





Hi! My name is Melissa

Designer at TradeGecko

@girleatworld

Illustration by the super talented [@franciak](#)

Hi! I'm Melissa

I am a UX Designer at TradeGecko by day

and whenever i'm not doing that, i'm probably eating at the office pantry
or booking a flight ticket somewhere

@girleatworld
385,000+ followers



Most of you would know me for the food photos I take for Girl Eat World on Instagram, where I take pictures of whatever I eat, whenever I travel.

How did you start @girleatworld?

THE #1
MOST ASKED
QUESTION

Rome, 2011

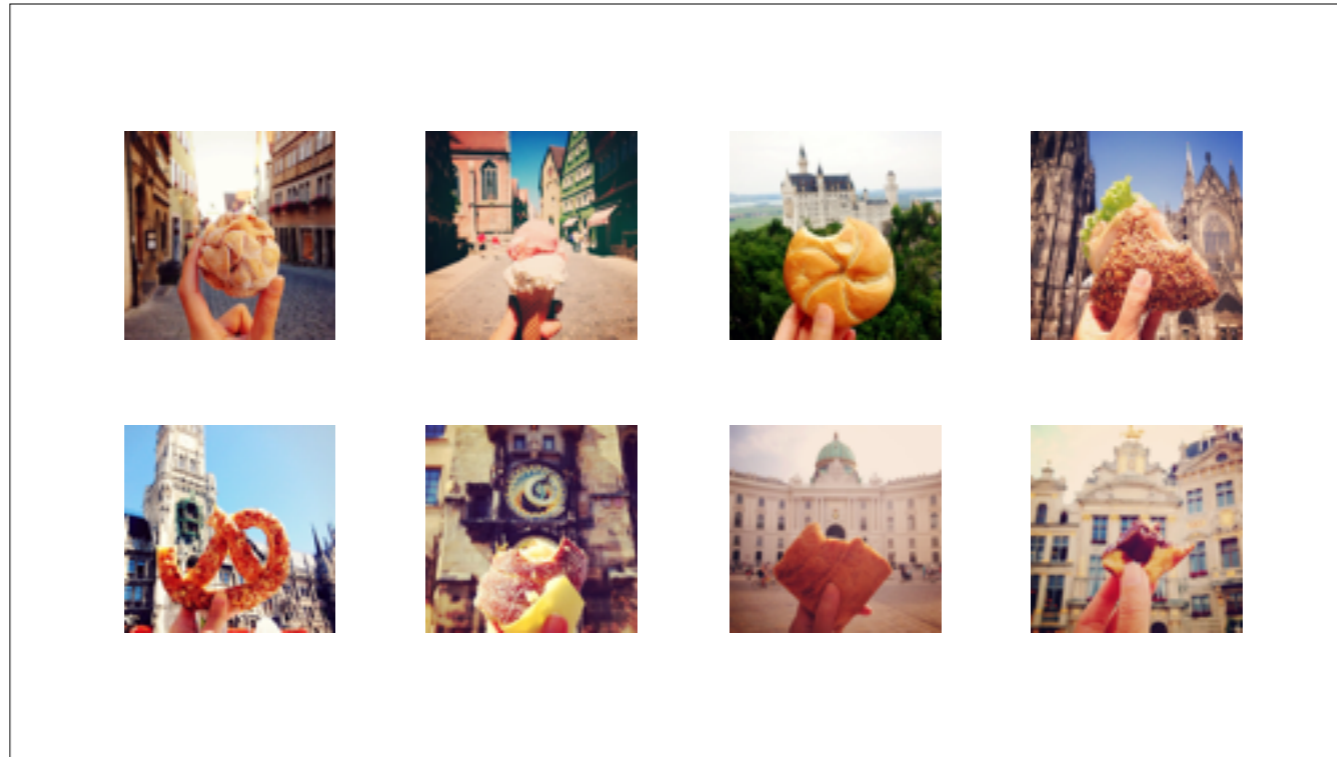
I was forced to take a picture at the colosseum
by my good friend [@serenaslenses](#)



