



Whether it's one of the most famous markets in the country or just a few stands in a parking lot, every farmers' market is a photogenic treasure with compelling visual stories to tell. The produce is gorgeous, and farmers display it beautifully. Here are a few tips to snap great Instagram images.

General Tips for Taking Market Pictures

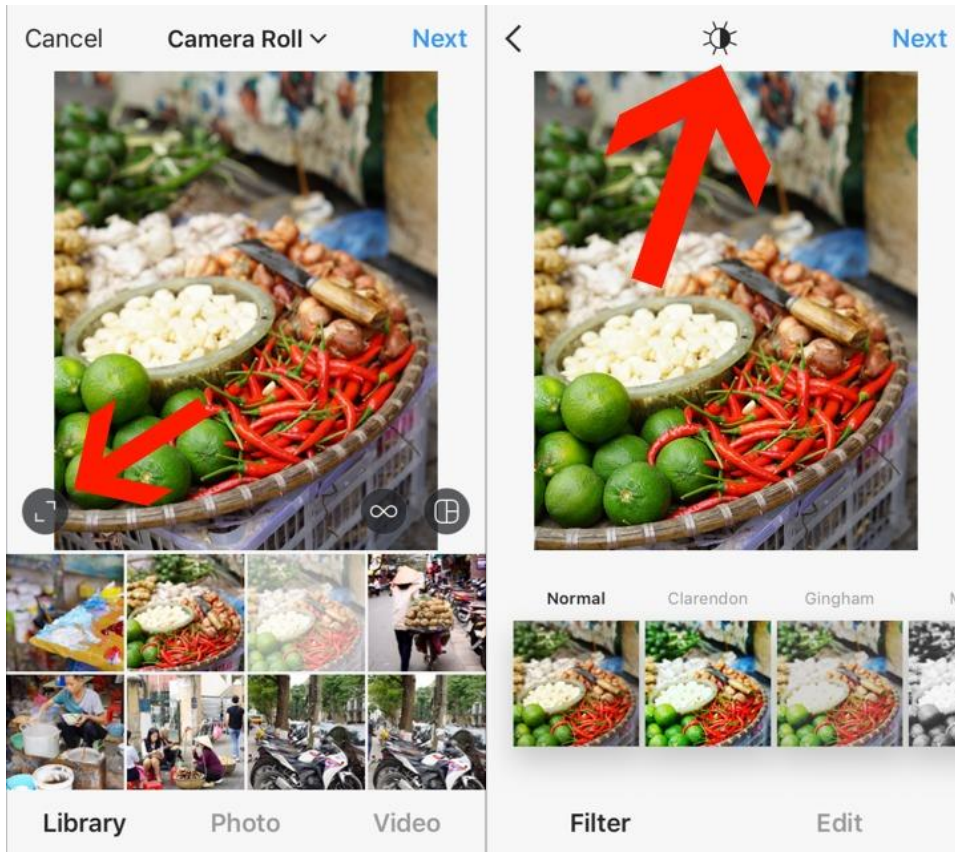
Chase the (pretty) light. Food, like people, looks best in indirect natural light. There's a reason photographers and cinematographers call the hour after sunrise and before sunset "golden hour." That's when the light is soft and flattering -- really kind of magical. But midday light casts harsh shadows. If you know you'll want to snap some pretty pictures, get to the market early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Not an option? Choose shaded spots to snap your pictures. I shot these heirloom tomatoes at high noon in July, but in a well-shaded stand:



