Shooter 4



TETHERPRO USB CABLES

- ❑ **TetherPro USB Cables** - Connect your camera directly to your computer for fast and reliable transfers.



STRAPMOORE

- ❑ **StrapMoore** - Attach to the leg of any tripod or stand to secure handy items such as a power brick, external hard drive, or transmitters and receivers.



TETHER TABLE AERO & ROCK SOLID TRIPOD ROLLER

- ❑ **Tether Table Aero & Rock Solid Tripod Roller** - This pair provides food photographers with a stable, portable tethering platform, perfect for daily studio use and the ideal out-of-studio workspace.



ONSITE RELAY CAMERA POWER SYSTEM



SMART SHOOTER

■ **ONsite Relay Camera**

Power System - Continually power your camera without interruption. This system provides power while being connected to an external power source.

- **Smart Shooter** - This digital photography workflow application is perfect for tethered shooting, remote capture, and advanced camera control.

Learn more about tethering by checking out even more [food photography information](#), including gaining access to professional photographers who can offer you valuable advice.

Already want a tethering setup so you can get started?

Call 888-854-6565 or email

customersupport@tethertools.com

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