

Making Everything Easier!™

Food Blogging

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Find your voice and your niche in the food blogosphere
- Enhance your blog with superb design and photography
- Make your recipes searchable and connect your blog to social media

IN FULL COLOR!

Kelly Senyei

Creator of the blog JustaTaste.com



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Food Blogging For Dummies®

Visit

**www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/foodblogging
to view this book's cheat sheet.**

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[About Food Blogging For Dummies](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[What You Don't Have to Read](#)

[How This Book Is Organized](#)

[Part I: Whetting Your Appetite](#)

[Part II: Finding Your Voice](#)

[Part III: The Soup to Nuts of Design](#)

[Part IV: Eating with Your Eyes](#)

[Part V: Marketing and Monetization](#)

[Part VI: The Part of Tens](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

[Part I: Whetting Your Appetite](#)

[1: The Many, The Proud](#)

Assessing the Food Blogosphere

Food blogging on the rise

Surveying the scene

Making your move

Understanding the Varied Roles of Food Bloggers

Meeting Your Fellow Food Bloggers

Setting Yourself Up for Success

Finding your niche

Owning your voice

Six tips for sweet success

2: Finding Your Niche

Starting with a Spark

Streamlining your foodie interests

Identifying what makes you different from other food bloggers

Building your food blog skills

Joining the Food Blogging Community

Knowing Your Audience

Writing Your Own Recipe for Success

The Secret Sauce for Naming Your Blog

Brainstorming your way to a name

Gauging instant reactions

3: Setting Up Shop

Registering and Hosting Your Blog

Registering your domain

Selecting a web host

Choosing a Blogging Platform

Knowing your blogging software options

Installing your blogging software

Claiming Your Social Media Space

Benefiting from social media

Strategizing your social media approach

Part II: Finding Your Voice

4: Is This Thing On?

Finding Your Voice

Making a good first impression

Setting the tone

Mastering Good Food Writing

Descriptions

The basics

The Power of Going Public

Ranting and raving

Publishing your first blog post

Food Blog Legalese 101

Protecting your content
Being credible, not a copycat

5: Setting Your Content Menu

Defining the Content on Your Blog

Brainstorming blog post ideas
Engaging your audience

Writing and Creating Recipes Organizing Your Content

Creating categories and subcategories
Understanding pages versus posts
Gauging content and time commitments

6: Branding Your Blog through Consistency and Frequency

Envisioning You and Your Blog as a Brand

Creating consistency
Branding your blog

Establishing Your Style Guide

Post length
Attribution
Images
Links

[Recipes](#)

[General grammar and spelling](#)

[Inserting Visuals into Posts](#)

[Focusing on Frequency](#)

[Implementing a posting schedule](#)

[Deciding what days to post](#)

[Part III: The Soup to Nuts of Design](#)

[7: The Lay of the Land](#)

[Extreme Makeover: Food Blog Edition](#)

[Making the best first impression](#)

[Blogging templates for beginners](#)

[Utilizing a custom template](#)

[Beautifying Your Blog](#)

[Selecting a color palette](#)

[Determining font size, style, and contrast](#)

[Designing your header](#)

[Embracing negative space](#)

[Steering clear of common errors in design](#)

[8: Your Blog's Roadmap](#)

[Understanding Navigation Essentials](#)

[Establishing your home page](#)

[Crafting your About page](#)

[Creating a Contact page](#)

[Claiming Your Blog's Prime Real Estate](#)

[Mapping out your blog above the fold](#)

[Mapping out your blog below the fold](#)

[Getting social or getting lost \(literally\).](#)

[Inviting Readers to Have a Voice](#)

[Adjusting your comment settings](#)

[Establishing comment guidelines](#)

[9: Getting Your Garnish On](#)

[Exploring the Wide World of Widgets](#)

[Implementing widgets](#)

[Going beyond basic widgets](#)

[Displaying badges and buttons](#)

[Creating Your Own Blog Garnish](#)

[Hyperlinking a graphic](#)

[Memorizing common HTML tags](#)

[Building your blogroll](#)

[Part IV: Eating with Your Eyes](#)

[10: Food Photography Basics](#)

[Developing Your Photo Style](#)

[Starting with the Fundamentals](#)