Rome, 2011

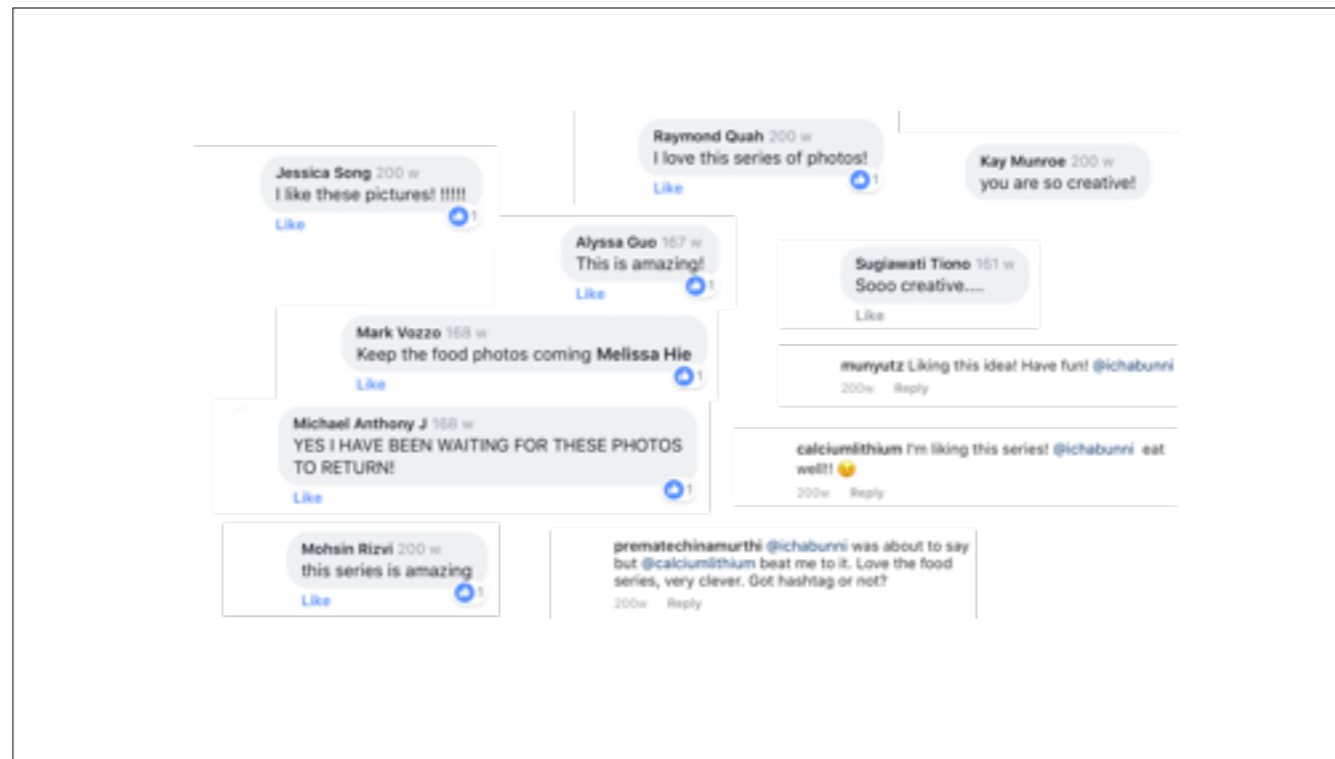
I have always loved food, so naturally when I began travelling, I started getting introduced to different local cuisines.

My good friend Serena insisted of taking a picture of me in front of the colosseum, but I was way more interested in that calzone (in the end I don't have a decent picture of me, just this one)



Then in 2013, I went on a solo backpacking trip to Europe. I never really liked taking selfies, so I focused on taking pictures of food I was eating in different places instead.

I had a lot of time to myself and didn't have to follow anyone else's agenda, so I experimented with different styles - which resulted in these series of pictures.



While I was on the trip, I uploaded these pictures to my personal Facebook account and Instagram. I received many positive feedback from friends so I was encouraged to take even more pictures in the next city, and the city after that... and the city after that.

