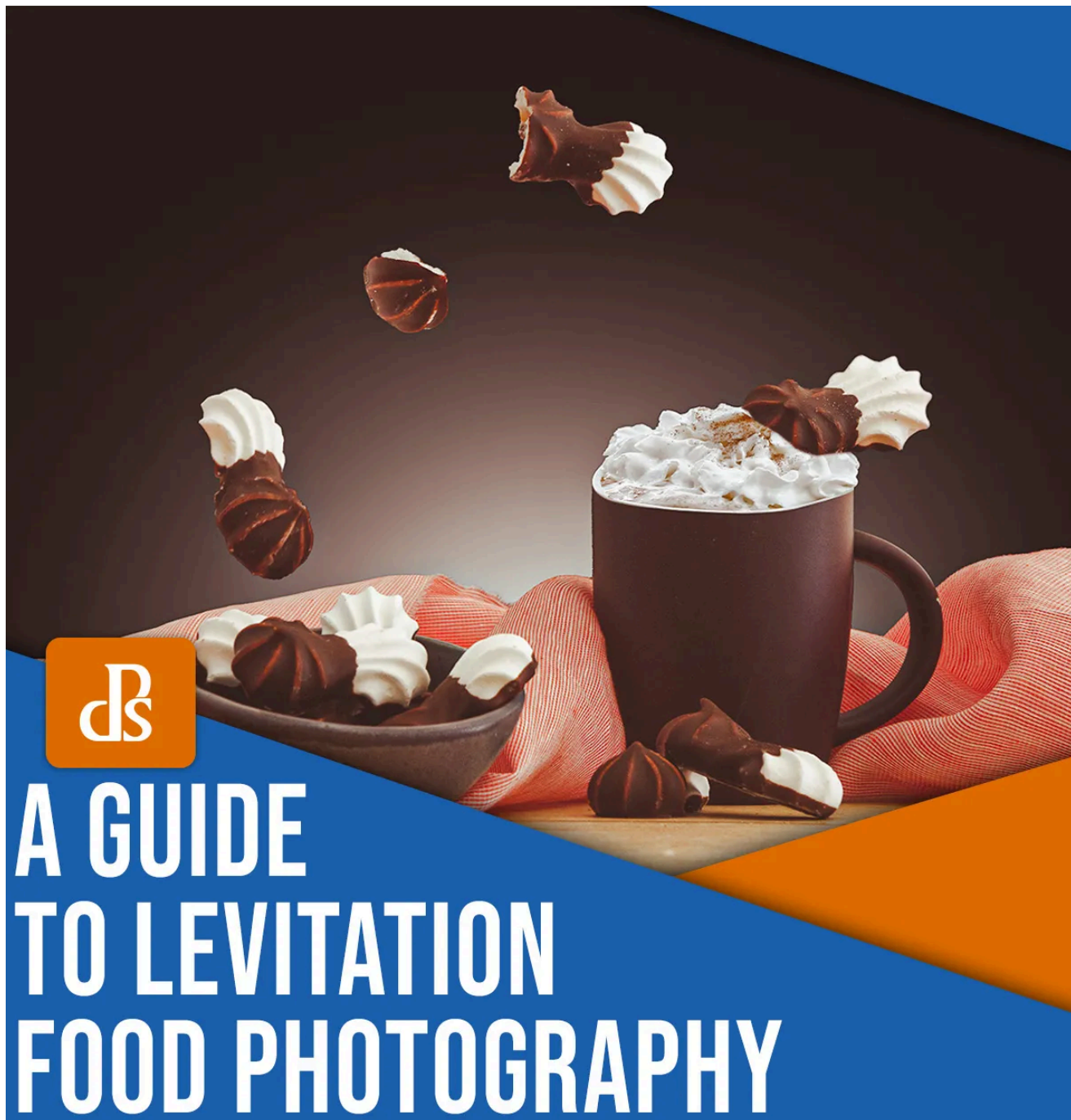


How to Create Levitation Food Photography: The Ultimate Guide

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10-12 minutes



**A GUIDE
TO LEVITATION
FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY**

Do you want to try levitation food photography but aren't sure how to pull it off? Then you've come to the right place.