[Seeing the bigger, clearer picture](#)
[Shooting in Manual mode](#)
[Putting on the “manual” training wheels](#)
[Wanted: Depth of field](#)

[Sticking to the Basic Photography Rules](#)

[Obeying the Rule of Thirds](#)
[Composing the perfect shot](#)
[Gaining perspective](#)
[Paying attention to backgrounds](#)

[Seeing the \(Natural and Artificial\) Light](#)

[11: Gathering Your Equipment and Tools](#)

[Knowing Your Camera Options](#)

[Camera phones](#)
[Point-and-shoot cameras](#)
[dSLR cameras](#)

[Building Your Studio](#)

[Enhancing your light](#)
[Repurposing household items](#)
[Freeing up your hands](#)

[Assembling Your Food-Styling Toolkit](#)

[12: Styling and Photographing Food](#)

[Finding Your Style](#)

[Going au naturale](#)
[Faking your food](#)

[Food Styling Like the Pros](#)

[Timing your process](#)
[Speeding up your process](#)

[The Power of Propping](#)

[Choosing props with a purpose](#)
[Orchestrating the extras](#)

[Constructing Your Setup](#)
[Photographing Food in Restaurants](#)
[Using Free Programs to Edit Your Photos](#)

[Typical editing tasks](#)
[Assessing free editor options](#)

[Part V: Marketing and Monetization](#)

[13: \(Super\) Marketing](#)

[Envisioning Your Blog as a Brand](#)
[Becoming Your Own Publicist](#)
[Sharing Your Content](#)

[Feeding your readers' cravings](#)
[Promoting your visual content](#)

[The Ins and Outs of SEO](#)

[Clueing in to keywords](#)

[Giving and getting link love](#)

[Interacting Online and Offline](#)

[Building community](#)

[Meeting and greeting bloggers offline](#)

[Tracking Your Progress](#)

[Implementing a statistics tracker](#)

[Decoding basic blog statistics](#)

[14: Bringing Home the Bacon](#)

[\(Reality\) Check, Please!](#)

[Making the Most of Your Content](#)

[Tapping into the Ad World](#)

[Evaluating the impact of ads](#)

[Putting profits in perspective](#)

[Keeping the Control with Direct Advertising](#)

[Joining an Ad Network](#)

[Google AdSense](#)

[PlateFull](#)

[BlogHer advertising network](#)

[Federated Media Publishing](#)

[Foodbuzz Featured Publisher program](#)

[Interacting with Sponsors](#)

[Establishing effective relationships with sponsors](#)

[Giving and taking with giveaways](#)

[Diversifying Your Online Portfolio](#)

[Squeezing income from your skill set](#)

[Opening up shop](#)

[Accepting Swag without Selling Out](#)

[Part VI: The Part of Tens](#)

[15: Ten Things to Know before Starting Your Food Blog](#)

[Match Your Blog Name to Your URL](#)

[Look into Self-Hosting Your Blog](#)

[Embrace Editing](#)

[Log Your Ideas and Inspirations](#)

[Get Social Early in the Game](#)

[Know Your Free Resources](#)

[Blog with a Conscience](#)

[Let You Be You](#)

[Avoid an Obsession with the Numbers](#)

[Back Up Your Blog](#)

[16: The Ten Hardest Foods to Photograph](#)

[Beef Stew](#)

[Hummus](#)

[Raw Meat](#)

[Melted Cheese](#)

[Oatmeal](#)

[Ice Cream](#)

[Chocolate Pudding](#)

[Meatloaf](#)

[Poached or Fried Eggs](#)

[Enchiladas](#)

[Cheat Sheet](#)

Food Blogging For Dummies[®]

by Kelly Senyei



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About the Author

Kelly Senyei is a multimedia food journalist, stylist, photographer, and chef. She joined the food blogosphere in 2008 with the launch of her blog, Just a Taste (www.justataste.com), which chronicles her culinary musings tied to everything from easy appetizers and creative cocktails, to quick-fix meals and endless desserts. Kelly is a big proponent of keeping things light in life (and she's not talking about calories) and was motivated to launch her blog to share her family's rich recipe history.

