

How to make a food blog

Serves: Thousands

Preparation: A lifetime

Method: Gather an array of culinary experiences, choosing those that are fully ripe but still fresh – the more colourful the better. Add finely sieved talent that leans to the visual or verbal (but often stretches to both), and sprinkle with an inclination for opening one's heart to the world. Mix these three elements lightly but passionately for a deliciously readable dish

Words: Lucy Vanel

Illustration: Stephan Muntaner

Ask any food blogger how they started out and they'll laugh; for most, the way they fell into the job can't be explained or related to any one event. In a food blogger's mind, the question isn't "Why food?" but more "What would your life be like if you didn't blog about food?"

Clotilde Dusoulier, for example, began recording her gastronomic awakening upon return to her native France after a sojourn in San Francisco. Her blog, *Chocolat & Zucchini*, was one of the world's first about food, and became an instant international hit. Eight years, several wildly popular books and articles in every imaginable food magazine later, she muses: "If I never blogged, I would have still made the change

to something food related, even if it took a little bit longer. It's the kind of passion that would have eventually won over."

Whether it's recipes, beautiful images, nostalgic reminiscences, adventurous discoveries or restaurant reviews, food blogs are now everywhere and abide by no common rules. Some detail cookbook projects or catalogue foraging activities, while others follow taco trucks or wax lyrical about real burgers.

One might obsess on the practice of artisan bread baking, while another chronicles food history or attempts to capture a burgeoning food scene in a particular city.

Whatever their subject, however, an overriding passion for food oozes from the

prose and photos of these online pages.

"It has become part of our life – we can't imagine living without it," confirms Brussels-based food blogger Iris Debremaeker, to the sound of pots clinking in preparation for dinner. She also speaks for sister Els, who does the cooking while Iris handles the writing and photography for their blog *The Yummy Blog Sisters*. "We structure all of our spare time around it," she adds.

As a photographic subject, food is at once sexy, wholesome and nourishing. It can be taken as is, on a plate, cradled in the hand, stacked in piles, piped into glass containers, or barely cooked to emphasise freshness. It can be greased up, captured caked with native soil, splattered in patterns, propped up in place for still life, and absorbed in

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Anti-clockwise: Sandra Salerno's blog led to her opening a cooking school. Strawberry tart baked by Salerno; Cauliflower becomes art on Liz Steinberg's blog Chez Liz



"A food blog is a place for a reader to indulge in a bit of gourmandise

does a fine restaurant appear with such clarity of vision," enthused *Time Out*.

Ideally, a food blogger's passion resonates within the format, and it becomes an inviting respite for the reader – a place for us to indulge in a bit of gourmandise. For the bloggers, the project is a labour of love, a baby of sorts – a personal endeavour that may eventually be the nudge one needs

FR Recette pour blog culinaire

Rassemblez une large gamme de saveurs, ajoutez-y quelques fines couches de talent, parsemez d'un zeste de passion et d'ouverture au monde, et vous serez sans doute prêt à concourir votre blog culinaire. Rencontre de Lucy Vanel avec des blogueurs

Recettes, souvenirs, découvertes ou critiques gastronomiques... Les blogs culinaires sont partout. Quelle que soit la thématique, c'est avant tout une passion sans limite pour la gastronomie qui s'impose dans leurs pages en ligne. Dans l'esprit de ces blogueurs, la question n'est pas « Pourquoi la cuisine? » mais « Que serait la vie sans blog dédié à la cuisine? »

« C'est vraiment devenu une partie de notre vie et aujourd'hui, nous ne pourrions imaginer vivre sans », confirme Iris Debremaeker basée à Bruxelles, créatrice de *The Yummy Blog Sisters* avec sa sœur Els. « Tout notre temps libre, nous le consacrons à notre passion... »

« Démarrer mon blog m'a paru un processus naturel », dit Keiko Oikawa, fondatrice du blog *Nordjus* à Londres, récompensé pour la qualité de ses photographies. Elle reconnaît volontiers que cela l'a menée à une carrière de photographe « food et lifestyle ».

À Turin, la dynamique Sandra Salerno a acquis une renommée dans son pays, grâce à son blog *Un Tocco Di Zenzero*. Ce qui au départ avait pris la voie du journalisme freelance a connu de plus amples développements, jusqu'à la clé une école de cuisine et un service traiteur.

Le suédois Mikael Jonsson, quant à lui, est passé du blogging avec *Gastroville*, centré sur les meilleurs ingrédients locaux, à la restauration; il est à l'heure actuelle propriétaire et chef d'un nouvel établissement gastronomique, Hedone, à Londres. « Un blog culinaire offre un espace aux lecteurs qui aiment les plaisirs de bouche. Mais pour les blogueurs, le projet revêt la dimension d'un travail fait par amour et nécessité personnelle. Et il arrive qu'il se transforme en une entreprise plus vaste. L'Europe connaît une incroyable blogosphère culinaire, riche en saveurs; et ceux qui aiment vraiment leur sujet sont faciles à repérer. »

Lucy Vanel est blogueuse culinaire, professeur de cuisine, photographe et freelance à Lyon.

