NEWS LESSON

When Your Meal Becomes Someone Else's Photoshoot



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. When does taking a photo start to spoil a meal?
2. Would a photo of a restaurant persuade you to try it?
3. Should you ask before including a stranger in a video?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**intrusive**	☐	A	private and personal, usually with few people
2	**authorisation**	☐	B	disturbing people's privacy or peace without being invited
3	**phenomenon**	☐	C	unpleasant enough that people complain about it
4	**vain**	☐	D	too proud of how you look or what you do
5	**designated**	☐	E	officially chosen for a particular purpose
6	**consent**	☐	F	official permission
7	**intimate**	☐	G	something that happens or exists and is noticed by many people
8	**objectionable**	☐	H	agreement to let something happen

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Venues depend on looking good online, yet some now restrict the very photography that promotes them. The dividing line may be behaviour rather than profession.

1 Imagine settling down for lunch on a Mediterranean terrace, only for the next table to turn into a photoshoot. Clothes come out, furniture moves and the meal becomes a backdrop. Some guests want pictures; others want a quiet afternoon. For restaurants and hotels, deciding whose experience comes first is becoming a business decision.

2 An October 2026 report in the Guardian described a growing number of venues clamping down on intrusive photography, and the businesses involved were hardly confined to one country or one luxury market. Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, the celebrated property in Antibes, requires prior authorisation for organised photoshoots. According to reporting, some visitors had secured lunch reservations only to spend much of their time changing outfits and creating content. What might look like free publicity to an outside observer can become an operational headache for staff trying to maintain a discreet, luxurious environment.

3 The phenomenon extends well beyond glamorous resorts. The Hollies farm shop in Cheshire has restricted photography and filming during its busiest daytime hours after becoming a social media destination. A shop built around selling everyday goods can suddenly find itself hosting visitors whose main objective is to produce a reel. As crowds gather and cameras come out, regular customers may feel that the business has been transformed without their consent. In such cases, the question is not whether photography is inherently objectionable, but whose needs take priority.

4 There is, however, a striking contradiction at the heart of these bans. The hospitality industry depends on visual appeal, from carefully presented food to beautifully designed interiors. Countless independent businesses owe their success to customers who shared a photograph that caught on. Influencers can also provide valuable promotional work, particularly when traditional advertising is beyond a small company's budget. Dismissing every content creator as vain or disruptive risks overlooking both genuine creativity and the commercial arrangements that venues themselves encourage.

5 The real dividing line may be behaviour rather than professional status. A visitor quietly photographing a birthday cake is hardly comparable to someone setting up lighting equipment, obstructing a doorway or filming strangers without permission. What one person considers harmless self-expression may feel like an invasion of privacy to another. The tension becomes especially acute when an intimate setting is treated as though it were a public stage, and employees are left to pick up the pieces when complaints start pouring in.

6 Rather than declaring war on social media, venues could introduce proportionate rules: designated filming times, consent requirements and advance approval for commercial shoots. Customers also have a responsibility to read the room. A dining room is doing several jobs at once. It is a place to eat, a place to meet friends and, for some visitors, a place to work. The rules work best when they leave space for all three.

Sources: The Guardian. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The writer implies that venues gain from the same activity they now restrict. T F NG
2. The Antibes hotel and the Cheshire farm shop apply identical restrictions. T F NG
3. The Hollies has lost customers since it restricted filming. T F NG
4. The article suggests that a person's job matters less than how they behave. T F NG
5. The article claims influencers are useful only to large companies. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

confined **discreet** **disruptive** **elaborate** **inherently** **overlooking** **secured** **unwarranted**

1. The outbreak was _____ to a single district, and officials said it would not spread.
2. A _____ waiter will refill your glass without interrupting the conversation.
3. Critics argue that no form of entertainment is _____ harmful; it is how people use it.
4. By _____ the early signs of trouble, the board allowed the problem to grow.
5. After weeks of negotiation, the small studio finally _____ a contract with the broadcaster.
6. A single _____ guest can ruin an evening for a whole dining room.

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. The _____ of filming rules in hotels shows how widespread the problem has become. (PROLIFERATE)
2. Staff described the guests' behaviour as _____, since it disturbed other diners. (CONSIDER)
3. Venues must act _____ if they want to avoid accusations of unfairness. (CONSISTENT)
4. Rules are only as good as their _____. (ENFORCE)
5. Many owners are _____ to criticise influencers openly for fear of losing publicity. (WILL)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. At C1, look for fixed phrases where one word is almost impossible to replace, such as blunt instrument or mounting pressure.

draw	due	instrument	met	mounting	pose	swift

1. The council is under _____ pressure to explain its decision.
2. A blanket ban is a blunt _____ that punishes polite guests along with rude ones.
3. Even sceptics admit that credit is _____ to the cafés that spotted the trend early.
4. Venues must _____ a clear line between filming for work and snapping a memory.
5. The new policy was _____ with a mixed reaction.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What filming rule would make a restaurant better for everyone?
2. Would you visit a place that banned all customer photos?
3. Can a place become less enjoyable because it is famous online?

9 Role-play: filming at the restaurant

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the restaurant manager

A customer wants to film a video at one of your tables. Other guests are already eating. Ask what equipment they will use and how long it will take. You can say yes, no, or yes with rules.

Student B · the influencer

You want to film a short video of your lunch. It could bring the restaurant new customers. Explain why it's good for the business and promise to be quiet.

Useful phrases

Would it be all right if I filmed my meal?

I'm afraid other guests might feel uncomfortable.

It won't take long, and I'll keep the noise down.

I'd be happy to agree if you stay at your table.

That's not really fair on the other customers.

Could we agree on a time limit?

Afterwards, tell the class: did the manager say yes, and was it a fair decision?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 B · 2 F · 3 G · 4 D · 5 E · 6 H · 7 A · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 confined · 2 discreet · 3 inherently · 4 overlooking · 5 secured · 6 disruptive

6 Word forms

1 proliferation · 2 inconsiderate · 3 consistently · 4 enforcement · 5 unwilling

7 Language focus

1 mounting · 2 instrument · 3 due · 4 draw · 5 met

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