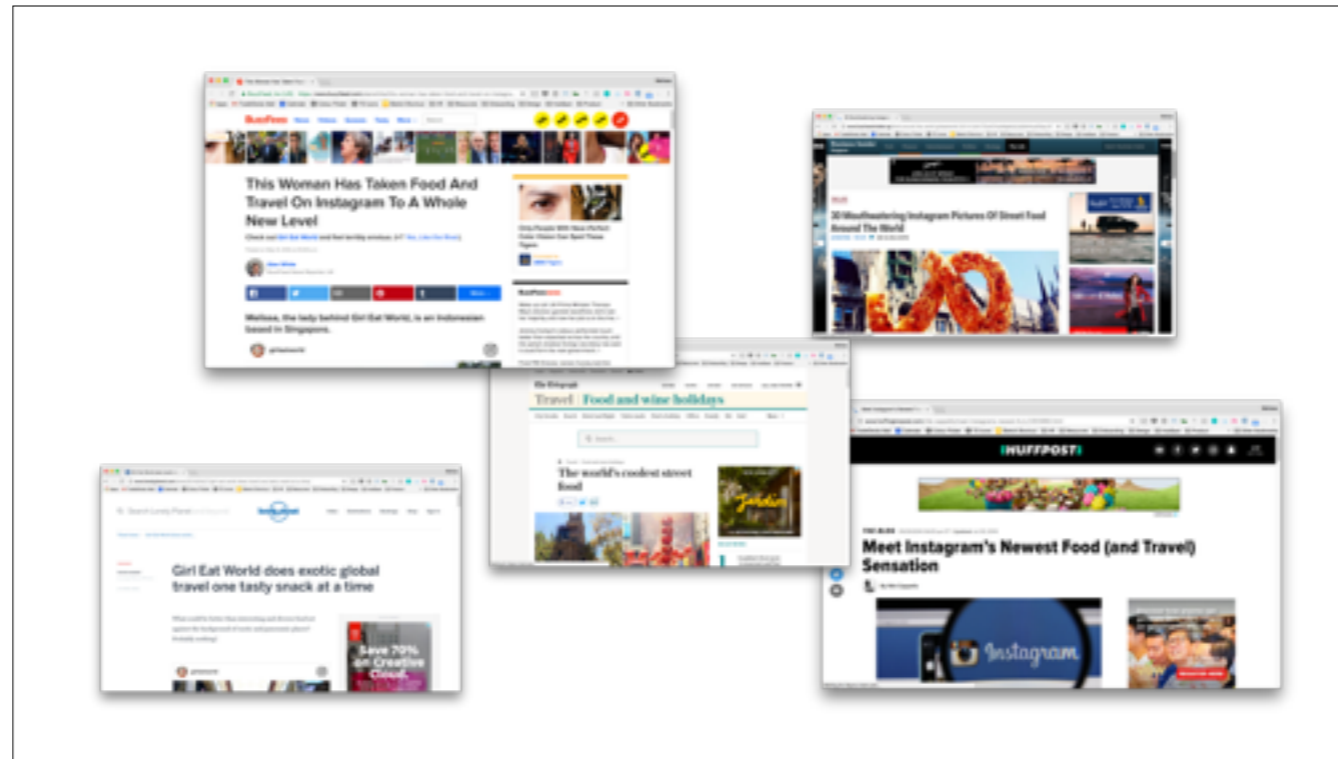
Some of friends told me that I should keep taking these series of pictures and create a dedicated account for it, so they can easily reference it when they travel. I kept the idea in the back of my head. It wasn't until a year later in 2014 when I finally created the Instagram account and named it @girleatworld.



I am also a heavy lurker in reddit.

I have always wanted to contribute to /r/travel. /r/travel is a community where people inspire each other to explore the world. I have lurked there for a long time and I have been inspired many times, so I posted a link to my instagram there, hoping someone would appreciate it.

To my surprise, I received many great feedback there too!



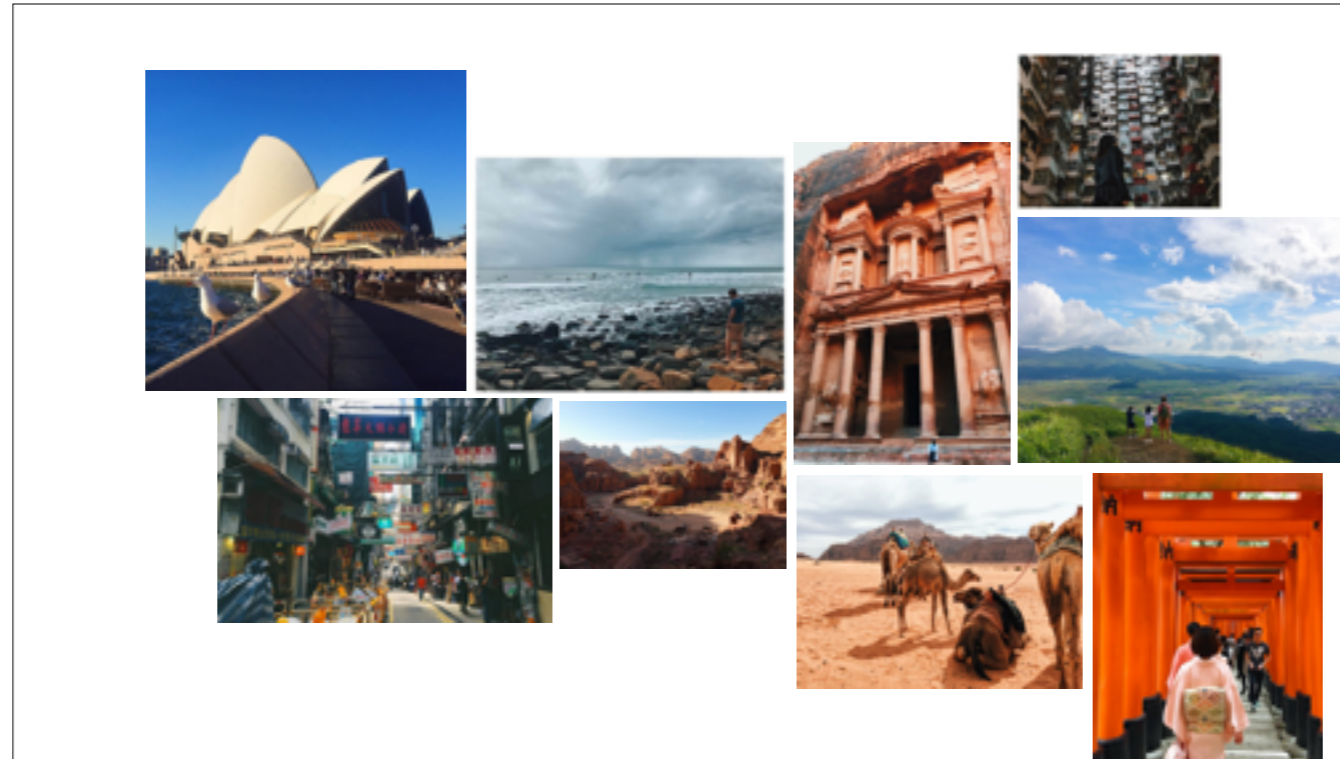
But what I totally didn't expect is that after seeing the post from reddit, a bunch of news outlets would pick up my work, and @girleatworld would go viral over the next few days.