NL Recept voor eetblogs

Verzamel een waaier aan culinaire ervaringen, voeg zorgvuldig gezift talent toe en besprenkel met een vleugje hartverwarmende openheid voor de wereld en uw eetblog is klaar. Lucy Vanel sprak met de bloggers

Aan eetblogs met recepten, anekdotes, ontdekkingen, beoordelingen... geen gebrek. De onderwerpen zijn uiteenlopend, maar altijd getuigen de webpagina's van een onverzagbare passie voor gastronomie. Een eetblogger vraagt zich alleen dit af: "Wat is een blog zonder blog over eten?"

"Het is een deel van onszelf geworden, we kunnen gewoon niet meer zonder," bevestigt de Brusselse Iris Debremaeker, die met haar zus Els *The Yummy Blog Sisters* creëert. "Al onze vrije tijd kruipt hierin." "Een blog beginnen vond ik de natuurlijkste zaak ter wereld," zegt Keiko Oikawa, ontwerper van *Nordjus* de Londense, bekroonde eetblog met foto's. Ze geeft grif toe dat haar blog de aanleiding was voor een carrière in kook- en lifestylefotografie.

In Turin werd freelance-journalist Sandra Salerno een lokale ster dankzij haar eetblog *Un Tocco Di Zenzero*; maar later opende ze een koksschool en cateringzaak.

De Zweed Mikael Jonsson creëerde *Gastroville*, een blog over lokale ingrediënten, maar is nu eigenaar en chef-kok van toprestaurant Hedone, in Londen.

Op een eetblog doen lezers zich te goed aan een vleugje gourmandise. Voor de bloggers is hun project een kwestie van pure genietten – een proefproject dat de aanzet kan zijn om nog een stapje verder te gaan. Europa wemelt van de heerlijkste eetblogs; en de echte liefhebbers haal je er zo uit.

Lucy Vanel is eetblogger, kookleraar, fotograaf en freelance in Lyon.

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Food photography can be absorbed in an instant of vicarious pleasure by any reader the world over

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"Starting out felt a very natural process to me," says Keiko Oikawa, creator of the award-winning London-based food blog *Nordjus*, of her beginnings seven years ago. Her photographs are carefully composed but at the same time capture an original whimsical ambience, which some might say opened the floodgates for a new genre in food and lifestyle photography.

Through blogging, Oikawa slowly accumulated a portfolio, showing only her best work. She freely admits that this led to a career in food and lifestyle photography. Her advice to new food bloggers? "Try something original and establish your style."

In Turin, home of cooking school Eataly and the majestic culinary landscape of the Piedmont, enthusiast Sandra Salerno has made her way to local stardom with her popular food blog *Un Tocco Di Zenzero*. In Italian and bedecked with jewel-like photos, it initially took her down the freelance

journalism road, before it dawned on her to open a cooking school and catering business to transmit her philosophy: simplicity, quality and reproducibility.

"The biggest thing I'd be missing out on if I didn't blog is all my food-loving friends whom I first met online," says Liz Steinberg, of kosher vegetarian blog *Chez Liz*, based in Tel Aviv. Indeed, food bloggers will travel great distances to attend bloggers' conferences to make contact with fellow enthusiasts, as well as to learn, through workshops and seminars, how to break into their chosen industry.

For some, a slow, solitary process of setting one's life work in a culinary direction is chronicled in skips and jumps over time, translating to small businesses, professional certificates, catering operations or even restaurants. Swede Mikael Jonsson, formerly blogging about the best local ingredients to be found in England on *Gastroville*, is now owner and chef of new fine-dining establishment Hedone in London. "Rarely" >>

Blogger's delights

Hot eatery tips from online gastronomes



■ **Lucy Vanel, Lyon**
kitchen-notebook.blogspot.com
Loves: Le Café Cousu (19 Rue René Leynaud) and Albert (10 Place Fernand Rey)

■ **Iris Debremaeker (pictured above left with sister Els), Brussels**
theyummyblogisters.blogspot.com
Loves: Bar du Matin (172 Chaussée Alseberg) and Resto Henri (113 Rue de Flandre)

■ **Keiko Oikawa, London** *nordjus.co.uk*
Loves: St John Bakery (Arch 72, Druid Street) and Nopi (21-22 Warwick Street)

■ **Liz Steinberg (pictured above right), Tel Aviv** *food.lizsteinberg.com*
Loves: Norma Jean bistro-bar (23 Elifelet Street) and Gusto (90 Frishman Street)

■ **Sandra Salerno, Turin** *untoccodizzenzero.it*
Loves: Samambaia (20 Via Madama Cristina) and Scannabue (25H Largo Saluzzo)