

One Big Beautiful Light Workshop

Assignment One

Don Giannatti | www.dongiannatti.com

Objective:

Give photographers a clear understanding of how a single large vertical light—like a window—can produce professional food photographs with minimal gear and maximum control.

Setup:

- Use a 4×4 scrim with strobe or a 2×3 vertical softbox.
- Place the light directly beside the table, window-style.
- Keep the setup simple and consistent.

Food Subjects:

Tomatoes (shine), tomatillos (texture), eggplant (gloss), mushrooms (matte), squash (dimension). No cooking required.

Technique Exercises:

1. Move your subject to 2", 6", 12", and 24" from the light. Photograph each position.
2. Add a white fill card. Test at 3", 6", 12", and with no fill.
3. Observe how softness, contrast, texture, and mood change.

Two Classic Looks to Try:

1. Soft-Wide Wrap (Raw Veggies):

- Subject 4–8" from light
- Fill card at 3–6"
- Overhead or 3/4 angle

2. Moody Falloff (Baked Goods):

- Subject 14–24" away
- Little or no fill
- Add black cards for deeper contrast

Final Portfolio Image:

- Choose your preferred distance + fill combination.
- Style minimally; use props you already brought.
- Shoot tethered if possible.
- One final commercial-ready shot.
- Total working time: under 2 hours.
- Submit: your final image + your best three test frames.

Reminder:

This simple setup can handle 80% of food jobs—restaurants, bakeries, chef promos, small product gigs. Master this light and you can work nearly anywhere with confidence.