

Insider's Guide to Starting a Six-Figure Food Blog



How many times have you dreamed of operating your own six-figure business while sitting on a calm, sunny ocean beach? An Internet business runs 24/7 and literally allows you to make money in your sleep. The truth is that achieving your dream is a lot easier than you think. In fact, 2014 is the best year to start your own food blog and reaching the golden six, seven, even eight figure revenue point is very achievable.

Over the past six years, we have learned a lot while running a food blog empire. I am not going to lie and tell you that it was a walk-in-the-park. It was actually quite difficult, mostly because we didn't have someone to give us the blueprint.

We became successful over many years by putting in thousands of hours of sweat, blood, and tears. That's one way to learn, but the cheapest lessons always come from learning from people who have been there and done that. That's where this guide comes in. If you follow the free advice below, I promise that you will be well on your way to your dreams.

The guide that we have written is quite long, but only because we wanted to create the best resource on the Internet for you to learn from. If you love the wonderful art of cooking and are truly dedicated to your own success, then read the guide in its entirety. You won't regret it, because you'll learn so much and get an inside view on how entrepreneurs worldwide turn their passions into fruitful companies.

My Promise: This guide is and always will be 100% free to read. When I was first starting out, I had a few mentors that showed me the ropes. One of them made me promise that if he showed me how to get started, that I would teach others once I became successful too. I have always believed in Karma and this is my little way to give back to the world.

There is some much opportunity in the food space. I don't view my fellow food entrepreneurs as competitors because there are so many unexplored areas in food that have yet to be written about. I encourage you to build your own food blog and I hope that the hundreds of hours I spent putting together this guide helps you. Enjoy!

Need help? If you ever get stuck in part of this guide, please email me at hello@sogoodblog.com and we will try to help you out. We want you to succeed.

Should You Do-It-Yourself?

The number one question that I get from people who want to start a food blog is whether they should hire someone to build a website for them or if they should do it themselves. The answer that I have given since day one is to do-it-yourself.

Why should you make your own site? Not only is making your own website easier than you think, but it is also important to your success. The thing that I have noticed about successful people over the years is that they always invest in themselves. They have enough faith in themselves to develop new skills and take on new challenges. If you want to start your own food blog, then flex your muscles and dive in!

In the sections below, I outline the exact steps you need to follow to make your own site. It should take you less than one week to have a site up and running, if you follow everything below.

How to Start Your Own Food Blog

The outline below shows you what you are going to learn. In 9 simple steps you will be up and running. By the end of this guide you will have published your first post on your very own sexy website. Brush up on your ninja skills because you are about to become a techie superhero in the next few hours. Let's get started!

1) Think of a Name

We will help you come up with a name for your website and purchase the .com domain name (*Example: yourblog.com*).

Cost: Less than \$10 a year.

2) Choose a Reliable Web Host

In order for people to be able to go to your website, you need to setup a server, the place where your websites lives on the Internet.

Cost: About \$35 a year.

3) Install WordPress

WordPress is the software that the world's best bloggers use to manage their websites. It's easy to install.

Cost: Free!

4) Setup WordPress Theme or Framework

A wordpress theme will let you change the way your website looks, behaves, and feels.

Changing your theme is easy.

Cost: Free to \$49+.

5) Analytics & Basic Tools

Just like a pilot would never fly without cockpit instruments, you shouldn't either. These tools will help you know how many people are visiting your site.

Cost: Free!

6) WordPress Plugins

One of the most powerful parts of WordPress is that you can use free code to enhance your website. Here we show you the best plugins to install and use to make your job simple.

Cost: Free!

7) Taking Photos

Part of being a professional food blogger is taking professional grade photos. Don't worry, it's pretty straight forward.

Cost: Free!

8) Publishing Your First Post

We will show you how to get your first post published without breaking a sweat.

Cost: Free!

9) Setup Social Media

Once your site is up and going you need to get traffic. Social media is the best way. We will show you how to get up and going.