A month later...



and a month later, I had 50,000 people following my little food instagram. The following kept growing organically after that, reaching 385,000 today, 3 years later.

And that's how @girleatworld was born!



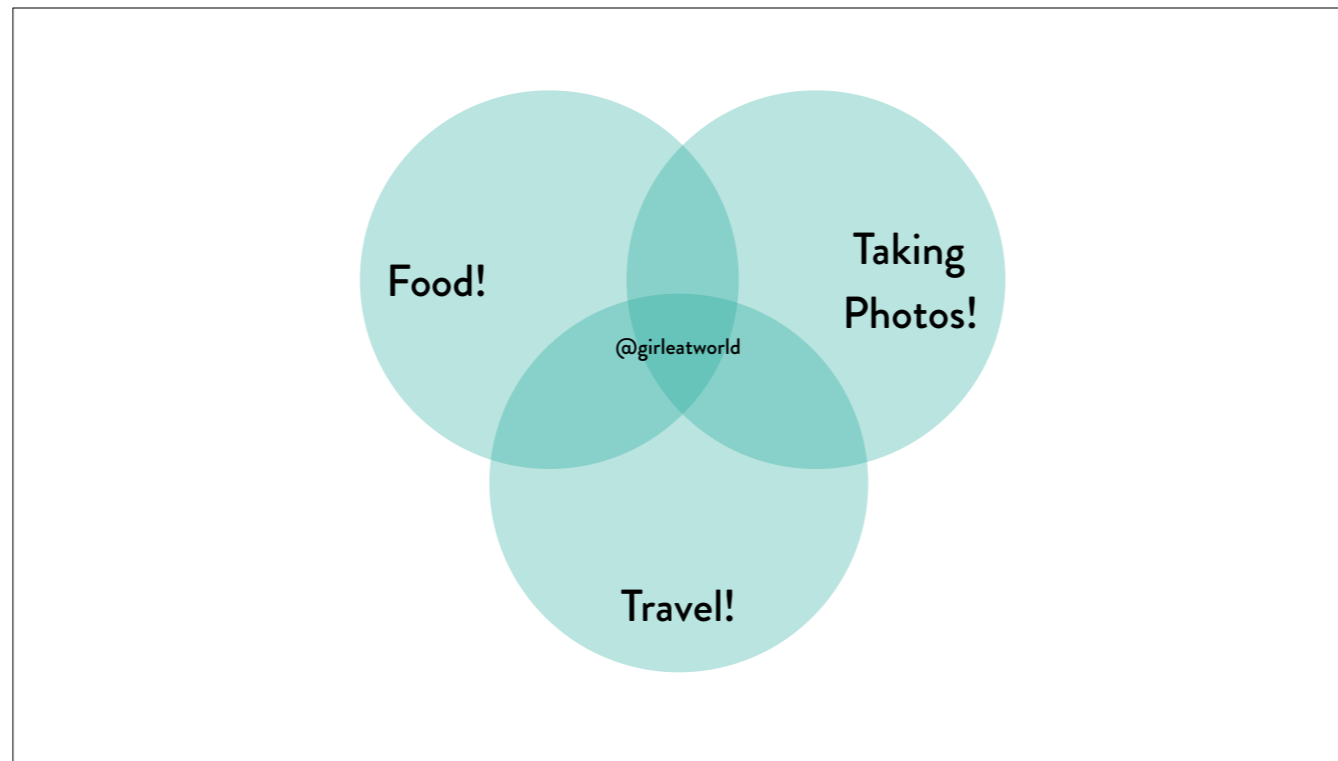
Many have asked how I travel “a lot”. In reality, I think I travel pretty average amount. I self-fund my travels by travelling super cheap and staying at hostels. Since then, I have been lucky to be invited to take local food photos in Jordan, Hong Kong, Japan and Australia.

Many have also asked...

How can I replicate the success of @girleatworld?

