



Biography Emma Boyns

- Emma works as a freelance photographer and as *BBC Good Food's* house Photographer. She is passionate about food and everything food-related, often styling her own images and cooking and baking daily. Emma won the Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year's *BBC Good Food Fresh Talent Award 2017*. She had two short films highly commended in the same competition and has also been a finalist in several others. www.emmaboyns.co.uk



[PROJECT 6]

Pro's challenge Fast food

*Award-winning food photographer
Emma Boyns shares how she
liven's up her restaurant shots*

THERE'S nothing better than communicating the energy I feel when in a restaurant, whether that's in the kitchen at service time or in the bustling dining area. I feel that's important because often completely static photographs of dishes fail to show the atmosphere of the kitchen. In a full restaurant at peak service

time, there are several staff members cooking, plating and moving around each other, in an unorganised yet seamless dance. I love to show the food and process of making a plate, while also communicating this chaos.

The easiest way to do this is to add some blur into the photograph. For this, steady your camera on a tripod or available surface and focus on a scene that will have both still elements and some movement. For example, in a shot of a chef adding the finishing touches to a dish, the dish remains still but perhaps the chef's hand moves as it sprinkles some salt over or adds a drizzle of oil.

To achieve blur in the right place, make sure your shutter speed is fairly slow. Somewhere below 1/30 sec will start to add blur to the moving elements, and the more you reduce the shutter speed, the more these elements become blurred. If reducing the shutter speed overexposes the image, balance it out by reducing the ISO and/or aperture.

Practically speaking, shooting in restaurants can be more challenging than other photography environments; using a tripod during busy periods can present a health and safety hazard and photographing in the midst of the action can be a

hassle, and hazard, for the kitchen team. I deal with these obstacles by using available surfaces, such as empty tables and clear kitchen counters, to put my camera on or balance myself against.

I also always make sure the staff know to tell me if I'm ever in their way and I make my presence known if I'm ever nearby or behind them to avoid accidents. Some chefs I've photographed think I'm only after shots of the food and tend to steer clear or apologise when entering the shot, so it can be good to explain that some action and interaction with the ingredients and dishes can actually take a shot to the next level.

Before shooting at a restaurant or other food establishment, I like to make a list of photographs I want to take or scenes I want to capture. With *Silo* in Brighton, for example, I wanted to show how diverse the place is; not only does it sell exceptional omnivore and vegetarian/vegan mains, it also has a great bakery, brilliant coffees, and unique botanical drinks. I also knew that I wanted its zero-waste ethos to be a central focus. But your plan doesn't have to be that complex: just ensure you know what you want to get, so you don't walk away thinking "I wish I'd captured that."



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