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The Time Out Effect: What makes a great food story

Getting into Time Out is easier than it seems. So what do the editors look for? We spoke to one and found out the four essentials of a good food story.

By Maida Pineda December 9 2025 3 min read



There's no denying that Melbourne is a top food and drink destination in the world. In fact, in a study by British company Travelbag, Melbourne ranked the world's top foodie destination in 2025.

TimeOut Editor Leah Glynn agrees with that sentiment: “Melbourne is a city of secret spots and wonderful hidden gems. Discovering them is half the fun about dining in Melbourne.”

Glynn's full-time job is to find all the delicious offerings for TimeOut Melbourne.

“Basically, we are out there eating and drinking our way through the city, so we really know what we're talking about when it comes to getting out there and exploring the best of the city. And 75% of our readers have taken action after seeing something on Timeout.

“For example, we did a reel on Instagram with Deep End pizza, this gorgeous little pizza place in Fitzroy. We visited them. We had a chat with the owners and shared everything that they're about. They messaged us a week after to say that they had a 60% increase in revenue off the back of our video going out.”

Four essential elements for a standout food story

What sets TimeOut apart is its commitment to publishing independent, anonymous reviews, with editors and writers paying their own way and writing honest critiques. Glynn seeks four essential elements for a standout food and drink story.

Exclusivity

First, we need exclusivity. “If we can be the first to break a story, that's a massive positive for us. We'd love to make that impact, break the news first and then share it with our audience. They also love to feel as though they're getting involved with something exclusive and just dropped.”

High-quality images

Second, high-quality images are crucial. She says: “You can't underestimate the power of great imagery that showcases a venue or a bar or restaurant in its best light possible. In the medium that we're in, where we're publishing on our website, and we're on social media, people are scrolling and flicking through. If you've got that wonderful imagery, it can honestly make all the difference.”

Time Out ethos

Third, does it align with the TimeOut ethos? Stories should celebrate the city, encourage exploration, and highlight something new and exciting.

A human angle

Fourth, focus on the human angle. Glynn says, “Our audience is really interested in the people who make these venues and hospitality businesses work. Be it a cool chef, a wonderful team, or a first female-owned business, tell us about it. It's that human angle that also really attracts our readership, because they want to know exactly what's going on.”

If you are a small restaurant with no PR manager and have a tiny Instagram following, don't fret. You can still have a great food story worth publishing.

Glynn recommends sending an email to Timeout with an idea: “Sometimes we won't know about these places until they reach out. If you can package your unique selling point into a clear, concise subject line that really sums it up, that will catch our eye. And don't be afraid to follow up. We get hundreds and hundreds of emails every day.”

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