The levitation approach to [food photography](#) is capable of producing jaw-dropping results that'll make viewers' eyes pop, but while you might think it requires fancy gear and incredible camera skills, nothing could be further from the truth.

Because here's the thing: While some levitation shots can get pretty tricky, you can actually start practicing this awesome photography style with just your trusty camera, a tripod, and a bit of editing know-how.

So to discover a super-easy way to create mind-blowing levitation food photos, keep reading!

What is levitation food photography?

Levitation food photography is all about making your food appear as if it's defying gravity and floating in the air. Yep, you read that right – your food will literally be flying!



What I mean by “flying” is that the food won't be sitting on any surface, and the viewer won't be able to see anything supporting it in the air, either.

This type of shot is very popular in commercial photography, and it's also a fun way to create captivating still-life shots of food.

When are levitation food photography techniques useful?

First of all, levitation food photos are a guaranteed attention-grabber. We're used to seeing our food sitting nicely on plates, not floating in mid-air. So when you present *levitating* food, there's something wonderfully intriguing about it. It defies our expectations and makes us take a closer look.

Additionally, levitation food photography is perfect for setting the mood or telling a story. Imagine a steaming pot of herbal tea pouring itself into a cup as if it possesses magical powers. It creates an enchanting atmosphere and sparks our imagination.

Another fantastic use of levitation food photography is when you want to highlight individual ingredients. Take, for instance, the immensely popular shot of a burger suspended in midair (also known as the *burger levitation photo*). It's a clever way to showcase each ingredient separately, adding visual interest and making your viewers' mouths water.

In truth, there's only one situation where levitation photography might not be a great choice: when your aim is to capture an authentic, realistic shot. But if you're looking to add a touch of magic and intrigue to your food photography, levitation is definitely worth trying out.

How to create levitation food photos: step-by-step instructions

When it comes to levitation food photography, there are several approaches you can take. Let's explore them one by one.

First, there's the option of launching or dropping the food and capturing it with a fast [shutter speed](#). This method requires minimal equipment and preparation. However, it limits your ability to create intricate [compositions](#) and isn't suitable for all types of food.

Another technique involves capturing a single shot where all the food is clearly supported by wires, blocks of wood, etc., and then using the [Clone Stamp tool in Photoshop](#) to remove all the supports. While this approach is certainly effective, it requires advanced retouching skills.

That's why I'm excited to share with you a simple yet effective way to achieve stunning levitation food photography using compositing. Let's dive into the steps together.

Step 1: Build your setup

Before you can actually position the food, you need to arrange the non-food items and fix everything in place. This includes setting up the surface, background, props, and other elements.

Don't forget to mount your camera on a sturdy tripod. Consistency is key, and a stable base ensures that all your photos will have the same framing. Steer clear of handheld shots to maintain that consistent frame!

Step 2: Light the scene

Now it's time to illuminate your masterpiece. Whether you choose natural or artificial light is entirely up to you. However, let me offer some guidance.

If you opt for natural light, try to shoot when the lighting conditions are relatively stable. Sudden shifts from sun to clouds (or vice versa) can cause exposure inconsistencies across your photos, which can be a headache to correct.

Whether you use natural or artificial lighting, if you're a beginner or you're less familiar with Photoshop, I recommend starting with soft [side lighting](#). It'll minimize the need to fix shadows in your final levitation shot, making your editing process far easier.

Of course, feel free to experiment with different [lighting setups](#) to bring your creative vision to life! For my example shot (displayed below), I used window light.

Step 3: Dial in the right settings

Once you've nailed down the perfect framing and composition, it's time to fine-tune your camera settings. Switch your camera to [Manual mode](#) to ensure the settings stay consistent throughout the shoot.