“The key to happiness is to find the three things in life you absolutely love doing, and combine them. If you do this, you would never have to work a day again in your life.”

Someone once told me (I forgot who)



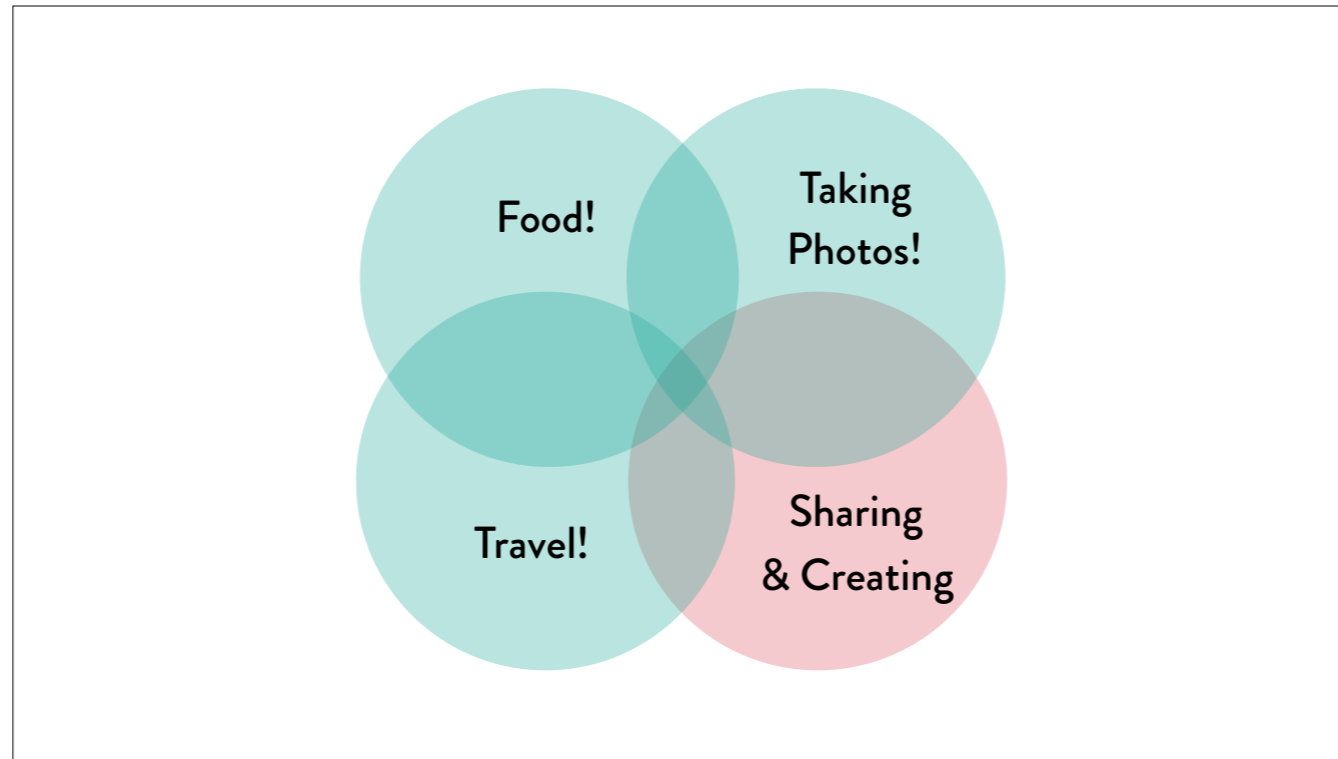
For me, the three things look like this. And it just so happens, @girleatworld is the perfect combination of those three! (I still have to work though... hmmm...)



Here is the thing: I'm not a photographer, or an artist, I really am just a regular person.

While I think having a consistent branding and visual identity as well as travel stories helps, this could have been done by anyone.

But all my friends would know that I am passionate about three things: Food and Travel... and to some extent Photography, which really just means taking pictures with my iPhone and editing them on the go.



Let's go back to that venn diagram. Personally, for me, there is a secret 4th ingredient: Passion to share and create.

I firmly believe that if you do not put your passion out there, you will not realise the full potential of it.

So think of the three things that makes **you** happy.