Cost: Free!

Total startup cost: \$40 - \$200.

Step 1: Think of a Name

When you start a company, you should come up with a name first. While coming up with a name might be hard, I urge you not to spend that much time on it. You can always change your name later if you want to. The important thing is to get your site live as soon as possible so that you learn everything you need to know. Once you have learned how everything works, you can change everything so that it's perfect.

When choosing a name make sure that it adheres to these four characteristics:

- **Descriptive:** Your name should describe what you are going to write about. If you are going to write mostly about different brownie recipes, then your name should refer to it (Ex. *BrownieBible.com*).
- **Memorable:** Your name should be easy to remember since you want people to come back again and again. Don't have a name like *JKatesBrownieCookbook.com*. It's too long, and chances are people are going to remember it.
- **Short:** Your name should be relatively short. This is part of being memorable. How many websites can you remember that are longer than 15 characters (Ex. *xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.com*).
- **Easy to Spell:** If your name has words that are hard to spell in it, then you might want to reconsider. For instance, if your website is *BrownieWeather.com*, know that many people might misspell weather as whether.

Like I said earlier, don't spend too much time thinking about a name. Successful people know how to focus on the important things, like developing their skills and then adapting things later.

Websites usually end in .COM on the internet. Check to see if your name is available in .COM form at [Bluehost.com](http://www.bluehost.com). Keep in mind, you may want to register that name today, since someone else might be thinking of that same name and only one person can own it!

<http://www.bluehost.com/blog/bluehost/domain-names-with-bluehost-1187/>

Step 2: Choose a Reliable Web Hosting Server



All websites in the world have their files stored on a computer or server that other people can access. This server is called a web host and you will need to purchase one to get your site up. Don't worry too much about the technical terms, just know that this is something that you need.

When it comes to web hosts, I have learned that you really do get what you pay for. The two best options are outlined below:

Best Value: BlueHost

If you want to get your feet wet, nothing beats BlueHost. BlueHost has some of the most affordable web hosting around and they will make sure that your website never goes down.

Future Proof: WP Engine (What We Use)

WP Engine is used by a ton of top six-figure bloggers. People trust WP Engine because it is future proof. No matter how much traffic your site gets, WP Engine will always work.

Limited Time: We have learned that for a limited time WP Engine is offering six month of web hosting for only \$4. They didn't tell us how long this offer is available, but they have been known to make changes.

Whichever web host you choose, I highly recommend that you avoid GoDaddy. Their servers are slow - something that will cause issues later down the line when you start getting website traffic.

Step 3: Install WordPress

As we mentioned earlier, WordPress is used by most of the world's biggest bloggers to manage their websites. WordPress allows you to publish posts, upload images, design your site, and so much more, all for the low price of free.

Chances are you may have heard of WordPress.com. What you need to install on your web host is the open source version of WordPress called WordPress.org.