After receiving her master's degree in broadcast television from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, she joined the editorial team at FoodNetwork.com as an intern, where she wrote features and blogged on Food2.com. Unable to quiet her longstanding desire to attend culinary school, she enrolled in the Culinary Arts diploma program at The Institute of Culinary Education (ICE), where she conceptualized and launched the school's first official blog, DICED. For seven months, she photographed and blogged about every intricate detail of life as a culinary student, and in 2010, she received the People's Choice Award for Food Photography by the International Association of Culinary Professionals.

Kelly graduated with highest honors from ICE and honed her culinary skills by externing in the Food Network Kitchens, where she cross-tested recipes, prepared food for photo shoots and TV productions, and had the lucky chance to cook in a practice battle of *Iron Chef America* (the secret ingredient was popcorn!). She was then invited to join Condé Nast in reimagining the iconic *Gourmet* magazine in digital form. Kelly presently works as the Associate Editor of *Gourmet Live* writing

articles for the app and Gourmet.com, managing the brand's blog and social media presence, and art directing and prop styling for photo shoots.

Through her work at *Gourmet Live*, Kelly has interviewed everyone from Eric Ripert and Tom Colicchio to Wolfgang Puck and Frank Bruni. She's also written in depth about the topics of cooking in the 1800s, nocturnal sleep-related eating disorder, the frozen yogurt fallacy, extreme couponing, low-carb diets, kitchen traumas, and more.

Kelly makes regular, expert appearances in all types of food media and has spoken at BlogHer Food and Food Blog Forum. Her work is featured on *Gourmet Live*, NBC, FoodNetwork.com, Glamour.com, and Food2.com. When not busy keeping up with the latest food media news and trends, she can be found in her New York City apartment, experimenting with ingredients and creating recipes.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my family, who are the most loving, supportive, and hilarious people I know.

Author's Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge my family — Mom, Dad, Alison, Grant, Grandmom, and Julio. Thank you all for breathing life and inspiration into Just a Taste and into me. I cannot thank you enough for your patience over these past six months and for your constant encouragement to pursue my greatest passion. You are all my eternal support system on speed dial, and for that — and for keeping me well-caffinated — I am forever grateful.

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Without each and every one of you, *Food Blogging For Dummies* would not be a reality. I raise a glass to toast to you, that you all may enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

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Introduction

Food blogging. Five years ago those words carried little weight in both the culinary and digital worlds. There were plenty of food writers, and even more bloggers, but there were very few who actually combined the two crafts. What began as a handful of tastemakers who took their ideas to the web has since evolved into an epicurean explosion whereby food enthusiasts of every age and every skill set can lend their voice in text and visuals (or should I say victuals?) to a community growing at an unforeseen pace.

Where would anyone be without the invention of food blogs? A few things are certain: You'd never have witnessed the proliferation of cake pops. You'd never have read the first blog-to-book cookbook. You'd never have experienced food porn in all its hi-res digital glory.

This book is for anyone who has a love of food, and an even bigger love of sharing their food experiences with others. I designed this book as a resource that's hopefully entertaining. After all, you're blogging about food, not nuclear fission. I'll warn you that I'm not afraid of a good food pun to help convey a point (and luckily — or unluckily — for you, I'm not short on them either).

About Food Blogging For Dummies

I'm the type of person who eats breakfast while daydreaming about lunch, and who digs in at dinner while strategizing about

dessert. If you love food as much as I do, chances are you also love sharing that passion with others.

Food Blogging For Dummies is the ultimate recipe for taking your passion from your kitchen to the World Wide Web. From strategizing your blog's name and designing an effective home page to editing your photos and making the most of social media, this book addresses all of the essential ingredients for creating and maintaining a successful food blog.

I begin by whetting your appetite with a look at the current state of the food blogosphere, which provides an insider's perspective of the robust online food blogging community bubbling with complementary and contrasting voices, visuals, opinions, and passions. Discover your place in the greater food blogosphere as you get your creative juices flowing.

Here's a sample of the tools and information included in the book, which will help you

- ✔ Set up the technical elements of your blog.
- ✔ Find your food niche while making the most of your layout and design.
- ✔ Determine your mix of content by evaluating a variety of post topics.
- ✔ Join the food community through online and offline interactions.
- ✔ Master the ins and outs of social media, marketing, and earning an income.
- ✔ Style, prop, and photograph food using resources you own already.