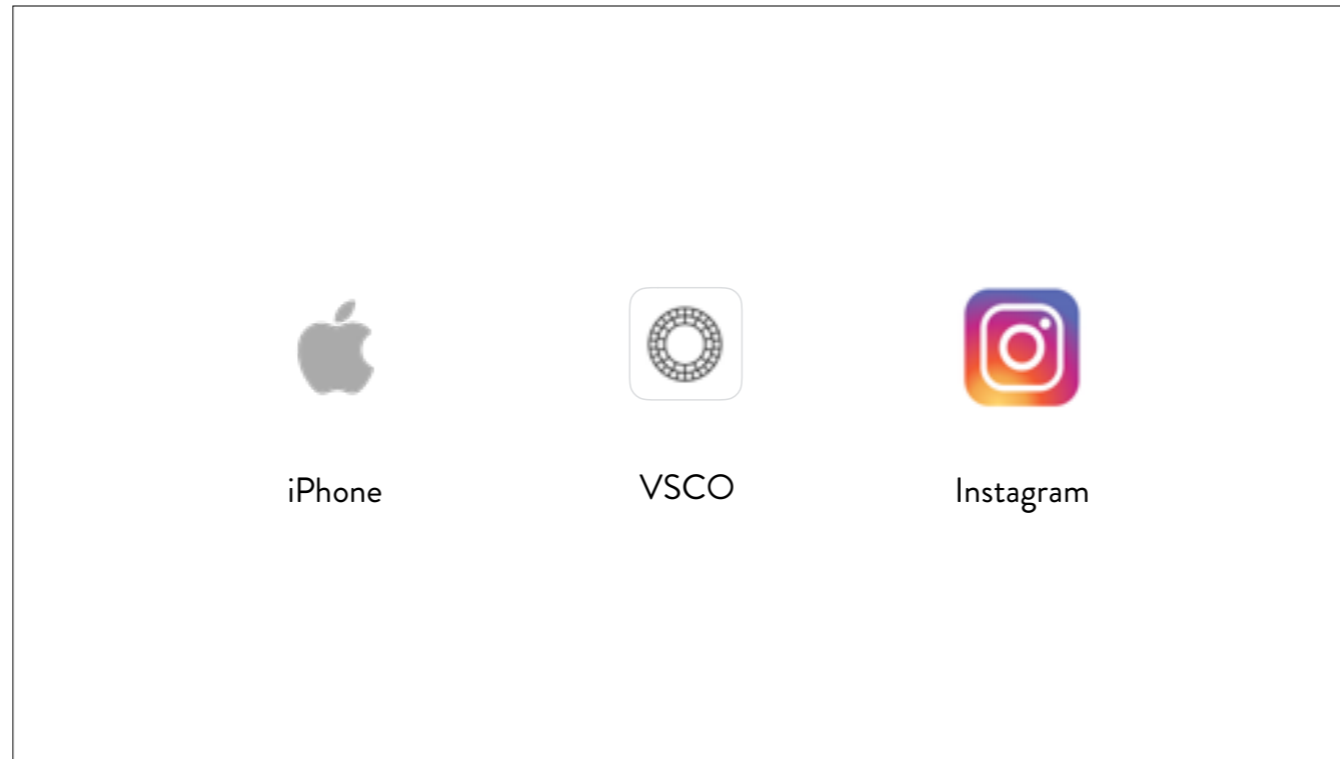
So think of the three things that makes you happy. It could be yoga, your pet, your child... Find ways to combine them

And share them with the world...
the rest will follow.

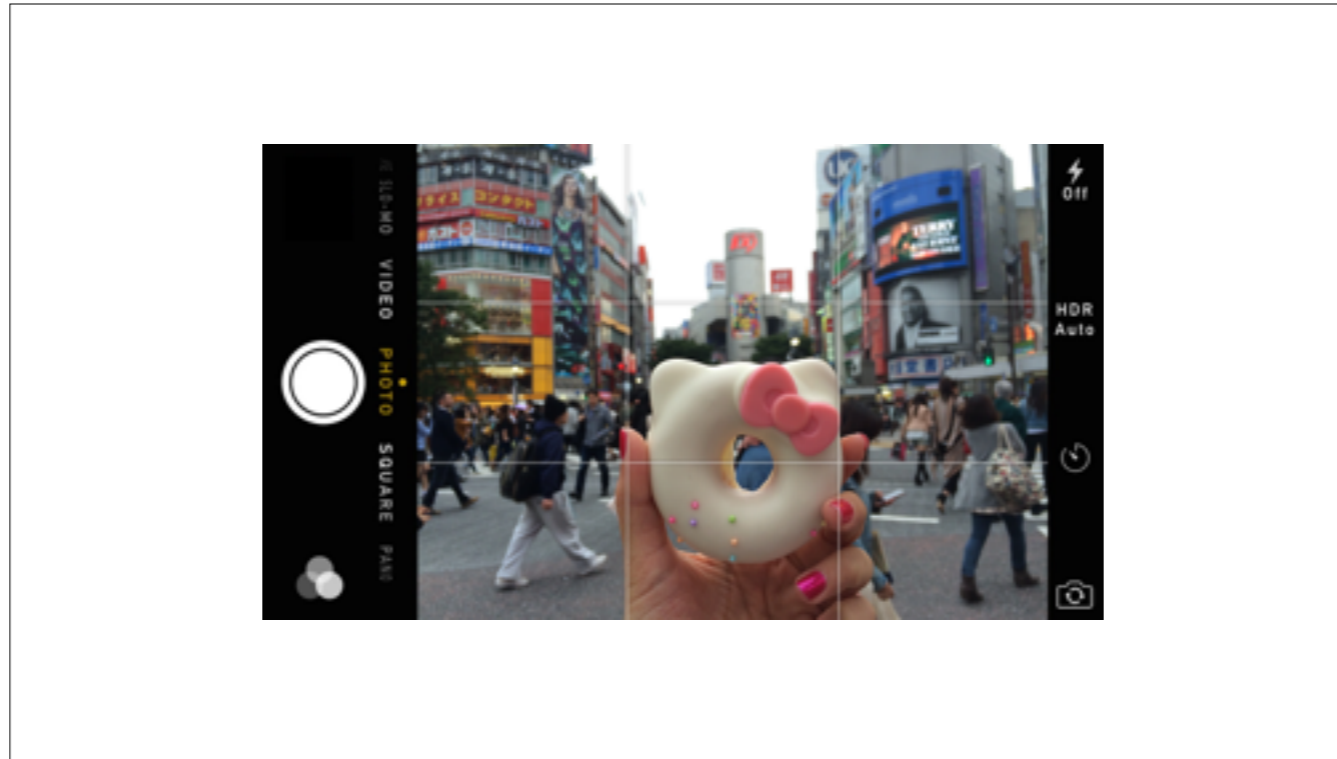
There is one more thing....

