

# Taking Digital Pictures of your Cakes for Publication

Grace McMillan, ICES Newsletter Editor

---

## Camera and Settings

- Use digital cameras 5 megapixels or higher for publishing.
- Set the photo quality setting on “fine” or as high quality as possible (not RAW, unless you’re a pro with camera and software).
- Photo size should be set at “medium” or “large.” This creates large files which requires memory, but generates better quality photos.
- ISO setting (“film speed” in 35 mm cameras): 200 ISO can be set for inside and outside photos.
- “Flash fill” setting should be ON.

## Buy the Basics

- Buy as much flash card memory as you can afford (more memory means more pictures on the camera).
- If you can afford nothing else, get an external flash that attaches to the top of your camera.
- Next, either buy a tripod that allows you to flip the head so that the flash stays above the camera, a flash bracket for the same purpose; or both for serious photography.
- 28-70 mm is a good, all-purpose interchangeable lens for your digital camera.

## Setting Up the Shot

- Use natural lighting (window proximity) whenever possible.
- It’s better to have a photo that is too dark than too light. Many

times dark images can be successfully edited and optimized.

- For step-by-step articles, shoot as you go, eliminating unnecessary articles from the shot. Try different angles of the same shot for the best “story.” Shoot some pictures from above, some at eye level, some at different angles, etc.
- For completed cake photos, eliminate ALL table clutter.
- Decorate/coordinate the table/surroundings.
- Always use a backdrop, choosing colors that will make your cake “pop.” Experiment with different color choices.
- Set the completed cake at least six feet away from a wall/background to minimize shadows (shadows disappear and become smaller behind the cake on the floor, rather than showing on the background).

## Shoot, Shoot, Shoot

- Always keep the flash *above* the lens, even for “sideways” shots (use a flash bracket or tripod).
- Focus every shot. Out-of-focus cake shots (even of breathtakingly beautiful cakes) will not be published due to poor photo quality.
- Take lots of pictures of each desired shot to give plenty of options.

- Zoom in for detail shots.
- Shoot from different angles.
- Fill the frame for shots of entire cake, BUT don’t cut off the top, bottom, sides, ribbons, etc.
- Zoom out to show cake and table dressing.
- Zoom out even further to show more background and to give the publisher options (so that words can be placed around the cake for title pages, etc.).

## Afterwards

- Never delete photos on the camera; wait until you see them on the computer before making the irrevocable decision to delete.
- Important: every time you modify and save an image in .jpeg format, you lose color information and image quality. If you photo edit, *never* modify the original image. Use the “save as” feature and rename the image: DSC\_011-1, for example (the “-1” on the end shows the photo has been edited).

## File Transfers

- Send files via the internet in .jpeg format. The .jpeg format automatically compresses images, causing a speedier transfer. The editor/printer can convert the files into .tif, .eps, or .pdf format, as needed.
  - Send files as e-mail attachments rather than embedded in the message of the e-mail body.
-