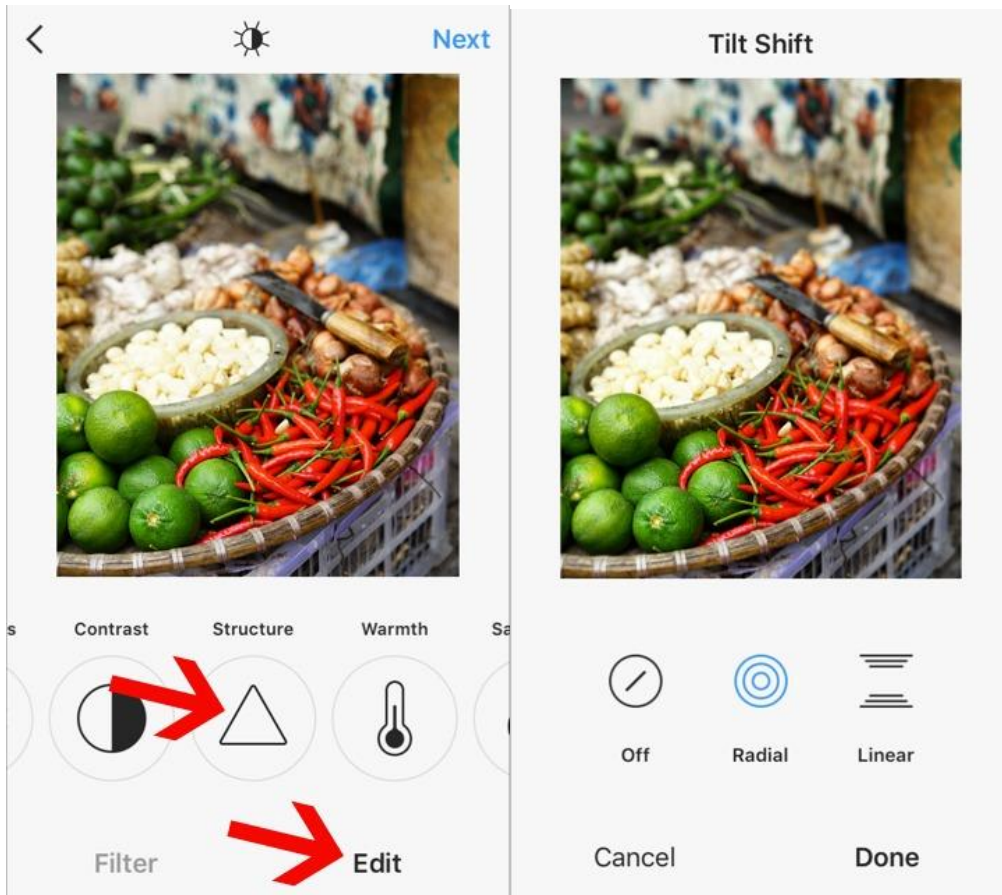
Tell a story with your pictures. Pictures of pretty produce are great. Images that also convey the vibe of your market are even better. Focus on details, like interesting signage and compelling displays (farmers are great merchandisers) and, of course, the people who make all this possible. I shot these at the Wednesday Santa Monica Farmers' Market -- one of the largest and busiest in the country:



Edit your images. Instagram's built-in filters can help enhance your images, but don't overlook its other robust editing features. Here's an example, using an image I shot at a market in Vietnam. First, I didn't want it to automatically crop as a square image, because I wanted to show some of the background for context, so I clicked the icon in the lower left-hand corner of the image to keep its vertical orientation. Then I adjusted the contrast, clicking the "Lux" feature at the top. You can adjust this as you need to, even dialing back the contrast if you're working with an image you shot in harsh light.



Then I went into the "Edit" features and used the "Structure" option to bring out more details. "Tilt Shift" is another fun one that lets you play with the depth of field to draw the focus where you want the eye to go. You can make other adjustments with brightness, angle and much more -- play around with it and see what you get!



Practice good basic etiquette. When you're snapping pictures around the market, remember a few basic "rules."

- Do make it a point to purchase produce at stands where you're shooting. After all, that's why the market is there!
- Do ask the farmer if it's OK take pictures, especially if you're taking pictures of staff or other shoppers. Most of the time, it's just fine, but not everyone likes having their picture taken.
- Don't start re-arranging produce. Farmers take a lot of pride in how they display their wares. Be respectful.
- Don't let your picture-taking get in the way of farmers and other shoppers.
- Do tag the market and the farmer (some farmers are very social-media-savvy) and use the #lovemymarket hashtag when you post your gorgeous pictures on Instagram!