At the end of the day, I took these pictures for myself, not for anyone else.
Composing the perfect picture, and capturing the nicest background makes **me** happy.
And even if nobody was following, even if nobody took notice,
I would still be taking these pictures

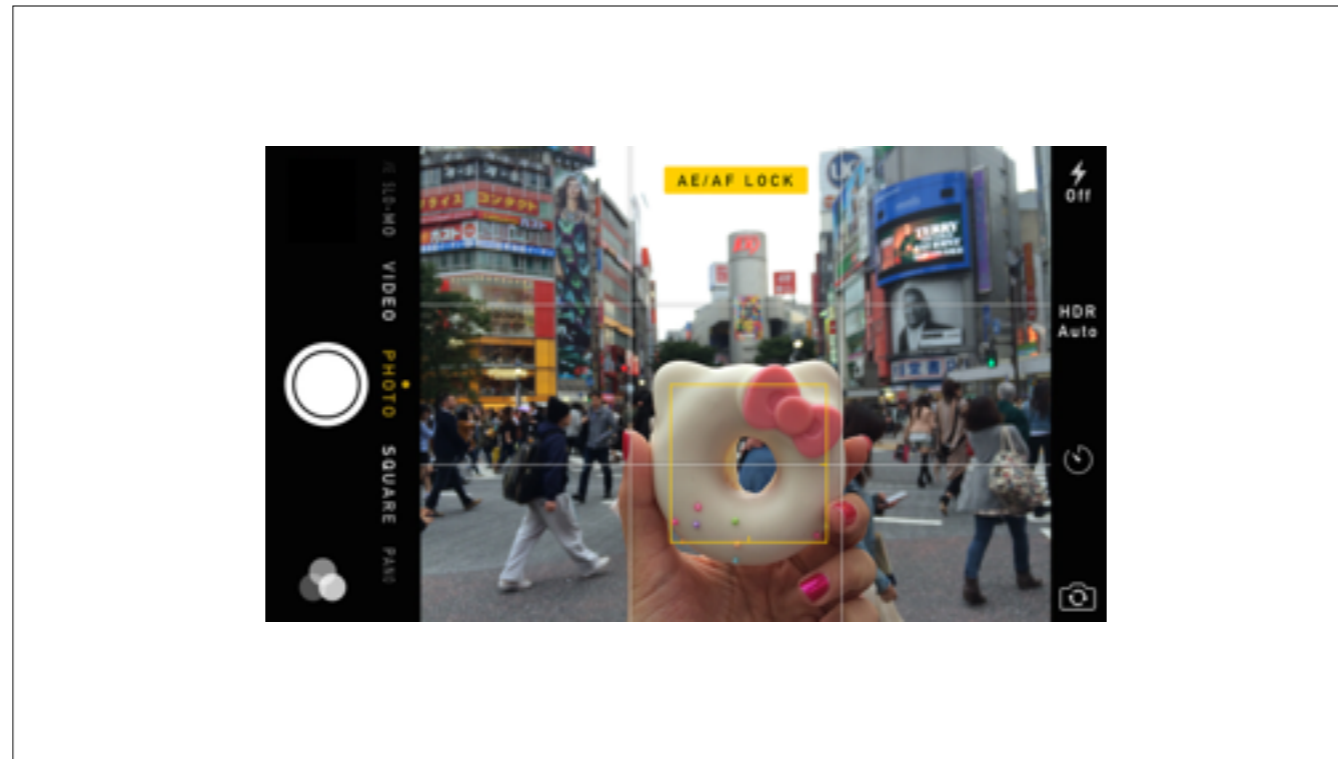
Working Process



Like i mentioned before, I am not a photographer. I am a very simple person, and I use these three things to take photos for @girleatworld: an iPhone, an app called VSCO, and Instagram.