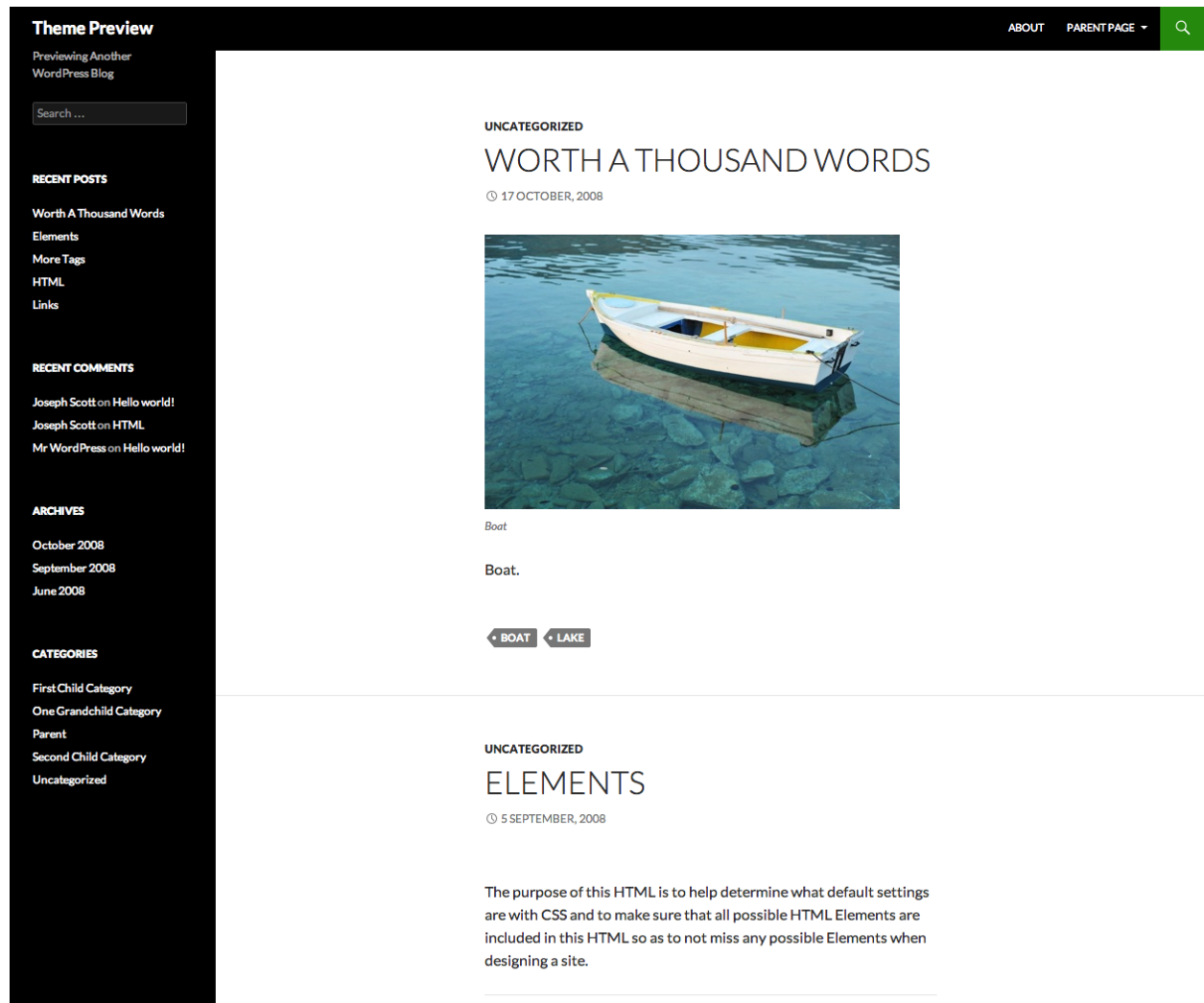
You can usually install it with the click of a button. Depending on which web host you are using, the installation process slightly differs.

BlueHost: To learn how to install WordPress on Bluehost, [click here](#).

WP Engine: By default WordPress is already installed on WP Engine, so there's no need for any setup.

Step 4: Setup WordPress Theme or Framework

After you are done installing WordPress, when you visit your website it will most likely look like this:



The basic WordPress site is pretty ugly, but don't worry because within just a few minutes you can have a professionally designed site up.

The power of WordPress is that you can install a theme on your site. A theme is basically code that makes your website look and behave in a custom way in the click of a button.

Here are some basics that you want to make sure your theme has when you select one:

Responsive: You want the theme that you select to be responsive. Responsive means that the theme works for all devices - laptops, PCs, phones, tablets, et cetera.

User-friendly: You want your website to be as user friendly as possible. The content should be easy to read, the font should be fairly large, and it should be well-structured.

