



The Instagram Takeover

With countless posts and accounts dedicated entirely to food, it's safe to say that Instagram is strongly influencing the culinary industry—but is its impact positive?

By Phoebe Ollerearnshaw

It's official; we love to share our food—not in the physical sense of course. The way that we consume food through the media has changed dramatically over the last decade. Before, one may have relied on word of mouth or reviews found in the paper to make a restaurant selection. Now, the internet is awash with food blogs and Instagram accounts that spurt posts about the hottest culinary spots. Snaps of enviable meals and mouthwatering snacks provide users with a visceral experience like no other. Considering the way that we share and discuss food online nowadays, one could even describe it as a sort of modern-day social currency. But, as with any popular platform, there are supporters and, inevitably, there are haters.

The debate

On one side of the coin are the Instagram lovers: they rejoice at the arrival of a

beautiful plate of food by whipping out their smartphone. Hungry for approval, they'll have shared their filter-gilded image before their fellow diners have even taken their first mouthful. On the flip side lie the resisters: those who believe that Instagram is ruining social interaction and generally dampening the dining experience. They shudder at the thought of taking a photo of their meal in a public space.

Style over substance?

The worry expressed by many foodies is that social media is making people lose sight of what's important: the taste. A drool-worthy picture is all well and good, but if it doesn't deliver in terms of flavour, what's the point? Similarly, the same individuals believe that over-sharing is quashing originality, with repetitive posts creating a culinary monotony. Meanwhile, avid Instagrammers believe that the platform inspires creativity and gives everybody a chance to exhibit. •

Prize-worthy tips for the Perfect Food Snap

- **Focus on the food.** Steady your phone to avoid shaking and focus on the most enticing detail.
- **Compose the photo.** Although Instagram now allows for vertical and horizontal images, square is still the default. Take a moment to frame your shot and use the rule of thirds.
- **Fill the frame.** Get close to your subject.
- **Shoot in natural light.** It will allow for more nuances than a photo taken with flash.
- **Think like a food stylist.** Ruffle some napkins, play around with cutlery or add some extra garnish.
- **Try a different angle.** Stand up and take a flat lay, or duck down to meet your plate at an angle.
- **Use an app.** Colour-correct images, but don't go overboard with filters and brightness.



Pasty Interiors

It's not just food that has been affected by Instagram; it's also the restaurants serving it. 'Instagrammable' décor is now a key factor in restaurant schemes and is often part of the brief for interior designers. Sketch, located in London's Mayfair district, is a prime example of this. While their interior scheme may not have been created with Instagram in mind, it has certainly become a haven for individuals fishing for likes. The all-pink interior, designed by David Shrigley, has become a sensation whilst the pod-like toilets are iconic within themselves. Although fine dining is still largely resisting the Instagram hype, we are left to wonder whether it too will conform.



The Professionals

While most people who share their photos on Instagram are amateurs, a sizeable and very profitable industry has arisen from the platform. Enter the professional food bloggers. These seasoned fanatics are steering the trends and setting the tone for the entire aesthetic movement. Below is what they have to say about the impact of 'the gram'.

plantbased_pixie



♥ 1,831 likes

plantbased_pixie I think problems arise when people spend so long trying to get a good picture—it ruins the food and disturbs the people around them

mondomulia



♥ 1,611 likes

mondomulia Food has been the subject of art and photography for a long time. What's happened is that Instagram has given us the tools to easily take, edit and share photos to a wide audience

eatnlondon



♥ 1,325 likes

eatnlondon There are so many excellent dish creators out there whose work should be seen by more people, so I agree that the way it supports amateurs is very inspirational