If the objects you're levitating have the potential to move, opt for a faster shutter speed to capture them in freeze-frame perfection. Of course, if you're aiming for some deliberate motion blur, feel free to experiment with slower speeds.

To guarantee that the levitating elements are all in focus, I recommend setting your [aperture](#) to at least f/5.6. This will provide ample [depth of field](#), allowing those captivating objects to take center stage.

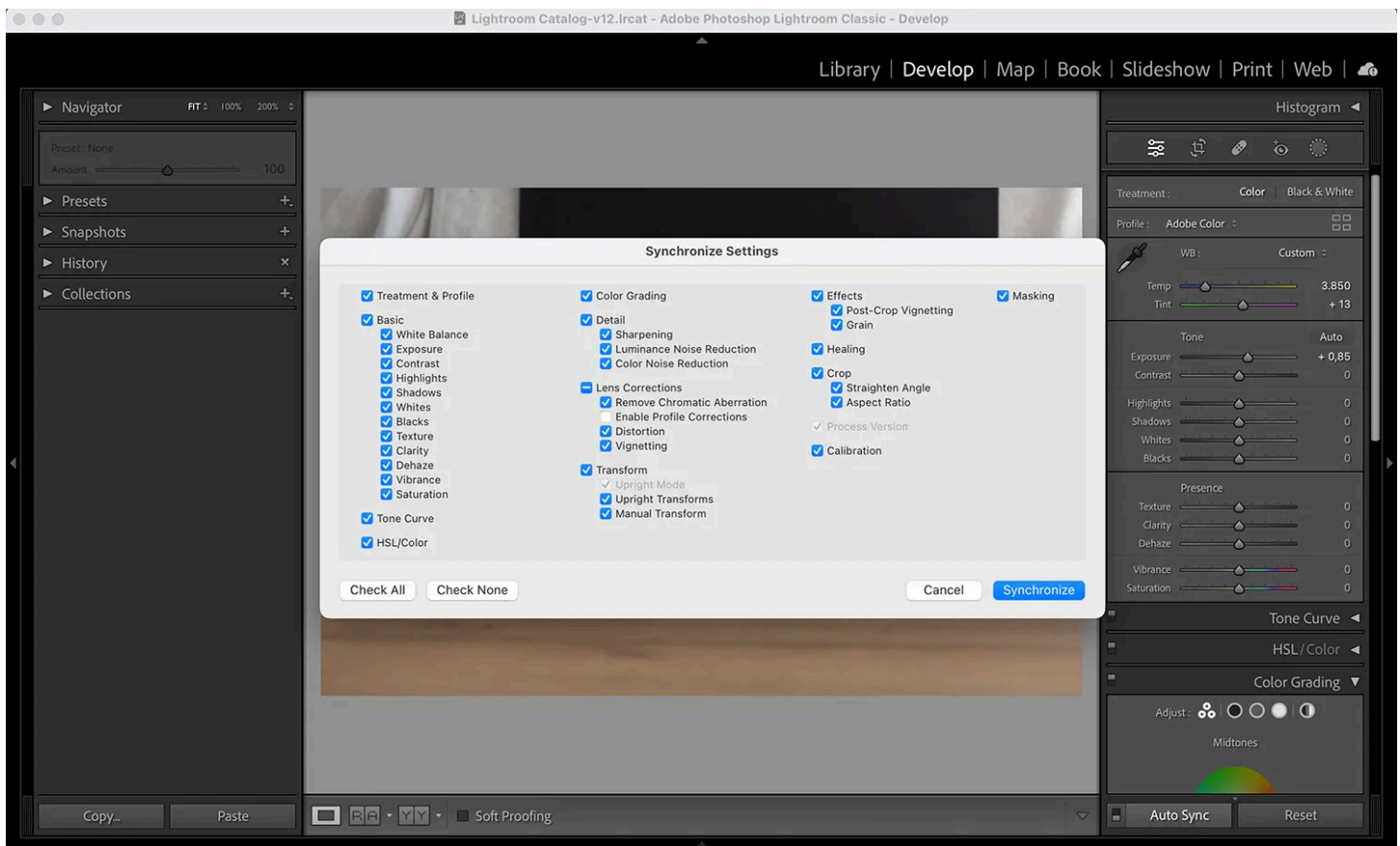
Step 4: Capture the shots

Now it's time to work your photographic wizardry and create the ultimate series of food images. Begin by capturing a photo of your setup without any of the levitating objects. This will be the base of the composite.