Easy to Work With: Generally, it is safer to go with frameworks that are flexible. This will allow you to customize the themes to fit your site and style. Many web designers use frameworks on Wordpress to build websites for their clients. You could go hire a web design company (we have done so many times for other projects), but be prepared to pay a few thousand dollars for a good-looking site. Instead, you're better off with a powerful framework that you can get for less than \$100.

Since a theme is going to be responsible for the way your website looks, it is a good idea to spend time and money looking for the right one. This step is one of the most important ones.

Here are two places that I recommend searching for themes at:

Genesis Framework: The Genesis Framework is used by a lot of WordPress food bloggers to enhance the power of their websites. It has a ton of features. Have a look around at their themes and buy it [here](#).

Elegant Themes: Elegant Themes has a really high-quality selection of Wordpress themes for you to choose from. Click [here](#) to look at their themes.

If you still haven't found a good looking site, visit the world's largest selection of WordPress themes [here](#). Click on WordPress in the navigation bar and type in food in the search box. This will get you the best choices.

When setting up your website, there are some important things to keep in mind. You want to keep your website as clean and uncluttered as possible so that people stay focused on what you write. You also want integrate social media on your site so that people can like and follow you on Facebook, Twitter, and more. If you keep these two basics in mind, your website should work pretty well.

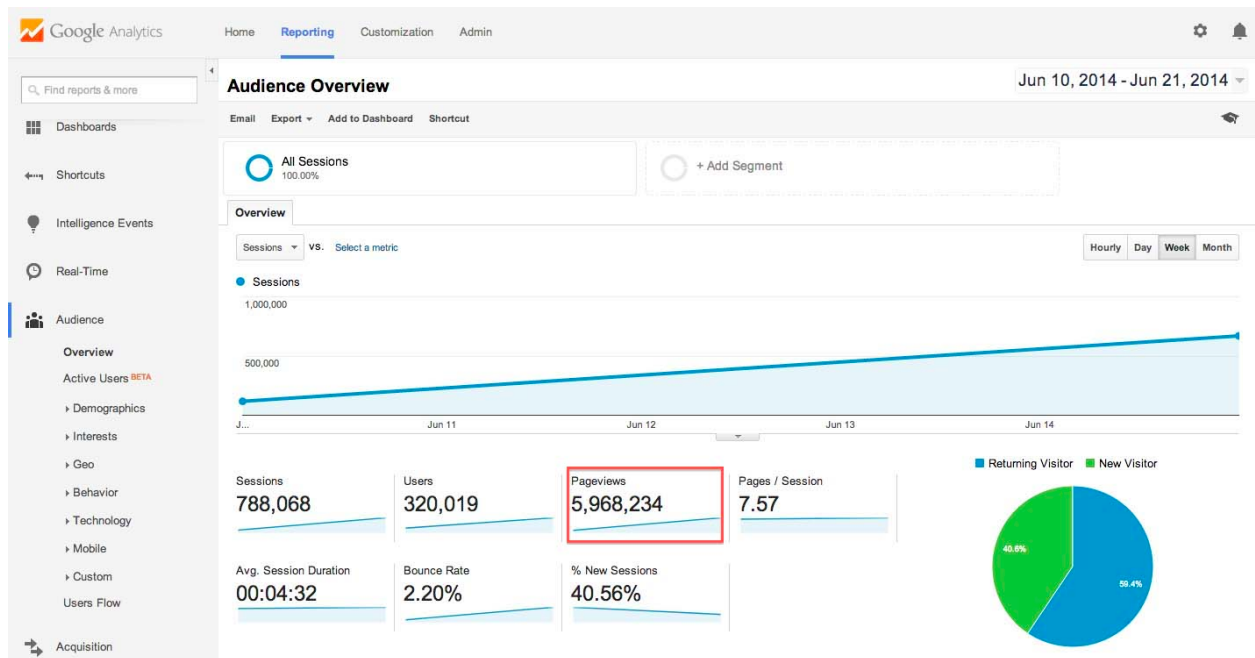
Step 5: Analytics & Basic Tools

After you have your website setup, you want to install some tools so that you can get an understanding of how your site is growing. Two must have tools are Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools.