Farmers' Market Photo Booth Tips

Setting up a market photo booth lets shoppers have some fun styling their market hauls for selfies or just pretty still-life images. It doesn't have to be expensive or complicated.

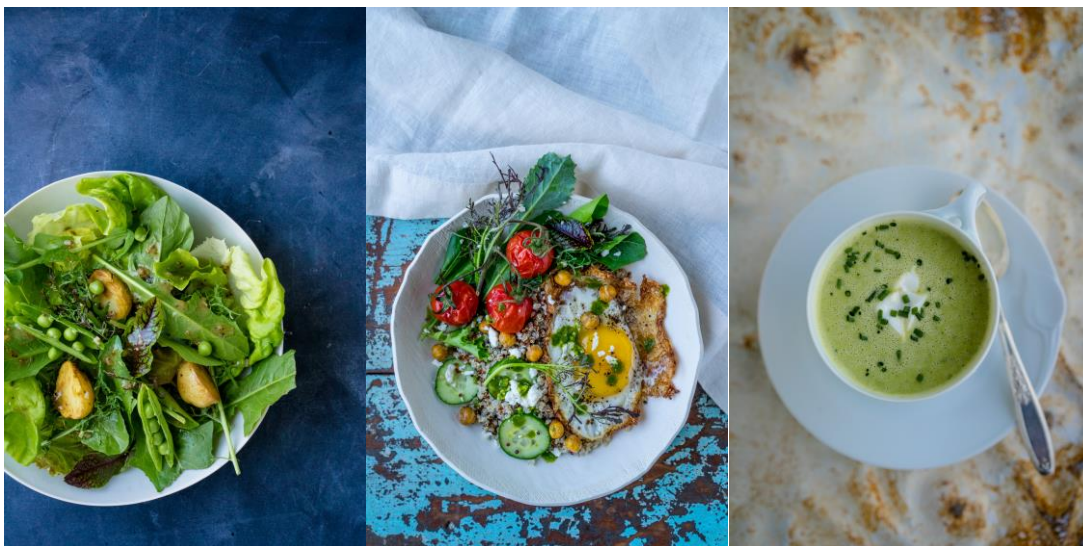
Made in the shade. An open-sided tent canopy is perfect. Just choose one that's white or another neutral color. Other-colored canopies can cast an odd hue that's tricky for Instagrammers.

Add a simple backdrop. This can help filter background light and reduce contrast, and it can be as simple as any sheer or semi-sheer fabric, such as an inexpensive curtain. Weight the bottom to keep it from blowing around ([photographer's clamps](#) will help hold it in place and don't cost a lot).

Add a table. It doesn't have to be large -- a portable card table is just fine!

Gather a few props. Again, simple is best, and rustic items help highlight the beauty of the produce. Some ideas:

- **A large cutting board or tray.** This doesn't have to be new -- in fact, something well worn with lots of character is ideal. [Sheesham](#) or [acacia](#) wood are nice. Other great backgrounds include old chalkboards, remnants of an old door or fence, small aged tables, even old ceiling tiles. These kinds of things may not look like much, but they make *great* backgrounds:



- **Fabric** is another easy background for produce. Opt for neutral colors and natural fibers -- the more rustic the better -- such as burlap, cotton or [linen](#) in neutral colors so the produce really pops. In general, skip patterns, which can fight with the produce.
- **A small selection of bowls.** These give shoppers more options to compose their purchases. Opt for shallow vs. deep bowls (so shoppers don't have to fill them with a ton of produce. [Enamel](#) and [wood](#) bowls are nice, since they're not breakable. Small [baskets](#) are also good containers.

Feeling fancy? Let shoppers play with light and shadow. Pick up a piece of white and a piece of black foam core at any office-supply store. Shoppers can use the white one to bounce light where it's needed, and the black one to create shadows for more drama.