Foolish Assumptions

Everyone knows making assumptions is a bad idea. But because I'm writing a book on a topic as expansive as food blogging, I inevitably have to assume a few things about you, dear reader:

- ✓ You are interested in not only creating food-centric content, but also sharing that content with an online audience.
- ✓ You know what a blog is, but not how it is set up or maintained.
- ✓ You have access to the Internet and know how to surf the web.
- ✓ You like to eat (a lot).

Conventions Used in This Book

Conventions are a fancy way of saying that information presented to you in this book is done so consistently. When you see a term *italicized*, for example, look for its definition, which is provided so you can understand the meaning of the term in the context of food blogging. If step-by-step instructions are required to complete a process, they appear numbered with the actionable items designated in **bold**. And finally, all references to website addresses (or URLs) and e-mail addresses are in monofont so they're easily distinguished from plain text.

What You Don't Have to Read

I have written this book so that each chapter stands independent of the others, meaning you can scan and flip through to whichever topics interest you the most. You can also skip over any sidebars and stick to the main material, which provides insight for completing the task at hand or points you toward the next steps in a process.

How This Book Is Organized

Food Blogging For Dummies is divided into six parts. Although you don't have to read the chapters, or even the individual sections, in order, I advise you to stick to the chronological layout if you're really looking to build the ultimate food blog from the ground up.

Use the Table of Contents and the index for quick references to locate information about specific topics, and make sure you spend some time studying (or drooling over) all the colorful visuals in the book. In this section, I provide you with an appetizer-size version of each of the main parts.

Part I: Whetting Your Appetite

From preserving your family's food legacy on the web to kick-starting your culinary empire online, the motivations and goals for launching a food blog are vast and varied. Although some

may be in search of fame, fortune, or even a cookbook deal, others strive to simply establish their voice and create an online community of food-loving enthusiasts. Regardless of your aspirations, knowing who already dominates the digital space, finding your niche, and strategically setting up the backend of your blog are all critical aspects that should be thought about well before your first post ever goes from private to public.

Part II: Finding Your Voice

Just because photography plays such a critical role in the digital culinary scene doesn't mean good old, plain text should be pushed to the back-burner. Establishing your voice and fine-tuning the tone of your blog is an evolving process that includes setting your content menu while paying particular attention to consistency and frequency. Discover the power of going public with your content, plus get a primer in food blog legalese as you discover the sticky world of recipe copyright law.

Part III: The Soup to Nuts of Design

Where is the search bar? Who is this person? Why can't I leave a comment? If you want to lose readers, just leave them asking any of those questions. Although the content you publish is undoubtedly an important aspect of your food blog, the bottom line is this: The superficial stuff matters. Enter the fabulous world of layout and design, from polishing your blog's first impression to crafting a confusion-free roadmap for your readers. Get ready to get your garnish on.

Part IV: Eating with Your Eyes

One of the biggest draws to any popular food blog is the photographs. Although a recipe for a sour cream chocolate chip bundt cake can make a reader reach for the Preheat button, what's really going to lead them from his couch to his kitchen is the drool-worthy photo of a cake that looks so moist he can almost taste the half-melted chunks of bittersweet chocolate and tender morsels of cake while scrolling down the page. But not everyone has the resources, space, or time to splurge on a professional photography setup. Find out about the power of the point-and-shoot, the insider's guide to Food Styling 101, and how you can create your very own in-home studio without blowing your budget.

Part V: Marketing & Monetization

After the creative stuff is under control, focus on promoting and distributing your content while entertaining the options for making bank from your blog. Discover the strategic steps for maximizing your blog's rank in search engines, extending your brand, tracking your progress, and diversifying your sources of online income.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

It wouldn't be an iconic *For Dummies* book without the inclusion of the Part of Tens. In this part, I serve up two essential ten-tip guides. Chapter 15 discusses the ten things I wish I had known before starting my food blog (with the eleventh tip obviously being that someone had written a guide to prevent me from making those mistakes). Don't miss that chapter! Chapter 16 introduces you to ten of the hardest foods to photograph. Go face-to-face with the divas of the food world and figure out how