Next, introduce the levitating elements one by one, taking separate shots of each. This approach will help ensure that pesky shadows won't cause problems. You can hold the food items in the frame however you like, but the less obvious the supports, the better.

You can shoot as many pictures as you want. Try different positions, heights, etc., until you're satisfied.

Step 5: Cull and edit the photos



Now that you have all the photos you need, let's dive into the post-production process.

Start by selecting the images you want to use and give them a general touch-up. For instance, I always fix lens distortion and fine-tune the white balance.

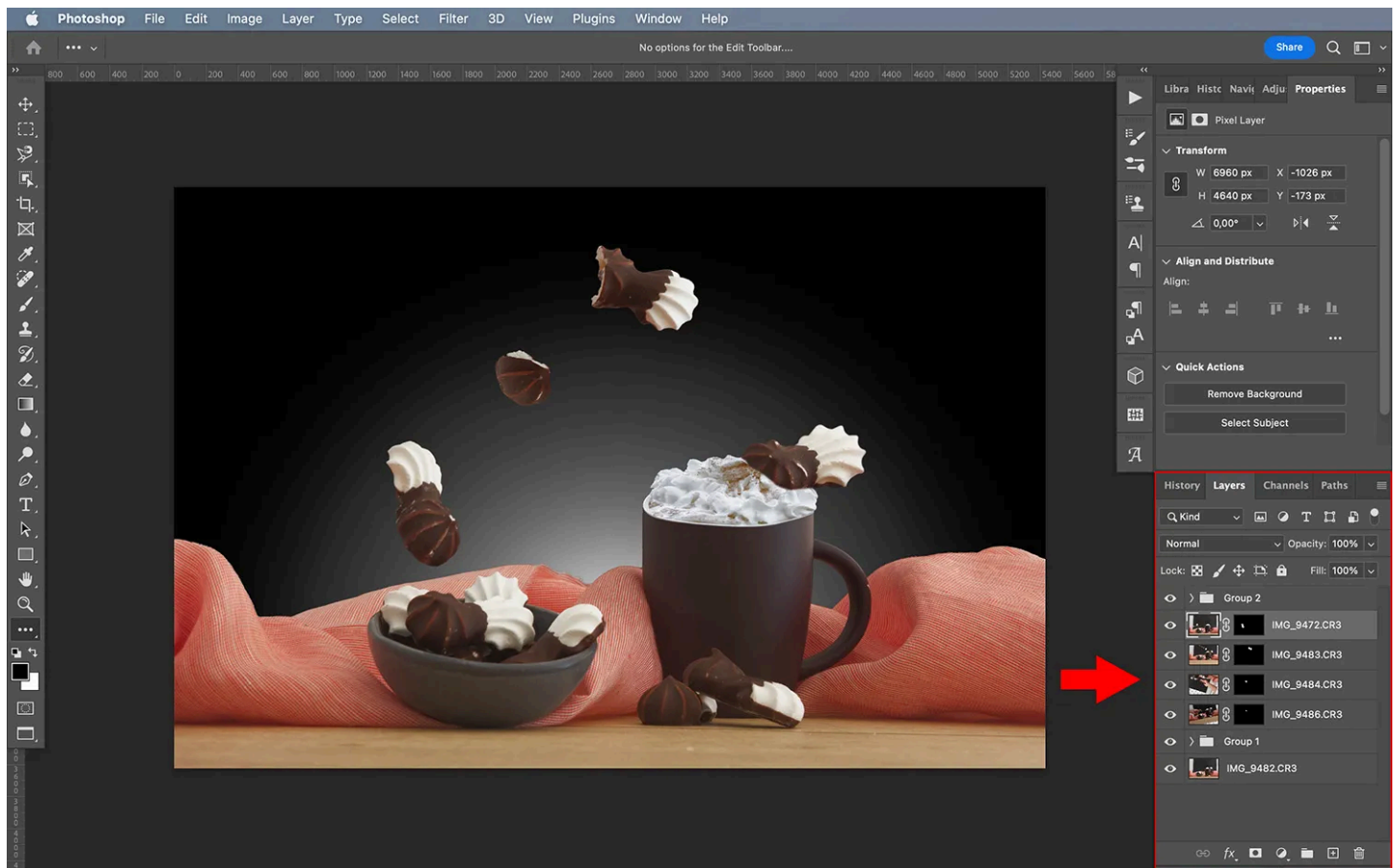
You can also make additional adjustments, but I usually prefer to save that for the final file. Regardless of what you do, make sure you apply it across all the images. Personally, I rely on Lightroom for this task since it's easy to sync all the edits, but feel free to use any software that suits your fancy.