First, I use the grids in iPhone to position my subject (the food) in the center. I use the bottom two middle grids to make sure the subject does not overwhelm the background, which is also an important part of the entire picture.



Then, while still on camera mode, I press on the subject until the AE/AF Lock icon appears. This ensures that the subject will be correctly focused even if I need to move the phone around to get a better angle.



Background is not interesting enough.

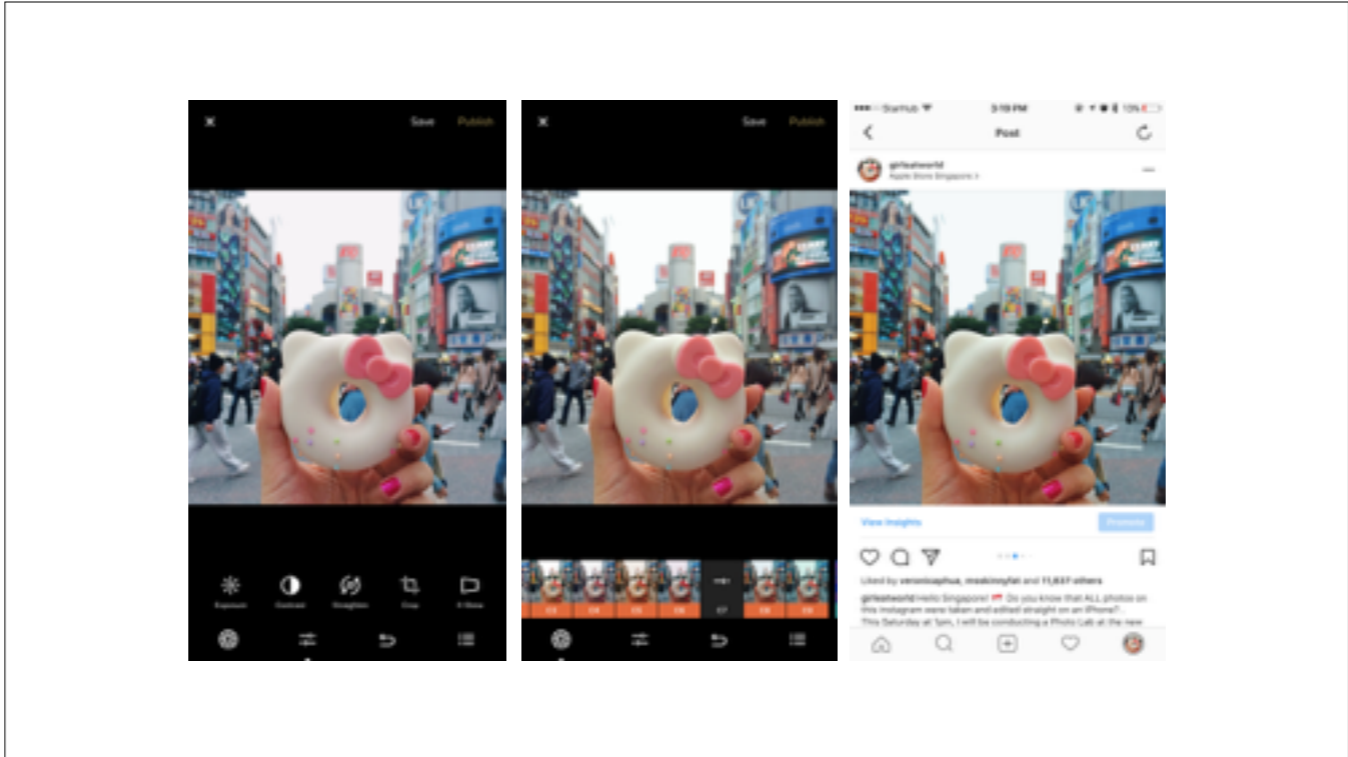


Subject was too close, too much shadow.



BEST!

I would then take a few shots, move around a bit to get better angles, and choose the best one.
Then eat :)



Then I would move on to VSCO cam to edit the picture, which I will show you in a bit.

Live Demo

1. **Take a Picture with some props provided.**

2. **Edit the picture on VSCOcam app.**

(I'll show you a few of my tips and tricks)

3. **Post your creation on instagram!**

Hashtag #todayatapple and tag me @girleatworld
so I can see them later!



Thank you, I hope you enjoyed today!

My blog: www.girleatworld.net

Find today's slides at: www.girleatworld.net/today

Keep in touch: [instagram.com/girleatworld](https://www.instagram.com/girleatworld)

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