



THE BEST

LENSES

For Food + Lifestyle Photographers

FIRST WE EAT

THE POWER OF THE RIGHT LENS

Hey there! Thanks so much for grabbing this lens guide!! After photographing a wide range of subjects for over 16 years, I have a thing or two to share when it comes to my favorite lenses, and I'm VERY excited to nerd out about it with you in this guide to my top 5 faves!

As you probably know, a good quality lens can take your images from mediocre to amazing in one swift switcheroo. Even more so than the camera body, lenses have an immediate and very strong effect on the visual aspect of the image that you're creating—affecting everything from the perspective to the depth of field to the angles you can shoot from, and the details and swirls in your bokeh.

One of the things I get asked about the MOST during in-person workshops, and out there on the internet, are lenses. Which ones do I recommend, why do I like them, and what should the different ones be used for?

Well, all the answers can be found here, my friend! I have put together this handy little guide for you with all the details about my favorite lenses, what types of shooting environments I use for each one, and the benefits and downsides that each one has. (Yep, even the most awesome lenses have downsides to them, and we'll get to the nitty gritty of those!)

And just a disclaimer, the links to the lenses in this guide are affiliate links. The money I make as an affiliate helps me be able to create and share all this information with you for free. So if you find this guide useful, want to purchase a lens, and want to contribute to more free helpful content, I'd be much obliged if you used one of the links here to purchase it :)

— *READY TO SOAK IT ALL UP? LET'S DIVE IN!* —



Shot with 24-70mm 2.8



24-70mm 2.8 Zoom Lens

If you're interested in photography, you've probably heard about this lens before. It's a zoom lens, which means that the focal length is variable from 24mm (a wide lens setting) to 70mm (a telephoto, aka more close-up, lens setting). I love using this lens for top down (aka flat lay) shots when I'm shooting food, and I love using it for travel and landscape photography when I'm on the road.

BENEFITS

- ▲ This lens has a minimum aperture of 2.8, which means you can let a lot of light in for a zoom lens. If you're a natural light photographer, this is a HUGE benefit!
- ▲ It's a zoom (I know, duh!), but really this means that you don't have to physically change out your lens in order to change the focal length (aka perspective) of the image, nor do you have to physically move your body + camera closer or farther away from the subject. It's a big time saver, and if you're photographing an event or traveling, it means you only have to carry one lens around. Your back muscles will thank you!
- ▲ If you're shooting a top-down (aka flat lay) images with your camera on a tripod arm, instead of moving the tripod's legs up and down to adjust frame (which can be precarious with a tripod arm), all you have to do is move the zoom ring on the lens to adjust the framing.

DOWNSIDES

- ▲ This lens is very expensive. Zoom lenses are always on the pricey side, but high quality ones like this guy are even more so (you're looking at about \$1600 USD). It's definitely an investment piece!
- ▲ Like all zoom lenses, there is some distortion that occurs around the edges of frame. It's most noticeable when you're at a wider focal length setting and the lens is physically closer to the subject—you might notice that the center of frame looks like it's raised up slightly and the edges are bowing down. There are some tricks in Lightroom for taking this distortion out, but it's something to be aware of.
- ▲ I'm going to mention the 2.8 aperture again as a downside, too. Because while it's the lowest possible aperture for pretty much any zoom lens out there, you can get *way* lower aperture options with the prime lenses I'll be talking about later in the guide.

Shot with 50mm 1.2



50mm 1.2 or 1.4 or 1.8 Prime Lens

This lens was the first one I used when I started out, and it's by far the most versatile lens for food and lifestyle photography. This lens is not wide, and it's not telephoto, it's 'normal'. It's actually the closest perspective lens-wise to what the human eye actually sees. So however you're looking at the subject, if you use this lens, it's going to capture that same distance/perspective.

It comes in three different models, the 50mm 1.2 (most expensive at \$1,300 USD), 50mm 1.4 (medium at \$350), or the 50mm 1.8 (budget option at \$105 USD). Of course, as the price goes up, so does the quality of the glass and the lens casing. That being said, the 50mm 1.4 is the best lens hands-down in terms of bang for your buck. I like using this lens to shoot the subject from the side, for tighter top down shots, and for travel photos.

B E N E F I T S

- ▲ The aperture opens up a lot with this lens, all the way to 1.2 if you go with the most high-end make. This is incredibly useful for shooting in low-light situations, and for creating incredible bokeh.
- ▲ The price of the 50mm 1.4 and the 50mm 1.8 are both pretty affordable for the quality they deliver. It's great if you're just starting out and don't have a ton of money to invest in lenses yet.
- ▲ The framing and subject matter for this lens is also really versatile. Like I mentioned in the summary above, it looks great for closer top-down shots and side angle shots, too!

D O W N S I D E S

- ▲ Because it's a fixed lens, you need to physically move yourself and the lens closer to or farther away from the subject to change the perspective.
- ▲ The price of the 50mm 1.2 is high, but it's because the quality of the lens is high,

Shot with 85mm 1.2



85mm 1.2 Prime Lens

This is the lens I use the most frequently right now, it's a telephoto lens that is great for side-angle shots of a wide variety of subjects, from food to people to plants. Because it's telephoto, you can't really use it for top-down shots. It's really specialized in its usage for side-angle shooting that's close-up, but not too close, as you'll learn in the downsides below! I also use it for medium-framed shots, but because it's a telephoto lens, that means I have to stand realllly far back from the subject. Why do I do this instead of just using a 50mm or 35mm? Because the bokeh with this lens is JUST that good and no other lens can compare to it.