Google Analytics:

Google Analytics tells you how many people have visited your site over a period of time. For instance, you can find out how many people visited your website, how many times they visited, where they came from, et cetera. It is really powerful and 100% free.

Visit [this link](#) to learn how to set it up.



If you work hard, your analytics dashboard could look this very soon as well. We had over 6 million hits to our website in a two week period.

Google Webmaster Tools

Search engines are one of the biggest sources of traffic for most food blogs. For instance, if someone types in "barbecue chicken recipe" into Google, Yahoo, or Bing and your website ranks at the top, chances are the person will visit it and read your article. The process of ranking high in a search engine like Google is called search engine optimization (SEO).

Google Webmaster Tools gives you information on how many visitors are coming to your website from Google.

You can learn how to install it [here](#).

Step 6: WordPress Plugins

Once you are up and running, you might want to add some plugins to your site. A plugin is an easy way to add functionality to your site. Usually, you just click the install button and configure a few settings, and your site then gets some new powerful functionality. Most plugins on WordPress are free.

- [WordPress SEO by Yoast](#): This plugin will help make sure that your site has good SEO. As mentioned before, SEO is the process of getting traffic to your site from search engines like Google, Yahoo, and Bing.
- [Recipe Card](#): This is the plugin that we use on our site to add recipes to it. It is the best WordPress recipe plugin.
- [Hover Pin-It](#): This plugin adds a pin button to your images so that when someone hovers over a photo on your website, they can instantly add it to their Pinterest board.

There are tens of thousands of WordPress plugins out there. If you want your website to do something, chances are someone has probably made a WordPress plugin that you can install to do it.

Step 7: Taking Photos

I wouldn't obsess too much about the quality of your food pictures in the beginning, but if you want to step up your game, I recommend the [Tasty food Photography guide](#).

The guide is only \$19. It was written by Lindsay over at Pinch of Yum. She takes high-quality photos and I can vouch for the quality of her course.

Personally, I know people who take world class food pictures with their iPhones, so I wouldn't stress that much about your equipment. It's all about how you use it.

Step 8: Publishing Your First Post

Publishing your first post in WordPress is straightforward. I recommend watching this video if it is your [first time](#).

If you want to have step-by-step instructions on how to setup WordPress, there's also a course called [WP 101](#). While you can easily learn WordPress without a program like this, it will jump start your learning and help you get up to speed super fast.

Step 9: Setup Social Media

What is a food blog without social media? Social media will probably be the most important source of traffic to your site when you first start out. Lucky for you, it is free for you to setup an account and start promoting your recipes, images, and content on nearly all of the top social media platforms.

Here are the social media sites we recommend you use to promote your new food blog:

- Twitter
- Create a Facebook Page
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- FoodGawker
- TasteSpotting
- Foodie.com
- Yummly.com

Note: Consistency is key when using social media to promote your new food blog. Building a community is hard work, but it is a very valuable asset for your new food blog. It's best to focus on just a few social media sites to remain consistent, since hyperextending yourself is never good.

Conclusion:

The most important part of this journey is to have fun. Blogging is tough, gritty work but it has it rewards. You can work from anywhere in the world, on a boat in the middle of the ocean, on top of the mountain, where ever your favorite place is. All you need is a laptop and an Internet connection.

Remember talk is cheap. The only person that is going to get you closer to achieving your dreams is you. Make an investment in your future and start your first food website today.

If you need any help getting setup, please feel free to email me and I will see what I can do.

Sign up for our email newsletter to get more exclusive information.

You can signup here: <http://www.sogoodblog.com/how-to-start-a-food-blog/>

A free guide called "4 Ways to Monetize Your Food Blog from Day One" is available.