Step 6: Make a photo composite

It's time to work some compositing magic. I use Photoshop for this, but any program with layer capabilities will do the trick.

Import all the images as **layers** into a single document. Make sure the base photo you took – the one without levitating elements – is at the bottom of your layer stack.

Then start adding in the flying elements. Simply click on each layer, select the flying element, then click on the Layer Mask button in the Layers panel. This will create a **layer mask** that hides everything *but* the flying object. (You'll also be able to see the base layer with the background image; that's what makes the compositing process so effective!)



Repeat this process for each layer with levitating food. Then remove any problematic shadows and fine-tune the final image as needed!

Quick tips to improve your levitation food shots

Now that you've got the hang of levitating food photography, let's take it up a notch and achieve even more stunning results. Here are a few quick tips to elevate your game:

1. Be careful with the shadows

When it comes to creating captivating levitation food shots, shadows can be both your friend and your foe. On the one hand, they can add depth and realism to your images; on the other hand, they can spoil the illusion.

To ensure a flawless final image, be diligent in removing any trace of the supports used, including shadows, during the photo compositing process. But bear in mind that, depending on the lighting and positioning of your levitating food, a complete absence of shadows can look unnatural. So it's sometimes important to recreate shadows (or add them back in using your levitating object layers).

Note: If your shots feel slightly off, the culprit might be the shadows! So before you declare an image complete, take a careful look to ensure everything appears accurate.

2. Try different supports

To suspend different ingredients in the air, you can get creative with your supports. Cocktail sticks, toothpicks, clear thread, wires, or even your hand can be used, though make sure that they *don't* obstruct the subject and can be easily removed in Photoshop.

The shape, texture, and size of the food will determine the best choice of support. Feel free to try out different options until you find the perfect match!

3. Add motion to your shots

While “frozen” levitating food photography can be visually striking, injecting a sense of motion can take your shots to a whole new level. Adding a touch of motion blur brings dynamism and energy to your photos, which is often highly desirable!

One way to add motion is to position a food item within the frame, then let it fall just before you press the shutter button. That way, you'll capture a captivating motion blur effect!

Note that you can also [create a motion blur effect in Photoshop](#).

Levitation food photography: final words

Hopefully, thanks to this article, levitation food photography is no longer a mystery – and you're armed with the know-how to take your food shots to soaring heights!

So the next time you're capturing levitating food, get creative, think outside the box, and let your imagination take flight. Remember, practice makes perfect, so keep honing your skills and watch your food shots improve.

Now grab your camera, find a few culinary creations, and let the levitation magic unfold before your lens!

Over to you:

Do you have any levitation food photography tips that I missed? Share your thoughts in the comments below!