BENEFITS

- ▲ The aperture opens up all the way to 1.2 so it's excellent for natural light and low-light shooting.
- ▲ There's something especially magical about the glass in this lens, it makes for the softest and most beautiful bokeh, while the area of focus is razor sharp.
- ▲ This is the most flattering lens I've ever found. It's very hard to take a bad photo when you're using this guy.

DOWNSIDES

- ▲ The biggest downside is the price, it's very very expensive (about \$2,000 USD). Definitely an investment piece that should be added to your lens collection later on.
- ▲ It's not a versatile lens—it's suited to shooting subjects from the side, so like I said earlier, you can't really use it for top-downs at all.
- ▲ Even though this is a telephoto lens, you can't get super close to the subject with it. The lens won't be able to focus if it's closer than 3 feet (about 1 meter) from the subject.

Shot with 100mm 2.8 Macro



100mm 2.8 Macro Lens

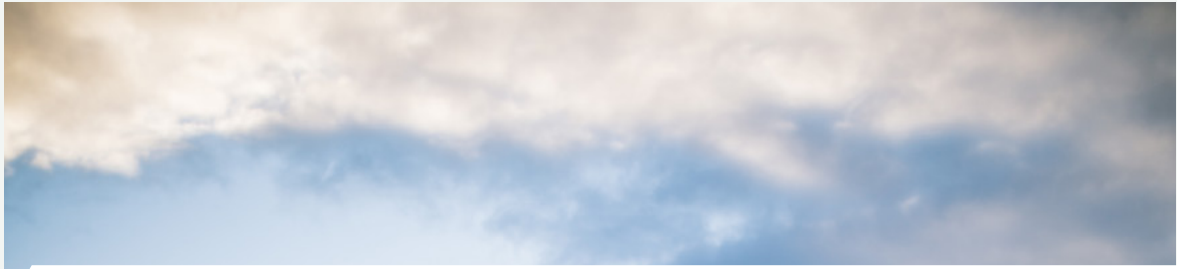
This is the perfect lens for shooting that crazy-beautiful detailed close-up shot of your subject. It's a telephoto lens, so the subject appears much closer than it actually is. I love using this lens to shoot mainly side-angle extreme close-up shots of the subject, and sometimes I use it for extreme close-up top-down shots, too. Great for picking up those little details in subjects that the naked eye doesn't quite catch, like the individual seeds on a strawberry or the fuzz on a honey bee.

B E N E F I T S

- ▲ Because it's a macro lens, you can get very close to the subject while still keeping the subject in focus. Feel free to get all up in your subject's business with this lens!
- ▲ Even though it only opens to 2.8 (which isn't a lot for a prime lens) it still has beautiful soft bokeh.
- ▲ You can shoot side-angle shots and top-downs with it, just keep in mind that both will be very close-up.

D O W N S I D E S

- ▲ While it has beautiful bokeh, it's also harder to focus perfectly with this lens. You have about a hair's width of focus area when you're shooting the subject close-up at the 2.8 setting, so make sure to triple check that your focus is perfectly set to the subject.
- ▲ It's slightly on the pricier side, but at \$759 USD, it's considered a medium-price range.
- ▲ Definitely a specialized lens that is meant for close up and extreme close-up shots. Not as versatile a piece of equipment as the 50mm or 24-70mm lenses. It only opens to 2.8, which isn't that much for a prime lens.



Shot with 35mm 1.4



35mm 1.4 Wide Lens

This lens is great for top-down (aka flat lay) shots if you don't have the 24-70mm. Its wide lens can fit a whooooole lot in frame, which means you don't have to get super far away from the subject to fit everything in frame. I also love using this lens for wider establishing shots of interiors when I'm traveling, to really show the whole feel of a space. I also love using this lens for exterior landscape shots, too, since its shallow depth of field really adds a nice bokeh to these images that you can't really get with the 24-70mm. It's also perfect for shooting large tablescapes from the side, like a table set for a festive holiday meal.

B E N E F I T S

- ▲ Because it's a prime lens, there's much less distortion around the edges of frame, even though it is a wide lens.
- ▲ The aperture opens to 1.4, so you can use it in low-light shooting situations both indoors and out. I love using this for sunset-time landscape and travel photos. Plus, it has a stunning bokeh that you don't quite get with the 24-70mm.
- ▲ You can photograph both side-angle shots and top-downs with it, just keep in mind that it's meant to capture scenes from a bit of a distance.

D O W N S I D E S

- ▲ Going off the last benefit listed, the closer you physically get to the subject with this lens, the more pronounced any distortion becomes.
- ▲ It's expensive, coming in at around \$1,700 USD. The quality of the glass and the lens casing are great, though, which is why the price tag is high.
- ▲ Now that I have the 24-70mm, I don't use this lens very often since I was primarily using it for top-downs, but the 24-70mm is a better fit for that. I really only use this for landscape and travel photography at this point. So what I'm really saying is, if you already have the 24-70mm, you might want to skip this one.

FIRST WE EAT

*You are going to take the most gorgeous photos, ever!!
Thanks for letting me fill your brain with all these nerdy
and fascinating lens tips. I'm so excited for you to put
them to use and invest in a lens that will take your
creative vision and make it a reality!*

*If you found this guide useful, I'd love it if you encour-
aged a friend to download it from me, as well! You can
also tag your photos [#FirstWeEat](#) for a chance to be
featured on my Stories, too!*

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Thanks so much + happy styling!!

Much love,

Eva

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